The Perceptions of Teachers in Rural Areas Towards Inclusive Education:
A Case Study of Three Schools in Ibenga.

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to investigate the perceptions of teachers in rural with the focus on three schools in Ibenga. A case study was used aimed at ascertaining the extent to which the perceptions from teachers either hinder or progress the learning environment of learners with disabilities in inclusive settings. 50 teachers and 50 pupils participated in the study and a questionnaire and focus group discussion was used as data collection instruments respectively. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were employed in data analysis. The quantitative data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and was presented using figures and tables while the qualitative data was analyzed thematically. The study revealed that teachers had negative attitudes and perceptions towards inclusion. Further, challenges were noted in the implementation of inclusive education include poor inclusive education policy implementation, lack of coordination or shared responsibility between NGOs and other stakeholders with the government, the absence of curriculum adaptations and modifications, poor support from the administration and lack of special education knowledge by some teachers which results into negative behaviours towards learnerss with disabilities. The study also found that despite inclusive education being implemented in schools of learning, there were several challenges like unadopted curriculum and inadequate human resource to enhance effective implementation of inclusive education. Hence, there is urgent need for continuous professional development if inclusive education is to achieve its intended purpose. Based on the findings of this study, the research proposes and recommends that the relevant authorities take keen interest in inclusive education and ensure that teachers are exposed to it.

Keywords—perceptions; disabilities; learners; Inclusive Education

I. INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Philosophies involving inclusive education have changed dramatically over the past two decades. In the past, segregation of special education needs students seemed an easy solution, however, it denied those students the right to develop their personality in a social and school environment. Special education needs is described to include the view that learning and behaviour problems are the reciprocal product of individual and environmental interaction. Inclusive education should not just be about addressing a marginal part of the education system, it should rather constitute a framework that all educational development systems should follow. Inclusive education is aimed at increasing the participation of students in the curricula, cultures and communities of governmental educational systems. Inclusion should involve creating an environment that allows all students to feel supported emotionally, while being given the appropriate accommodations in order to learn. Most importantly, those students need to be respected and appreciated for all their personal differences. Various researches have proposed that integration can take on three forms. Locational integration, which allows special needs students to attend mainstream schools. Social integration, which is the integration of special needs students with mainstream peers. Finally functional integration, which is the participation of students with special education needs within the learning activities that occur in the classroom. Engelbrecht (2006) states that inclusion is culturally determined and depends

on the political values and processes of the country for it to become effective. Even taking this into consideration, it is extremely important to realise that there is not just one perspective on inclusion within a single country or even within a specific school.

Inclusive schooling has been accepted in almost all countries across the world. UNESCO (2015) underpins that inclusive education has received more attention globally in the last few years. As a result, inclusive educational practices are being endorsed internationally. As a refrain, segregation in schools is being done away with as it has been noted that it is not realistic and undesirable from the educational point of view. Thus, all children are entitled to equity of educational opportunity, (UNESCO, 2015). It is also maintained that inclusion is the preferred approach to providing schooling for students with special needs.

In inclusive education there has been some significant controversy in terms of the concepts involved linked to their implementations. In some instances, some scholars have seen inclusive education to be more of a daunting task especial if a teacher has a handful of learners. It has been stated that inclusive education proves to be involving, as it requires a teacher to meet the varying needs of learners in one classroom in one session. The teacher may be required to extensively teacher the children with lesser learning speeds. This may mean that the teacher may not be able to give well conducted divided attention. In addition, it has been stated that because of inclusive education and its demands as a concept it is seen as a very difficult concept to execute and hinges more to the impossibilities side in terms of performing its demands to mere perfection (Thomas and Loxley, 2007).

On the other hand, Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is a provision in IDEA that states that students with disabilities are to be educated with their non-disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate. LRE is that situation where students with disabilities need to be place in the environment that is most suited for their educational needs, or as it is termed the least restrictive one (Rose-Hill, 2011). The ideas placed across in LRE have been received with doubt in some circles of scholarly and practical activities. This is due to the reason that the concept of LRE give rise to questions to whether the expression made as standards of practice outline can be done fully by individual or educational institutions. For example, it questioned whether it is possible to create the least restrictive environment for a learner with either visual impairment or hearing impairment amongst learners with sight and have them have no restrictions. Although the LRE concept explains that the LRE should be created to the greatest extent it still leaves question marks on the effectiveness of realization of a highly restrictive environment for a learner who may be with severe disability being amongst learners with a directly opposite ability. This has created necessitated controversies to whether the LRE concept is achievable for the teacher or the learner upon application as inclusive education provision I being implemented.

Equally, full inclusion emanates scholarly arguments in the implementation of inclusive education. According to Jorgensen et'al (2005) full Inclusion is an interpretation of the principle of the LRE advocating that all pupils with disabilities are to be educated in the general education classroom. Furthermore, it involves the delivery of appropriate specialized services to students with disabilities in a general education classroom. Having analyzed the above state some scholars have urged that Inclusive education being implemented to the fullest potential is seen to a very tough task that comes close to impossibility. This is so because full inclusion could mean that even children with severe special education needs can learn with learners with superior intelligence. In this view learners with bigger or wide intellectual discrepancies in terms educational learning needs may not be put in the same class to have the same session and be handle by a teacher right there. Therefore, the concept of full inclusion may not be possible to realize practically or upon attempt in implementing inclusive education in any situation.

It is noted that most African governments' commitments to Special Needs Education (SNE) started in the 1970s. It is noted that most of the countries in Africa are still struggling with the

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problems of making provisions for children with special needs even on mainstreaming basis as compared to countries within the advanced economies that have gone beyond categorical provisions to full inclusion. What is observed is that many African countries have shown theoretical interest in SNE by formulating policies such as mainstreaming, family, community or social rehabilitation and showing the desire to give concrete meaning to the idea of equalizing education opportunities for all children, irrespective of their physical or mental conditions.

Zambia has made frantic efforts to reach out to the differently abled children. The Education for All (EFA) movement and other international conventions have pointed out that particular groups of children are prone to exclusion. In most instances, they been denied the chance to fully take part in the learning activities which take place in the formal, informal and non-formal setups. The social, cultural, regional and economic environments in which they live disadvantage these children. The South African Federation For Persons with Disabilities (SAFFPD) (2008) quoted in Patriotic Front Manifesto (2011 to 2016), estimated that 93% of persons with disabilities in Zambia are living below the poverty line of US $0.93 per day. This is because they have limited access to quality inclusive education and training which reduces their opportunities to access the employment market.

The right to education within the regular school setting is highlighted in instruments such as the world declaration on Education for All in 1990, the United Nations Standard Roles on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities in 1999, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991 as well as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2006 which calls on all State Parties to ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and the Dakar framework for action 2000 (UNESCO, 1990).

The Salamanca Declaration on Special education built on The United Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the world conference on Education for All (1990) and the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of

Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993). This conference recongised that every child has a fundamental right to education. The Zambian government has positively responded to this campaign by increasing access for all children in primary schools and subsequently increasing and expanding secondary education. In practical terms, the government has taken measures such as the abolishment of examination fees at Grade seven level, introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE), re-entry policy for pregnant girls and admitting learners without uniforms. Moreover, the government of Zambia through the Ministry of General Education recongnises that all Zambian children have the right to free, compulsory and quality education including Children with Disabilities (CWD). The paramount responsibility to provide this quality education in collaboration with parents and communities. However, the widely accepted notion is that conditions required to allow for successful inclusion are those that contribute to overall school improvement and high levels of achievement for all children. Despite the above good policies introduced by the Ministry of Education, it seems that there are still challenges faced in the implementation of inclusive education in rural areas, and mostly these pertain to attitudes and perception that teachers show towards inclusion.

Statement of the Problem

Numerous studies have observed that in both the developed and developing countries that preparing students for inclusive education is a challenging task. Further, some other studies have strongly argued that the perceptions of teachers about their learners have profound effect on the performance and self-image of the learners especially the learners with disabilities (LWDs), (Ndhlovu, 2008; UNESCO, 2008). This manifests itself on how the learners interact especially in groups of mixed abilities. Notably, there has been insistence on education for all (EFA) in the 20th and 21st centuries. Thus, the study of the perceptions of teachers towards inclusive education and LWDs becomes an integral undertaking. The important aspect is to understand how the effects are of profound

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influence on the rural teacher and rural LWDs. The imperative state is that it is yet to be seen to the extent to which all learners (LWDs inclusive) are captured in the inclusive movement.

Research objectives
General objectives
1. To ascertain the levels of perceptions that teachers have on inclusive education.

Specific objectives
1. To determine the extent to which teachers in rural areas impact on learners with disabilities.
2. To identify tags given to learners with disabilities
3. To isolate barriers to effective inclusion of learners with disabilities.

Research questions
The following are some of the research questions that the study endeavored to use:
1. What are some of the ways in which learners with disabilities are included in the regular classroom?
2. What treatment do learners with disabilities undergo at the hands of teachers and their fellow learners without disabilities?
3. How is the interaction of learners with disabilities in groups of learners in the regular classroom?
4. What modalities are put in place by schools and teachers in particular to ensure that learners with disabilities receive the intended learning experiences?

Significance of the study
The study provided insightful ideas and lessons on how teachers in rural areas were maintaining the status quo of including LWDs in their classrooms. It also highlighted to what extent these teachers had the knowledge on inclusive schooling and the ways in which they were able to correctly include LWDs. The insistence of the study was based on the concept that all learners had the right to education including those with learning disabilities.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework
Conceptual Framework
A concept is a word that speaks for several coherent ideas and it can also be said to be an abstract or general notion. Therefore, in the case of this study we can deduce that every child has the right to education. The granting of this right does not just end with access to education but other factors too play a role such as the positive attitudes and perception towards all learners. It is therefore important to begin redefining the concept of inclusion in such a way that maintenance of attitudes and perceptions in schools leads or enhances the child's right to education. It should also enable the protection of the child from degrading and humiliating attitudes and perceptions. This will therefore create a link and a relationship between attitudes and perceptions of the teacher and/or peers and the right of the child in the school and the freedom to learn and actively participate in the classroom.
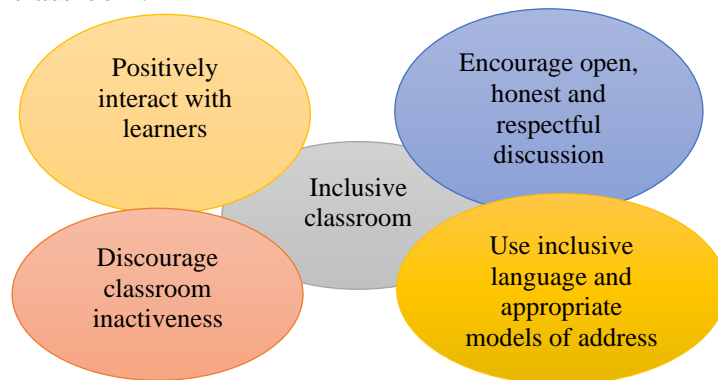
Theoretical Framework
Theoretical framework is the collection of ideas based on interrelated theories. This study's theoretical framework wass based on the classical liberal theory of equal opportunities propounded by Sherman and Wood, 1982 and the social learning theory of Bandura, 1971. The underlying tenets of the two theories are that there is need to aspire for equal opportunities in education for all eligible learners and that learning occurs within the social context for the

classical liberal theory of equal opportunities and the social learning theory respectively.

The classical liberal theory of opportunities contends that each individual is born with a given amount of ability. In this case, the theory encourages the educational systems to be designed in a manner that avoids barriers of any kind so as to allow for full inclusion of learners regardless of one's disability. In many instances, for example, learners with disabilities are marginalized based on their socio-economical, socio-cultural, geographical and school-based factors which prevent them from achieving the most out of learning. As a result, these need to be detached as disability is not inability. Thus, education offered to such groups should be able to accelerate and promote their wellbeing within the large social setting. Education is a great equalizer which enhances life chances of the children with special needs (USDG, 2015). The theory demands that opportunities be made available for individuals to go through all levels of education to which access to quality education will not be determined by the disability of the learners but on the basis of individual capabilities.

On the other hand, the social learning theory contends that all learners can be helped to reach their potential within the classroom setting. The learners imitate each inasmuch as they do the teacher. In the actuality, the theory stipulates that learners model and hold the level of responsibility that is open to all. For example, they are let to turn their work past the due date to reinforce the importance of responsibility. In this scenario, the students learn that they are held to this standard and they should hold for all their work.

The classical theory of equal opportunities states that social mobility will be promoted by equal opportunity for all citizens to education. In this way, education will least provide equality of economic opportunities where children with disabilities could benefit from excellent academic performance. Moreover, many economists have supported the policy on free primary education. This policy has made education free and compulsory for all as Zambia was trying to meet the millennium development goals by 2015 (UNESSCO, 2013). The inclusion of children with disabilities into the public schools has yield little in Zambia despite the efforts by all stake holders.

Further, the social learning theory highlights that learners learn a great deal by observing other people. This is achieved by describing the consequences of the actions performed by others in a meaningful context. This can effectively increase the appropriate behaviors and decrease the inappropriate ones. A number of activities are proposed in the use of the use of this theory and these arrange from group work in which learners are of diverse abilities. Here, students are motivated and responsible, and those who do not care about school work will imitate others in the same group. The group aspect allows learners to be put in control of the discussion and allow the learners to determine the agenda. Thus, minimizing the gap between the learners with disabilities to those without learning disabilities.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Understanding of Inclusive Education Globally

Education in its all aspects is a human right. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and the World Declaration on Education for All of 1990 acknowledged and proclaimed that Education is a fundamental human right (UNESCO, 1994). Thus, 'Education for All' in this respect provides the basic policy on education worldwide, and calls for the need to streamline it further to allow for the concept of inclusion. This quest arose from the fact that although the pronouncement of 'Education for All' underscored the right of every child to education, the existing educational structures in developing countries including Zambia promoted a wide range of discrimination among the school aged children (UNESCO, 1994).

Inclusion or inclusive education can be interpreted as the philosophy and practice for educating students with disabilities in general education settings (Bryant, Smith, & Bryant, 2008). The practice anchors on the concept that every child should be an equally valued member of the school culture in all its manifestations. In other words, children with disabilities benefit

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from learning in a regular classroom, while their peers without disabilities gain from being exposed to children with diverse characteristics, talents and temperaments. Ajuwon (2008) posits that supporters of inclusion use the term to refer to the commitment to educate each child, to the maximum extent appropriate, in the school and classroom he or she would otherwise attend. Thus, it involves bringing the ancillary services to the child, and requires only that the child will benefit from being in the class. DEEWR (2010), notes further that this is a salient aspect of inclusion, and requires a commitment to move essential resources to the child with a disability rather than placing the child in an isolated setting where services are located. In effect, for the child with a disability to benefit optimally from inclusion, it is imperative for general education teachers to be able to teach a wider array of children, including those with varying disabilities, and to collaborate and plan effectively with special educators.

Cushner, McClelland, and Safford (2012) indicate that inclusive education refers to the practice of including another group of students in regular classrooms: students with physical, developmental, or social-emotional disabilities, and those with chronic health problems. The philosophical basis of Inclusive Education rests on the principles that heterogeneity within a group is both unavoidable and desirable, and that differences in ability are not marks of greater or lesser worth. The idea of inclusive education is to provide whatever adaptations are needed in an effort to ensure that all students, regardless of their disability, can participate in all classroom experiences, and as much as possible, in the same manner as everyone else. Thus, inclusion entails that students with disabilities become part of the general education classroom, receiving a meaningful curriculum with necessary support, and being taught with effective strategies.

However, inclusion can be contrasted with integration in the manner that the former refers to educating students with disabilities in close proximity to students in regular classrooms. Although the term inclusion is more widely accepted in the United States of America and the United Kingdom, internationally, the term integration is more preferred except in the recent years (Forlin, Loreman, Sharma, & Earle, 2009). For the purposes of this paper, inclusion and integration will be used interchangeably for the reason that participants in the study may not aptly distinguish between the two terms.

It has been suggested that integration in developing countries can be facilitated much more easily and successfully than in North America and Western European countries, because in the former, students with disabilities are already in the mainstream, unlike in countries with a dual system of regular and special education (UNESCO, 2008). The major reason for this is that schools in developing countries have large class sizes, untrained teachers, inadequate teaching techniques, transportation problems, and lack of resources and facilities, and this is resting point of this paper. Johnson and Howell, (2009), commented that one of the arguments put forward by policy makers pertaining to facilitating inclusive education in poor countries is to consider the regular classroom as the mainstream model. This position takes into consideration the prohibitive costs associated with implementing the inclusive model, which is expected to meet the needs of a small number of children, as opposed to additional services provided to the existing regular classroom for low achievers, regardless of the shortcomings of such a model. There is an urgency to address the educational needs of students with disabilities; however, there is a major crisis in general education. Among some policymakers and the educational elite in Haïti, for example, special education is considered a luxury or a benefit that only industrialized nations can afford. Thus, I delve into this study to understand the underlying causes for this.

Furthermore, Ainscow (2008), points out that preparing quality teachers for inclusive education is a challenging task in both developed and less developed countries. He also reveals that pre-service teacher education programs in Latin America are blamed for not addressing the needs of children with disabilities and unsatisfactory school system performance. The deficiencies most commonly found in Latin America are related to the inadequate methods

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used to train teachers. Among these inadequate methods is imparting the technicality on how these are going to perceive and treat students with disabilities.

However, perception is everything in learning and they refer to a predisposition or response of an individual towards an animate or inanimate object, event, subject or person among others. Hodkinson (2009) defined attitude as one's positive or negative judgment about a concrete subject. This shows that attitude towards Special Needs Students (SNS) among teachers could be described as learners' positive or negative predisposition or perception about SNS. A significant influence on students' classroom performance is teacher attitudes [and perceptions], (Forlin, 2008). For example, research has shown that negative attitudes can lead to low expectations of a person. On the other hand, positive attitudes can lead to higher expectations of a person (Angelides, 2008). Thus, it is important to understand how educators perceive the academic outcomes of students with diverse needs and abilities.

The principle of inclusive education was adopted and worldly accepted as an alternative policy at the Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality in 1994 (Hemmings & Woodcock, 2011). It was organized by the government of Spain in co-operation with UNESCO. The goal of the conference was inclusion of all the children in the world in schools and reform of the school system to make this possible. Explicitly, the Salamanca Framework for Action stated among other things, that schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other conditions. The latest call for inclusive education is the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2006 which calls on all State Parties to ensure an inclusive education system at all levels (OECD 2010). Hence, all the above developments coupled by initiatives from the countries themselves as well as from various multilateral and bilateral organization and NGOs, have come to recognize the right of every child to a common education in their locality or community regardless of their background, attainment or disability.

However, UNESCO (1994) cited in Ajuwon (2008) emphasized that for inclusion to achieve its objectives, education practices must be child-centred. This means that teachers must find out the abilities each of their students are academically, socially, and culturally to determine how best to facilitate learning. Thus, a logical consequence of this realization is that these teachers will need to acquire skills in curriculum-based assessment, team teaching, mastery learning, assessing learning styles, cooperative learning strategies, facilitating peer tutoring, or social skills training. Given that children have varied learning styles or multiple intelligences, both general and special education teachers must plan and coordinate classroom instruction to capitalize on each child's needs, interests and aptitudes. In essence, the social learning aspects of all learners, both disabled and non-disabled, need to be captured if inclusion is to achieve its intended goal.

Some governments in Africa, upon realising that children with disabilities have been historically marginalised and excluded from the education systems in their countries, have taken it on themselves to supply education to this marginalised group. For instance, the governments of Lesotho and Malawi mandated themselves to accord children with disabilities an education that will ensure their growth and development. Both the governments have favourably signed the international instruments that bind them to the provision of education to the persons with disabilities. For instance, Lesotho ratified the United Nation's convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in December 2008 while Malawi ratified the same convention in August 2009. By ratifying the convention both governments with regard to education were committing themselves to ensuring that: …persons with disabilities are not excluded   from the general education system at all

        levels on the basis of disabilities and that   children with disabilities are not excluded   from free and compulsory primary   education, or from secondary on the basis   of disability… (United Nations Conventions   on   the   Rights   of   Persons   with

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Disabilities, Article 24 in UNESCO 2015).

It is, however, interesting to learn that both countries have not yet ratified the Optional Protocol attached to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) which requires countries to recognise the authority of the UNCRPD to receive individual complaints on any perceived violation of the provision. Lesotho and Malawi are also signatories to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, World Declaration on Education for All and Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs. Both countries have also ratified a number of other United Nations and African Union instruments and associated initiatives that have important implications for children with disabilities and their right to education, (The Secretariat of the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2012).

Nonetheless, it is sad to note that special needs education in Africa, from the colonial period to independence, some governments had not been actively involved in this type of education. The government of Malawi, for instance, had not been active about the education of people with disabilities instead it was mainly the Catholic Church under Montford College of Special Needs Education in Chiradzulu that almost singly took the responsibility (Chavuta, 2008). Due to this neglect, research-based statistics about special needs education in Malawi is also very limited and not comprehensive. But it is common knowledge that without credible statistics, it would be impossible to help learners with disability in good time. Thus, there has been failure to provide early detection, identification and intervention to infants and young children with disabilities and support to their parents and caretakers, and this has further limited their capacity to benefit from educational opportunities. In addition, since the church may have been using a spiritual and sympathetic approach and also because the church did not have enough resources, development of this area of education has lagged behind. In other words, focus seems to have been placed on long term care for learners with disabilities rather than helping them to develop their full potentials of life. Observations from the above author showed that training of specialist teachers in Malawi is restricted to visual impairment, hearing impairment and learning difficulties and yet there is also a need for multi-disability teachers and regular teachers with special needs education skills. In similar circumstances, in Lesotho, prior to the 1980s, the NGOs, churches and individuals with the help of international donors and private agencies provided education and care for children with special needs. For example, St. Bernadette Centre for the Blind was the first school to be established in 1971 by the Roman Catholic Church in Maseru, the capital city.

With such developments at hand, many African countries have adopted and inculcated the policy of inclusion in their education policies. Nigeria for example, adopted the policy of inclusion in her National Policy on Education in 1998. The policy stipulates the integration of special needs students into regular classrooms, and free education for exceptional students at all levels. In practice, however, implementation has been slow for many states in the country. The decade 1970–1980 could be rightly described as the golden period for the special needs children in Nigeria because it was in the latter half of the decade that the Federal Military Government of Nigeria released the National Policy on Education in 1977. In this document, issues relating to inclusive education and equality were elaborated, especially as it concerns the right to education of both the special needs children and the non-disabled children. For example, it is only one state out of over thirty states that had actually started the implementation of the inclusive education at the primary school levels at around 2005, other states of the federation in Nigeria are just starting up by creating a unit in each of the schools for their inclusive classrooms, (Fakolade, Adeniyi & Tella, 2009). The future slow implementation of the policy on special needs education in Nigeria is reported to be the attitude of the society, government and citizens on special needs children which had been highly negative and degrading, where the

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disabled were thought of to be incapable of contributing anything meaningful to the society. In Zimbabwe, some studies were conducted to ascertain the level of training in special education in some schools. The study revealed that most teachers were perceived to be lacking training in inclusive education, (Chireshe, 2011). Despite more universities and teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe training teachers in special needs education, many teachers remain untrained in the area. Therefore, the obligations of inclusive education have not been met even if almost all schools have teachers with adequate training in special needs education.

Ajuwon (2008) however, comments on the obvious benefits of the inclusive education paradigm when he says that 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 for speech impaired learners for instance. 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. It is also apparent that such modifications to the environment often enable others who do not have disabilities to access their environment even more readily.

The triumphs and losses in inclusion classrooms can depend on the dispositions and knowledge base of both teachers (Ross-Hill, 2009). Professional development that embraces the needs of both special and general education educators may be a solution that changes teacher knowledge and attitudes toward inclusion. It could also help teachers understand their roles in an inclusion setting, as well as how to negotiate this new terrain of collaboration. Training in relationship development rather than content mastery may bring this issue to light and help teachers develop the ability to discuss and improve their working relationships. Knowing how to co-teach, share responsibility and power, and blend the skills of both teachers does not happen automatically. Yet, even though the two teachers may have different perspectives and

backgrounds, the blending of perspectives, backgrounds, and personalities can lead to student success.

In order to curb negative perceptions on special education, Ashby (2012) points out that during training, trainee teachers must be prompted to raise their level of awareness regarding issues of disability and begin to see learners with disabilities as resources providing opportunities to learn and understand student characteristics more deeply in order to develop skills and empathy with the learners' abilities. This study will therefore stress the need for teachers and teacher educators to explore their understanding of disability and inclusion, and examine the ways that the curriculum addresses aspects of equity within the educational system and the teacher's responsibility for these issues. Teachers need to realise that the influence of teacher attitudes and perceptions are powerful. For example, negative attitudes and low expectations by teachers can result in reduced opportunities for students to learn. This, in turn, may impair students' self-beliefs causing them to reduce their expectations and leading to a deficit cycle. However, positive attitudes can enhance opportunities for students to learn, which may improve their performances, self-expectations and self-esteem. Therefore, in order for inclusion to be successful it is critical that teachers have positive attitudes and perceptions towards students (Angelidis, 2008).

Implementation of Inclusive Education in Zambia

As a signatory to the United Nations Educational and Scientific Organization (UNESCO), Zambia bound herself to achieve Education for All (EFA) goals targeted for 2015, which emphasizes inclusive education and non-discriminatory education practices (UNESCO, 2009). Thus, the country has both signed and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 which sets out children's rights in respect of freedom from discrimination and in respect of the representation of their wishes and views and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2006 which calls on

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all States Parties to ensure an inclusive education system at all levels.

In Zambia, inclusive education is associated with disabilities and the school. It is one of the several ways in which the Zambian education authorities have sought to enhance citizen rights for children with disabilities. Therefore, most schools in Zambia are now vehicles of inclusive education. The Ministry of Education in Zambia formulated a policy document 'Educating our Future' (MoE, 1996) which clearly spells out the need for inclusive education as strategic for ensuring equality of educational opportunities for children with special needs. The document states that: To the greatest extent possible the ministry will integrate pupils with special educational needs into mainstream institutions and will provide them with necessary facilities, however, where need is established the Ministry will participate in the provision of new special schools for the severely impaired. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education (2003) 'Inclusive Schooling Programme' asserts that a school is the delivery point for the country's education policies and curricula including the Inclusive Schooling Programme. It further points out the need for in-service training of teachers and the need to re-structure the teaching course for teachers in order to enable the teachers and would be teachers respond to the curriculum demands especially in an Inclusive set up. Thus, following the policy pronouncement, Educating Our Future Policy (MoE, 1996) and Inclusive Schooling Programme (MoE, 2003) some schools in several districts were adopted as Inclusive Education piloting schools in 2004. Some senior education officials, head teachers and teachers also underwent sensitization and training in inclusive education. A structure was also put in place to propagate and monitor activities pertaining to inclusive education. Structures were also put in place at ministry headquarters, provincial office, district level, zone level and at the school level. On the other hand, special schools have been maintained for pupils with severe disabilities (MoE, 2011). However, the perceptions of teachers towards special needs education have not been handled adequately.

Therefore, these educational polices, laws and declarations guide the education provision in Zambia. Thus, three categories of Inclusive Education are noticed in Zambia today; Unit based integration, Resource room based integration and full inclusion. A unit is a special class attached to the mainstream school which provides for learners with disabilities for part of the school day. Here, children receive specialized teaching from special teachers. At times, children with disabilities can join their peers in certain activities depending on individual's abilities, for example, music, dance and worship. The theory behind a unit is that it facilitates social interaction between the disabled and the non-disabled which in turn enables the disabled to gain valuable experiences and skills necessary in everyday living activities (Mkandawire, Maphele, and Tseeke, 2016). Examples of unit base integration are Munali Special Unit at Munali Secondary School (Lusaka), Mano Special Unit at Mano Basic School (Copperbelt) and St. Theresa Special Unit at St. Theresa Combined School (Cooperbelt). The resource room is a specially staffed room to which disabled children enrolled in the regular classroom come at planned intervals as the need arises. Usually, there is need for collaboration between the regular teacher and the special teacher in order to meet the needs of the disabled child. The special teacher complements what the regular teacher gives in his or her class by providing specialized skills, instructions, information and academic remediation necessitated by the disability. Under full inclusion, children with special educational needs are placed in ordinary classes for non-disabled children. Thomas and Loxley (2008) point out that;

The philosophy that underpins inclusive schooling emerged from the view point of a democratic society and of truly comprehensive school system; the shift towards protecting children's rights is perhaps the most essential issue within the inclusion debate. It is no longer a question of compulsory education or the children's special needs,

but rather the right to participate in common education.

Inasmuch as Educating Our Future promotes inclusive education, placement of children with special educational needs in ordinary schools is done without proper assessment to ascertain the actual needs of the child and in most cases children with disabilities do not receive the optimum help they need. Most teachers who teach in such schools hardly have basic skills in teaching children with disabilities, (Simui, 2009). Therefore, this disadvantages children with special educational needs from acquiring quality education.

In Zambia the problem of funding is common to most national endeavors that involve lucrative funding may not work as expected or desired. Simui, Waliuya, Namitwe, and Munsanje (2009) point out that inclusive education has an inadequate funding that may support it in terms of infrastructure and materials need for better implementation in respective schools. The funding from the government from ministry of education that may be dedicated to inclusive education provision in schools may not be adequate implement as should be according to proper inclusive education provision standards. This is a problem common to most developing countries in Africa and Zambia is one of them facing this challenge. This type of challenge leads to other problems such as lack of infrastructure problems to allow for provision of inclusive education, adaptation of the learning environment, lack of teaching and learning materials required for inclusive education (Porter and Smith, 2011).

The need for qualified teachers has also been reflected in the Education Act of 2011 and the Persons with Disability Act of 2012. Specifically, the Education Act (Section 23:8) emphasises the need for well-qualified teachers in order to provide quality education to children with special education needs. The Persons with Disability Act in Zambia of 2012, PART V: Sections 22 to 25 spells out, the need for an inclusive type of education system at all levels of education in Zambia and provision of quality education to children with disability. The implication of these two Acts is that every classroom will have to include a student(s) with

diverse needs and that teachers should endeavour to meet the needs of the learners in the classroom. Therefore, in order for all students to achieve quality education, teacher education programs must prepare teachers to develop their knowledge of diversity, skills for interpersonal communication, and appropriate dispositions to work with students and parents from different backgrounds (Pearson, 2009). For example, pre-service teacher education has a responsibility to both the teachers and their students to ensure that teachers are adequately prepared for the task of educating all students within the regular education classroom. Sad to note is that even the curricular and materials that is developed for use in teacher training colleges and universities have little or nothing to do with teacher attitudes and perceptions towards special needs education. Ndhlovu (2008) points out that all teachers should be trained in sign language and braille and all teacher training institutions should include sign language and braille in their curriculum. Kalabula (1991), Kasonde Ng'andu (2001) and Mandyata (2002) quoted in Ndhlovu (2008) highlight that most schools do not have facilities or resources conducive for inclusive education thereby excluding a lot of children with disabilities from accessing education in schools. It is pointed out that many could not afford transport to school, food or uniforms. Better still, those in rural areas have to walk an average of 11 kilometres to and from school. However, no attitudes or perceptions of teachers are mentioned as hindrances to accessing special needs education in the study above. It is this reason that this paper wants to highlight his aspect.

However, the situation in Zambia is not different from other countries. The Education Act of 2011 acknowledges the need for qualified and dedicated teachers to teach children with special education needs, (MoE 2011). Such is possible if the government trains teachers to be responsive to the diversity that they find inside classrooms. By so doing, Zambia would be implementing inclusive education. Additionally, Zambia as signatory to the United Nations Educational and Scientific Organization (UNESCO), is bound to achieve Education For All (EFA) goals targeted for 2015, which

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emphasizes inclusive education and non-discriminatory education practices (UNESCO, 2009).

Lack of material availability culminates in a challenge that is somewhat to be utilized for inclusive education implementation. This may be due to several reasons that are linked to an educational system lacking the necessary elements to implement the service of inclusive education (Kapinga. 2014). This may be a specially trained teacher, adapted books and a curriculum and many others. This creates somewhat limited accessibility to inclusive education and conditions for realizing inclusive education. On the other hand, limited provision of physical support in cases of infrastructure and learning programs and materials have been another challenge attached to inclusive education seemly being difficult to access for individuals requiring or necessitated to have this service offered to them (Meijer, 2003).

One other challenge according to the Ministry of Education (2009) special programs document indicate that Zambia has been experiencing problems of lack of infrastructure in the education system. In most parts of Zambia there are not enough schools to cater for the populations that may be present in an area this leads to either overcrowding or a lot of individuals not being able to attend school because there are not schools' spaces in which to fill and learn. Research done in Tanzania by Kapinga in 2014, has further shown that this is a problem in the education system that affects inclusive education just like any other branch in the education system of that country and many other developing countries like Zambia. Inadequate number of schools leaves inclusive education not to be somewhat a priority because of the problems already created by inadequate schools such as overcrowding. This means before inclusive education is thought of the major problems of classroom numbers already proves to be a challenge that may not be easily resolve as at present. Equally, another study done in Malawi by Munthali, (2013) shows that some classroom practices that may be practiced in normal schools may not accommodate inclusive education. For example, a teacher using an approach of given pupils or learners a lot of class notes without much of experience learning because most of the content of the subject may have that method be the most convenient especially if the subjects' bulkiness piles pressure of completion in time for the teacher. These and many problems are the roots to the problems experienced in inclusive education enhancement in Zambia.

Previous Studies in Inclusive Education

Although there is limited research on teachers' perceptions towards students with Students with Learning Disabilities (SLD), there are suggestions that teachers do not always respond positively to students with SLD within inclusive classrooms. This is evidenced in a study conducted by Silverman, (2009) who examined teacher beliefs where 228 Year six, seven and eight Mathematics teachers completed the 'Survey on Teaching Mathematics to Students with [Specific] Learning Disabilities' across 19 states in the United States. One of their striking, yet disappointing, findings was that the majority of respondents did not see any distinction between a student with SLD and a low-performing student. The telephone interviews from 26 of the respondents who completed the survey was used as a follow up activity. Consequently, the respondents believed that the modifications that they used for low-achieving students were adequate and sufficient for students with SLD. However, this study did not underpin the attitudes and perceptions of the respondents towards inclusive learning.

The study above supports previous work, such as that of Arnesen, Allen and Simonsen (2009) who concluded that there is a strong misconception of students with SLD among teachers. They hypothesised from this that teachers have low expectations of children with SLD. This can in turn manifest into teachers' different treatment of children with SLD. These authors contended that teachers' responses to children with SLD were triggered more by the label that they wore than their actual behaviour. Thus, it is important to understand the social learning atmosphere of these learners so as to underscore the attitudes and perceptions of teachers towards the said learners.

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Cara (2010) examined the perceptions of educators towards inclusive education in Johannesburg. The educators" perceptions of the barriers to learning, the skills required in an inclusive environment, the involvement of support in inclusive education and the training programmes required were all examined. The results demonstrated an equal amount of positive and negative perceptions towards the implementation of inclusive education. The educators of this study reported perceiving themselves to be inadequately trained to assume the responsibilities of inclusive education. The perceived prevalent barriers to learning in the classroom were emotional and cognitive barriers to learning. Due to South Africa's diverse population language was also seen to be a prominent barrier to learning within these schools. Educators reported the need for parental support for the successful implementation of inclusive education; however, the reality of these educators, according to the research, is that parental support is minimal and often non-existent.

Other studies demonstrate that increased experience and contact with students with special educational needs in conjunction with knowledge and training, results in more positive attitudes (Akiba, 2011). This research also shown that teachers' negative attitudes towards students with special educational needs are a function of lack of training and development and, teachers with more training about students with special educational needs should have more favourable attitudes and emotional reactions towards them. However, this research did not highlight ways in which teachers would avoid engaging themselves in modes of negative notions against SLD.

Downing and Peckham-Hardin (2007) conducted a study that showed a willingness on the part of 61% of classroom teachers to work in an inclusion classroom, but the teachers campaigned for appropriate preparation and resources to know how to work with students who had severe or moderate disabilities. General educators require necessary skills to instruct in their subject area, and they also need to acquire knowledge about special education requirements if they are expected to instruct students inside inclusion classrooms. Classroom teachers feel inadequate when they teach students with special needs (Loiacono & Valenti, 2010); however, forming a partnership with the special educator could help general educators learn the required skills. Professional development workshops that involve teachers of special and general education and focus on inclusion can help educators in both fields feel even more successful in their classrooms. Studies show that workshops centered on professional development in the area of teaching students with learning disabilities can help educators feel more capable of teaching students with disabilities (Kosko & Wilkins, 2009).

A study done in Armenia on transition to inclusive education by Page (2013) found that the problem of inadequately trained teachers in inclusive education is likely to be a major contributing factor to the state of affairs in the country. Inclusive education is a sector of education and special education that requires teachers to be specially trained to manage an inclusive class especially that this is classroom that may be very dynamic in terms of the approaches it may need a teacher to employ if they may be managed ably. Wanjohi, (2013) in his study on the Challenges Facing Inclusive Education in Developing Countries found that most teachers schools may have not been trained in matters of Special Educational needs found in children and how they can be dealt amidst unique and extensively varying educational needs. This has seen a major challenge in implementing inclusive education even in cases that it is introduced in some schools. Teachers who may have been trained may also need some retraining to handle the changing and dynamic problems that may be faced in handling an inclusive classroom. This may be in areas of the nature of the learners' special educational needs. The classroom may be composed of learners with dynamic problems that may require some form of re-training for the teachers if they are to adapt to new challenges that may arise in the inclusive classroom. This is a system or activity that is lacking in Zambia in terms of teachers managing inclusive classrooms.

Manisah, Ramlee and Zalizan (2006) conducted a study in Malaysia whose purpose was to

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examine teachers' attitudes and their perceived knowledge towards inclusive education. The research indicated that attitudes and knowledge about inclusive education are important as these are indicators of the teachers' willingness to accept students with special needs. The main finding showed that, in general, teachers have positive attitudes towards inclusive education. They agreed that inclusive education enhances social interaction and inclusion among the students and thus, it minimizes negative stereotypes on special needs students. The findings also showed that collaboration between the mainstream and the special education teachers is important and that there should be a clear guideline on the implementation of inclusive education. In conclusion, the research indicated that the findings of the study were significant and had implications to the school administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders who directly and indirectly involved in implementing inclusive education.

Nonetheless, researchers have also concluded that special education courses have little, if any, impact on changing perceptions and attitudes towards students with special educational needs (Brown et al., 2008). For example, Stella, Forlin and Lan (2008) studied 213 trainee teachers in Hong Kong who completed pre- and post-surveys on a compulsory special education module. This study was aimed at comparing their attitudes and concerns towards inclusive education. They found that although the results were significant, the differences in attitudes and concerns from completing the compulsory special education module were not substantial. It can be asserted that those trainee teachers who had taken an elective subject in special education as part of their course indicated less discomfort and more positive attitudes than those who had not done so. However, this study found that compulsory special education subjects had minimal impact upon influencing trainee teachers' attitudes and beliefs. Conversely, it can be deduced that training in special education is one form to enhance the formation of positive attitudes.

Similarly, research exists supporting the notion that teachers have preferences when accepting students with different types of disabilities. For example, it is asserted that teachers are mixed in their attitudes towards students with diverse needs and abilities with the least positive response towards students with behaviour, and particularly physically aggressive behaviour problems. Regardless of the inconsistencies, strides are made to bring about positive attitudes towards full inclusion. In Lesotho, for example, a study was conducted with the aim to change the attitudes of teachers, students, parents and special education staff. Urwick and Elliot, (2010) indicate that evaluators of the pilot programme recommended that it should be extended to all schools in Lesotho. Therefore, it can be highlighted that negative attitudes and perceptions had existed among all sections of society towards inclusion, and it is his reason that such projects as this need to be fostered to find out the underlying causes for this.

The Comparative Studies on Inclusive Education

One of many goals of special education is to give students with disabilities the opportunity to participate in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) so that they receive as much education as possible with non-disabled students (Urwick and Elliott, (2010). In Malawi and Lesotho, for instance, Special Education is seen as greatly based on Bandura's principles of Social Learning Theory (SLT). The thinking here is that learners with disability should be included in the general education setup unless their levels of disability are so severe that they could be a distracter to other learners (Sharma, 2010). These countries adopted this approach probably in line with the global view that when included in the general education setup, learners with disabilities have an opportunity to see their peers' working habits, and so they can model those habits and behaviours to reflect their own. After all, all learners come from society and so secluding learners with disability would make their discrimination worse when they finish school and want to work in the society they live. However, special education issues are not well developed and practiced in both Lesotho and Malawi. For instance, literature shows that special education in Malawi has been practiced from a narrow perspective; with visual, hearing

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and physical disability taking a largest visibility (Woodcock, 2013). This paper, therefore, uses secondary data to comparatively map out the general picture of special education as regards the attitudes and perceptions of teachers underpinning it.

The relationship between teacher attitude, and behaviour and instructional practice has become more evident in recent research. Chhabra, Srivastava and Srivastava, (2010) claimed that the connection between teacher beliefs and their behaviours in the classroom are linked to personally-based beliefs, values and principles and they have demonstrated that pedagogy is affected by teacher attitudes. Research has also shown correlations between negative attitudes and poor or ineffective instructional strategies investigated the types of instructional strategies that general education teachers used in inclusive classrooms. Eighty nine general education teachers (teaching Years 9-12) completed a self-evaluation of instructional strategies they used in their inclusive classrooms and their attitudes towards inclusion of students with diverse needs and abilities. The findings of this study were that teachers who were more positive in their attitude towards inclusion of such students utilised effective instructional strategies more consistently than those teachers who had a more negative attitude. Moreover, the more exposure and experience teachers had with students with disabilities, the more positive their attitude towards them. Thus, the analysis here is to foster inclusion so that teachers can develop positive attitudes and perceptions towards inclusion.

Malinen and Savolainen (2008), in a sample of 523 Chinese university students, administered a questionnaire to examine their attitudes towards the inclusion of children with disabilities into regular classrooms. Factor analysis, analysis of variance, t-test and correlations were used to assess the respondents' general attitude towards inclusion, the factor structure of the attitudes, the relationship between demographic variables and the attitudes and the ratings of best educational environments for students with different kinds of disabilities. The analysis revealed that the participants' average attitude towards inclusion was slightly negative; four factors, named as social justice, meeting the

special needs of the pupils with severe disabilities, quality of education and teachers' competence, were extracted. Not only this, the study also noted the most important background variable that explained the attitudes was the participants' major subject in the university; and the ratings for the best educational environment for a student with a disability varied according to different types and levels of disability. In this view, it can be asserted that attitudes and perceptions towards inclusion are not wholly positive and the sector is not widely accepted. Therefore, it is imperative to conduct this study at a localised level to ascertain the causes for this.

Elliot (2008) examined the relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of children with mild to moderate mental disabilities in physical education settings and the amount of practice attempts performed and the levels of success attained by these students compared to their peers without disabilities. The findings suggested a relationship between teacher attitude toward inclusion and teacher effectiveness. Teachers with a positive attitude toward inclusion provided all of their students with significantly more practice attempts, at a higher level of success. The deduction therefore is that teachers do not easily accept learners with disabilities and the sector itself suffers rejection from some educators who see it not to be viable. Thus, ways of highlighting how this scenario can be cornered are imperative.

In America in 2001, the "No Child Left Behind Act" was formulated to guide educators in reconstructing the academic content for students with special education needs in line with local and state-wide grade level standards for students with no special education needs (Cushing, Clark, Carter, & Kennedy, 2005). In 2004, the Individual with Disabilities Act (IDEA), was formed to make provisions for students with physical disabilities, cognitive difficulties and behavioural disorders to be taught in mainstream classrooms (Hays, 2009). In the UK, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) stated that students need to be educated in a mainstream school unless parental wishes differ or if fellow

students" education gets compromised (Frederickson et al., 2004).

International studies have focussed on the inclusion of particular students within the mainstream schooling system. These studies particularly focussed on intellectual disabilities as being more "serious" barriers to learning within the classroom (Gaad, 2004). In the United Arab Emirates this particular barrier to learning namely intellectual disabilities, were dealt with by placing those particular students into separate classes (ibid, 2004). Intellectually disabled students were viewed as having different ability levels and therefore required different teaching methods and curriculum compared to other students. An international study conducted by Avramidis & Kalyva (2007), focused on the students' "disability" as being the predominant barrier to learning. A study on Greek educators found that educators tended to have more negative attitudes towards students who were blind, deaf, had mild mental retardation or who had serious behavioural problems (Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007). In Cyprus, the two major factors that were seen to hinder inclusive education practices were the lack of infrastructure and a lack of knowledge, skill and confidence amongst their educators (Hays, 2009; Koutrouba et al., 2006). This resulted in Cyprus changing their legislation in order to adapt the attitudes of various role-players in the education system into accepting difference (Hays, 2009).

These countries mentioned above, all follow the Salamanca Statement however; even these countries that are committed to inclusive education face considerable difficulties, dilemmas and contradictions that often result in poor implementation (Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007). Through assessing international literature in the field of inclusive education, it is interesting to note that developed countries where resources are not scarce, like the USA, Australia, UK, Cyprus and Spain to name a few, educators' perceptions of the ability to cope was not based on resources. Educators in these studies reported knowledge, skills and experience as being fundamental aspects to the implementation of inclusive education (Hays, 2009). International legislation on inclusion

aims at creating multilevel shifts in attitudes of all participants involved in the successful implementation of inclusive education (Koutrouba et al., 2006).

III. METHOD

A. Delimitation of the Study

The study was limited to three schools in the rural district of Mpongwe on the Copperbelt Province of Zambia in Ibenga area. The targeted participants were the teachers who were directly responsible for their perceptions towards inclusive education. Pupils were targeted too as receivers of inclusive education and whose impact of perceptions manifest itself on them. 50 teachers and 50 pupils took part in the study. The participants were purposively selected in order to get a holistic view on the approach to attitudes and perceptions towards inclusion in the schools in the district.

B. Procedure

Both primary and secondary data were extensively used. Data was collected and analysed in order to understand the perceptions of teachers in rural areas towards inclusive education. Information was collected from questionnaires for teachers and pupils were engaged in the focus group discussion. The questionnaire was given to the randomly selected participants as well as the focus group discussion was conducted for the selected participants too. The questionnaires were not completed within time to allow the researcher to conduct data analysis and interpretation according to the plan of the study. Therefore, data from the questionnaires and the focus group discussion were checked for completeness, then coded, categorized and analysed based on content. The statistical analysis was carried out in the study by using MS-excel, Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and Statistical tools such as Mean, Median, Mode, standards deviation, and percentage method were used for the analysis. The analyzed and interpreted data was presented in the form of tables, charts and figures. However, all this was done despite the limited time. The schools' administration were asked for permission to

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conduct the study in their respective schools, and the target participants were told about the purpose and aim of the study. A thorough ethical consideration process was duly followed.

IV. RESULTS

This section presents the results of the study aimed at establishing perceptions of teachers in the rural area of Ibenga towards inclusive education. The results were presented under the subheadings guided by the objectives of the study and the questionnaire and the focus group discussion.

A. *Distribution of Participants by Gender and School Type*

A total of 100 participants were engaged in this study; 50 teachers and 50 pupils. According to the table below, 26 female teachers participated in the study giving 52% representation while 24 male teachers giving 48% representation participated. All participants were drawn from the selected schools. The table below highlights the data.

TABLE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF PARTCIPANTS BY GENDER

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	26	52.0	52.0	52.0
Male	24	48.0	48.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Equally, pupils were drawn from the selected schools whose participation was 10 (20%) boys and 40 (80%) girls as shown below in the bar chart in **figure 1**.

FIGURE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF OARTICIPANTS BY GENDER.

The data on school type is given in form of a pie charts for both categories of participants, that is, teachers and pupils. Data from the teachers show that 25 participants were from the government school giving 50% representation of the total participants, 18 were from the mission school and 7 from the private school giving 36% and 14% representation respectively. However, there was no participant from the special school or special education unit.

Equally, 23 pupils were from the government school, 19 from the mission school and 8 from the private school giving 46%, 38% and 16% representation of the total participants. There was no participant from the special school or special education unit.
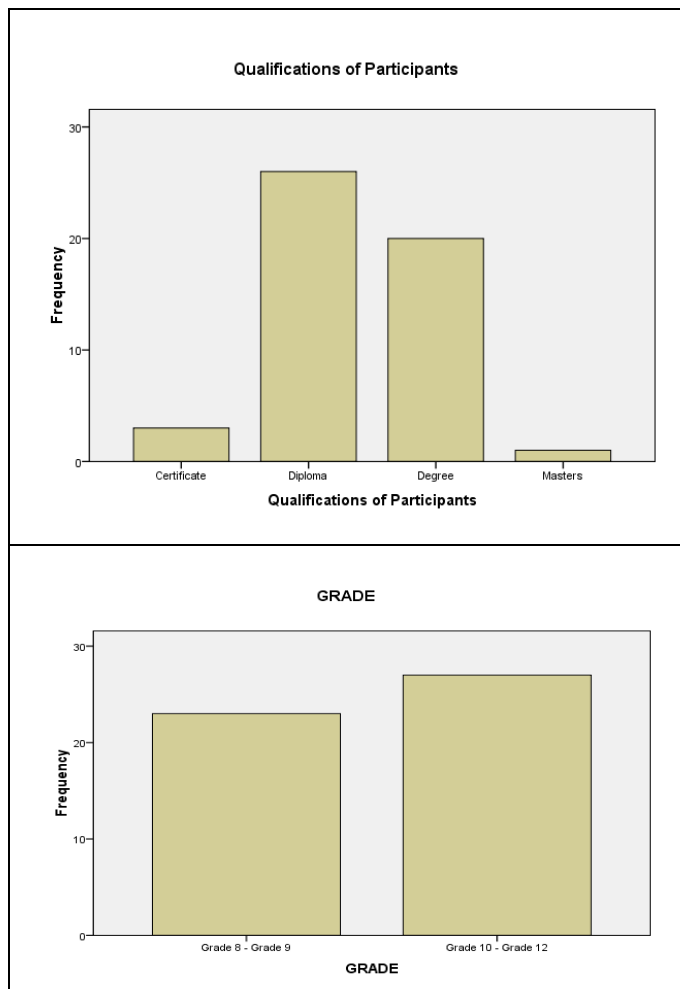
FIGURE 2. SCHOOL TYPE OF PARTICIPANTS

Teachers	Pupils
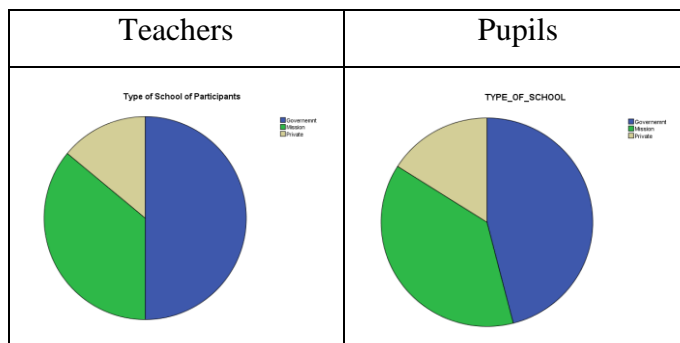
B. *Qualifications and Grades of Participants*

The Bar Chart below in **figure 3** shows the qualifications and Grades of the participants as obtained from the questionnaires and the focus group discussion. 3 participants had a certificate, 26 with diploma, 20 with degree and 1 had a masters giving 6%, 42%, 40% and 2% of the total participants respectively. The grade levels of pupils were separated between junior and senior secondary school and these represented by 23 of those who were between Grade 8 – 9 and 27 of those who were between Grade 10 – 12 giving a percentage representation of 46% and 54% in that order.

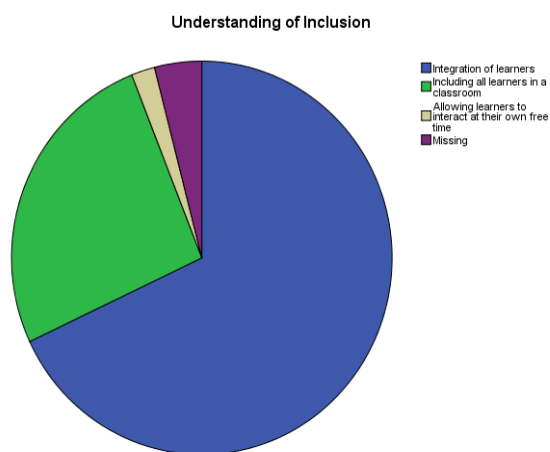FIGURE 3. QUALIFICATIONS AND GRADES OF PARTICIPANTS

Figure 4 above show that the majority 34 (70.8%) defined inclusion as the integration of learners while 13 (27.1%) defined it as including all learners in a classroom and 1 (2.1%) perceived it allowing learners to interact at their own time. The remaining 2 (4%) participants did not respond to this issue.

D. Interaction of Learners

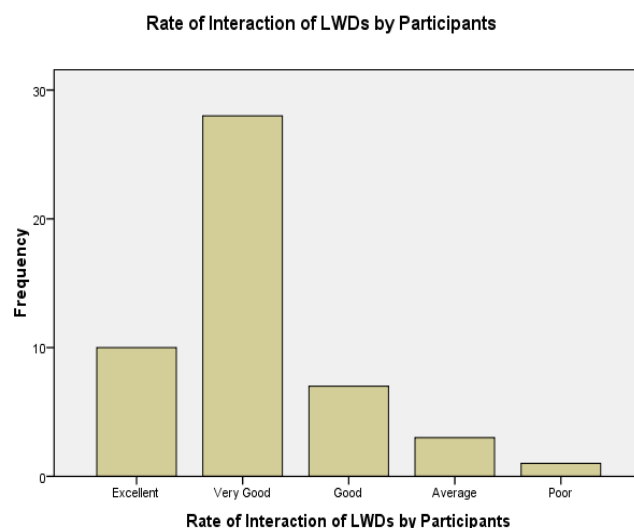FIGURE 5   RATE OF INTERATION OF LEARNERS WITH DAISBILITIES

Figure 5 above show that the participants rated the interaction of learners with disabilities with 10 (20.4%) saying it was excellent, 20 (57.1%) said it was very good, 7 (14.3%) said it was good and 3 (6.1%) said it was average. 1 (2.0%) participant said it was poor. However, 1 participant did not respond to this question.

In the similar manner, pupils were also asked to rate their interaction with leaners with disabilities. Their responses are shown in the table below.

C. Understanding of Inclusion

FIGURE 4. UNDERSTANDING OF INCLUSION

TABLE 2.   RESPONSES OF PUPILS ON INTERACTION

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Excellent	5	10.0	10.0	10.0
Very Good	19	38.0	38.0	48.0
Good	15	30.0	30.0	78.0
Poor	9	18.0	18.0	96.0
Very Poor	2	4.0	4.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

The table above shows that 5 (10%) said that their interaction was excellent, 19 (38%) who were the majority said their interaction was very good, 15 (30%) indicated that it was good and 9 (18%) stated that it was poor. 2 (4%) participants said that it was very poor. Prior to this question, participants were also asked to indicate whether there were learners with disabilities in their school to which 43 (86%) said yes and 7 (14%) said no. the table below gives the findings.

TABLE 3. LEARNERS WITH DISABITIES

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	43	86.0	86.0	86.0
No	7	14.0	14.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

E. Forms of Learning Disabilities

Both categories of participants, that is, teachers and pupils were asked a question on the forms of learning disabilities that were prevalent in their school. The figure below illustrates the responses.

FIGURE 6.   FORMS OF LEARNING DISABILITIES
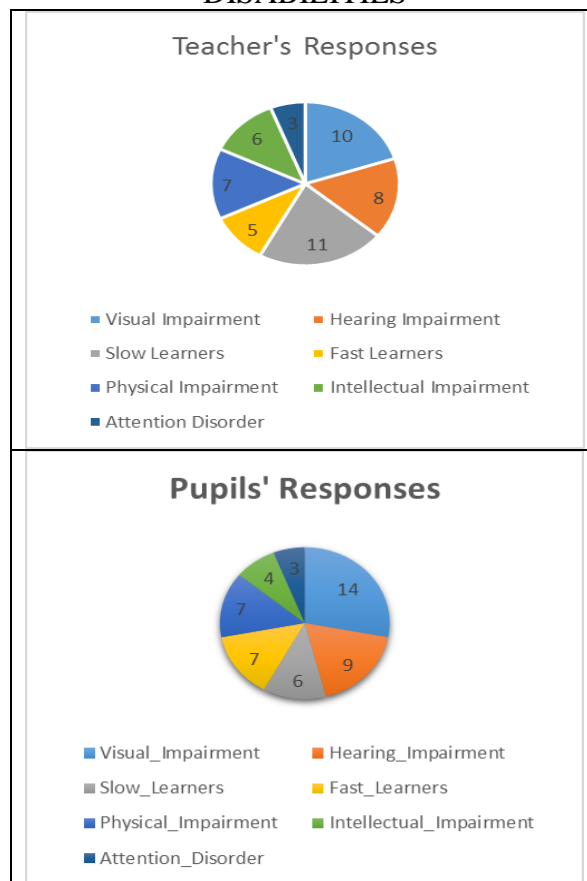
The figure above shows that the majority of learning disabilities were slow learners and visual impairment for teachers 10 (20%) and pupils 14 (28%) respectively. This was followed by visual impairment 10 (18%) and hearing impairment 9 (16%), physical impairment 7 (14%) and fast learners and physical impairment both at 7 (14%) respectively, intellectual impairment 6 (12%) and slow learners 6 (12%), fast learners 5 (10%) and intellectual impairment 4 (8%). In both respects, the least was obtained from attention disorders at 3 giving 6%.

However, pupils were asked in the focus group discussion to mention the methods that the teachers use to help the identified learners with LWDs. Among the responses given the striking one was when some pupils said and I quote, "Pupils with visual impairment are preferred to take the front seats for short sighted pupils or the back seat for those who are long sighted…teachers try by all means to be audible as they can so that even those with hearing

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problems are catered for…some teachers offer remedial lessons for those who are slow learners…loitering is not allowed in and around both the classroom and the school."

F. Pupil Awareness of Inclusion

TABLE 4   PUPIL AWARENESS OF INCLUSION

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	40	80.0	81.6	81.6
	No	2	4.0	4.1	85.7
	Do not know	7	14.0	14.3	100.0
	Total	49	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.0		
Total		50	100.0		

The table above shows that that 49 participants attempted this question with 1 missing value. 40 participants giving 80% said YES that pupils were made aware of inclusion, 2 said NO and said they DID NOT KNOW.

A follow up question was to discover how this awareness was made possible to the pupils. 41 participants answered this question and 9 declined to do so. 6 participants stated that they gave awareness of inclusion to pupils orally giving 12%, 3 said in written form giving 6% and 32 said in both ways giving 64%. However, 9 declined to respond giving 18%. The responses are indicated in the **Table** below.

TABLE 5.   FORM OF GIVING AWARENESS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Oral	6	12.0	14.6	14.6
	Written	3	6.0	7.3	22.0
	In both ways	32	64.0	78.0	100.0
	Total	41	82.0	100.0	
Missing	System	9	18.0		
Total		50	100.0		

G. Prevailing Status of Inclusion

FIGURE 7   PRRAVAILING STATUS OF INCLUSION

Prevailing Status of nclusion
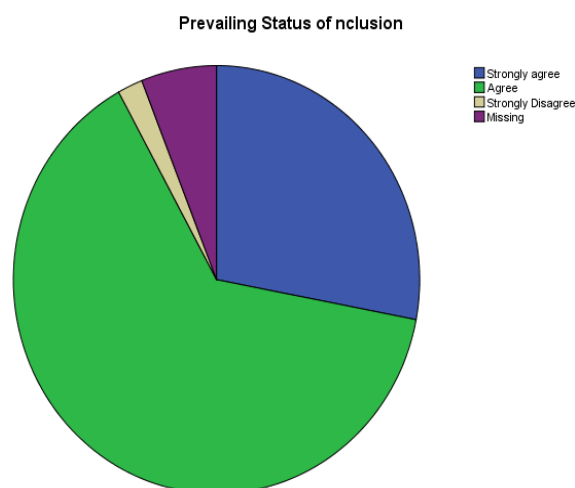
The participants were asked to state whether they agreed with the prevailing status of inclusion in their schools. **Figure** above highlights that 14 (20%) strongly agreed with the status, 32 (64%) agreed, 1 (2%) strongly disagreed and 3 (6%) did not respond.

H. Right of All Children to Education

Participants were asked whether they were aware of the right of all children to education including those with learning disabilities. Their reposes are indicated below.

FIGURE 8. RIGHT OF ALL CHILDREN TO EDUCATION

Awareness of the Right to Education for All Children
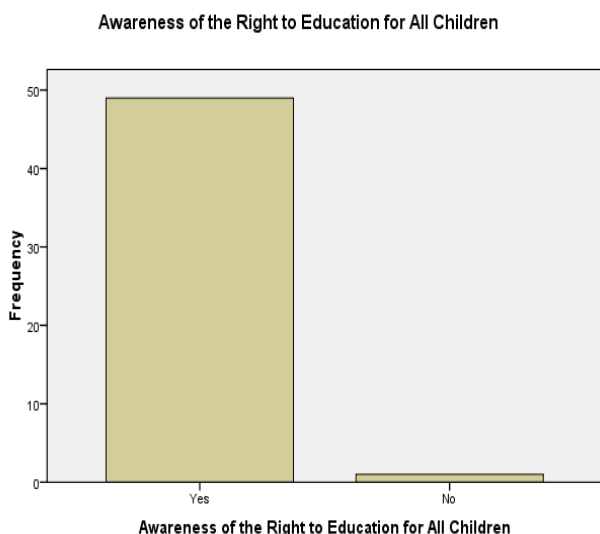
The **Figure** above shows that 49 (98%) indicated that they were aware of the right of all children to education and 1 participant (2%) said he or she was not aware of the right of all children to education.

Participants were further asked to show the ways in which they learned about this right to education. 33 (66%) participants indicated that they learned of this right in college or university, 8 (16%) participants showed that they learned this through seminars or workshops while 6 (12%) participants learned this through staff briefings and meetings. 2 (4%) participants indicated that they learned of this right through personal study and 1 (2%) participant said that he or she learned of this right through a colleague.

The same question was also asked to pupils in the focus group discussion and their responses are indicated in the table below.

TABLE 6. AWARENESS OF THE RIGHT OF ALL LEARNERS TO ATTEND SCHOOL TOGETHE

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	40	80.0	80.0	80.0
	No	10	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

The **table** above shows that 40 participants (80%) said they were aware and 10 participants (20%) said they were not.

I. Documents on Children's Right to Education

Participants were asked to identify documents on children's right to education that they were aware of. 6 (12%) said that they were aware of the Universal Declaration for Human Rights, 1 (2%) was aware of the Salamanca Statement on Special Education and 7 (14%) were aware of the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child and 23 (46%) were aware of Educating Our Future. 3 (6%) participants said that they were aware of Education for All, 2 (4%) participants indicated that they were aware of the United Nations Standard Roles on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, 5 (10%) said that they were aware of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. However, 5 (10%) participants declined to answer to answer this question.

J. Interaction of Learners including Learners with Disabilities

FIGURE 9. INTERACTION OF LEARNERS
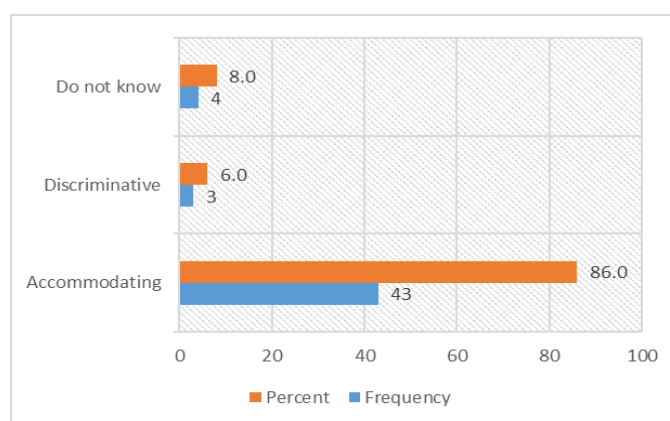
The figure above shows that that 43 (86%) participants indicated that the interaction of learners including those with LWDs was accommodating while 3 (6%) participants said that the interaction was discriminative. However, 4 (8%) participants indicated that they did not know there was any interaction.

K. Programmes of Special Education in Schools

The participants were asked to state whether there were any programmes or awareness campaigns of special education in their respective schools. Their responses are recorded below.

### FIGURE 10. PROGRAMMES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS
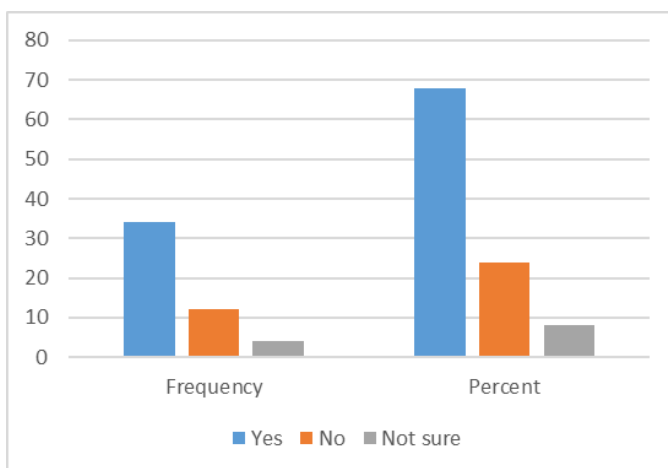
According to the data presented in the **Figure** above, 34 (68%) participants indicated that there were special education programmes in their schools, 12 (24%) participants said there were no special education programmes in their schools and 4 (8%) participants said that they were not sure if there special education programmes in their schools.

L. Component of Special Education in the Curriculum

Participants were asked to state whether there was a component of special education and/or inclusion in the curriculum. The responses of the participants are given in the figure below.

FIFURE 11. COMPONENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION IN THE CURRICUKUM

Component of Special Education in the Curriculum
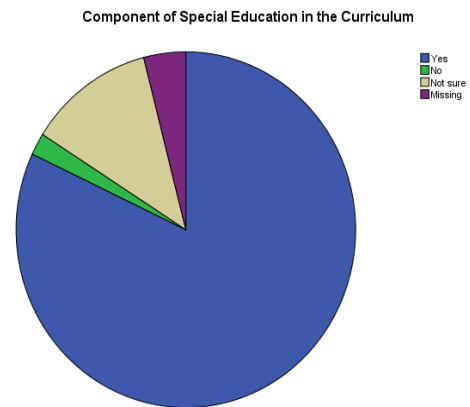
According to the **figure** above the majority of the participants indicated that there was a component of special education in the curriculum. The figures for this are 41 participants giving 82% while those who said there was no component are represented by 7 participant giving 2%. 6 (12%) participants were not sure and 2 (4%) participants did not respond to this question.

M. Academic Performance of Pupils

Participants responded to the question on academic performance of all learners including those with LWDs by giving varied reactions. Their responses are recorded below.

FIGURE 12 ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS
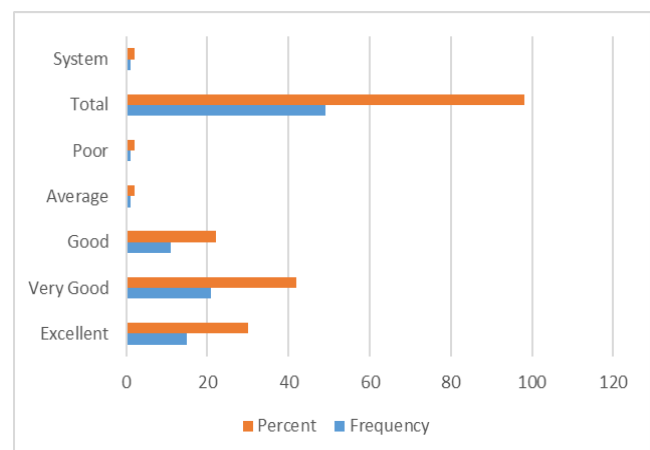
The **figure** above shows that 15 (30%) participants indicated that the academic performance of learners without disabilities was excellent in comparison to LWDs, 21 (42%)

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participants, who were the majority, indicated that the academic performance was very good. 11 (22%) participants said that this was good, 1 (2%) participant said this was average and another 1 (2%) participant said the academic performance was poor. However, 1 (2%) participant declined to answer this question.

N. *Respect of Right of Learners with Disabilities*

Participants were asked whether the rights of LWDs would respected if the pupils were left without control. The views of the participants are indicated in the figure below.

FIGURE 13. RESPECT OF RIGHTD OF LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES

Respect of Rightts of LWDs
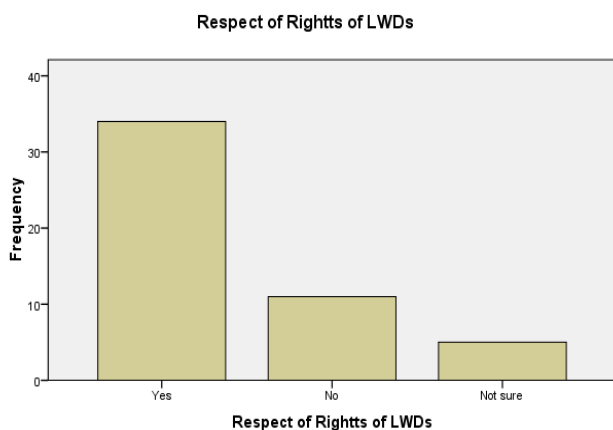
The **figure** above shows that 34 (68%) participants indicated that the rights of LWDs were respected and 11 (22%) participants said that these rights were not be respected while 5 (10%) participants were not sure if these rights were respected or not.

O. *Government Policy on the Administration of Inclusion in Schools*

The participants asked were to state whether there was a clear policy from government on the administration of inclusion in schools. The responses are indicated below.

FIGURE 14. GOVERNEMENT POLICY ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF INCLUSION IN SCHOOLS

Government Policy on Administration of Inclusion
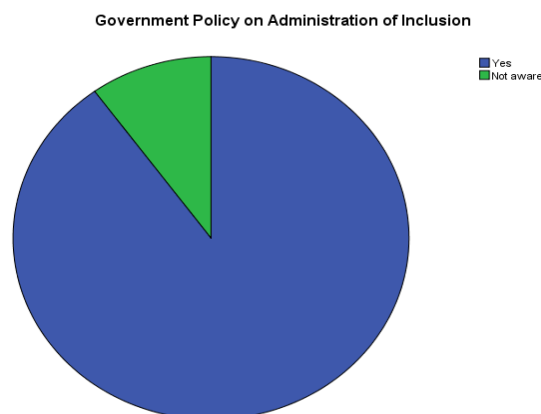
According to the **figure** above the majority of the participants 45 (90%) indicated that they were not sure and 5 (10%) participants said there was a clear policy from government.

P. *Insistence on Inclusion in Schools*

FIGURE 15. INSISTENCE ON INCLSION IN SCHOOLS
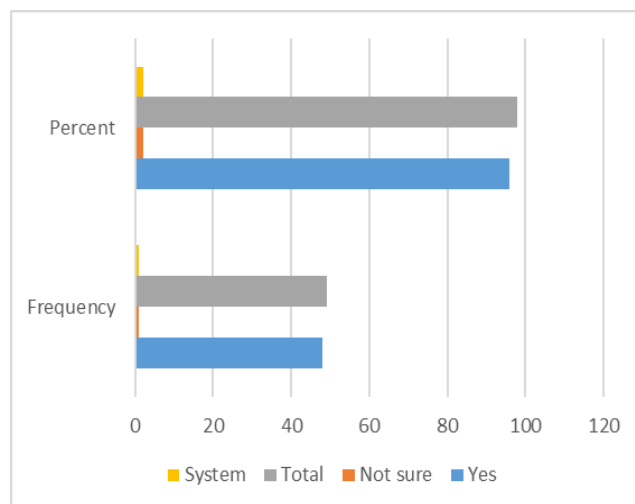
The f**igure** above shows that 48 (96%) participants said that insistence on inclusion would be helpful and 1 (2%) participant said she or she was not sure this insistence would be helpful. However, 1 (2%) participant declined to answer this question.

A follow up question was to find out the reason for having chosen the respective answer to the

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question on insistence on inclusion in schools. The responses were that 15 (30%) participants said that insistence on inclusion makes learners responsible while 21 (42%) said that it helps protect students with disabilities from harm. 11 (22%) participants indicated that pupils become aware of their limits of interaction. None chose the option on how pupils would begin to challenge the ills of society nor did any specify any other option as directed by the question. However, 3 (6%) declined to respond to this question.

Q. Maintenance of High Levels of Inclusion in Schools

FIGURE 16. MAINTENANCE OF HIGH LEVELS OF INCLUSION IN SCHOOLS
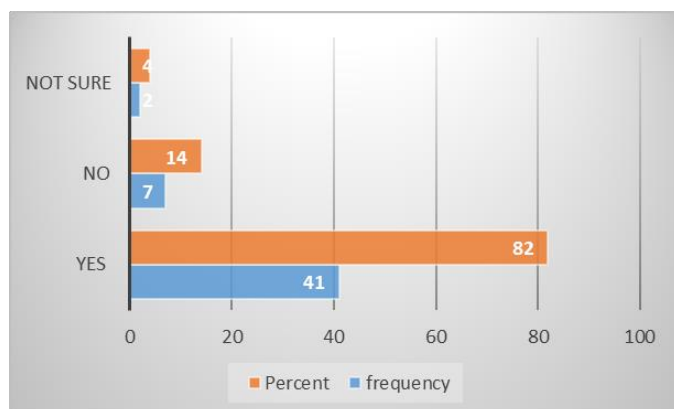
The **figure** above shows that 41 (82%) participants indicated it is possible to maintain high levels of inclusion without close supervision while 7 (14%) participants said it was not possible to maintain high levels of inclusion without supervision. 2 (4%) said they were not sure whether high levels of inclusion would be maintained or not.

R. Reaction to Inclusive Actions

Participants were asked to give the response(s) that they face from parents, the school administration, teachers and pupils as they try to apply inclusion in schools. The defining responses are recorded below.

Parents
Some participants indicated that parents whose children have special needs fear that their children will be stigmatized by those whose children are not SEN while some explicitly advocate for it others are not willing to accept that there children have disabilities. Inasmuch as some support it but a few seem not to be in favour and try to isolate their children from the non-disabled pupils. Nonetheless, some indicated that inclusion makes children responsible and it should be encouraged as others welcome the inclusion methods in the sense that everyone is considered as one.

The School Administration
Participants indicated that the school administration embrace all pupils into school and empowered them to achieve their dreams. Others stated that some administrations give material support but the means and ways are limited thus fail to incorporate children with special needs because of inadequate materials. However, others give chance to every pupil despite their status and respond by emphasizing on remedial work and repeating those who are very slow on learning.

Fellow Teachers
Participants stated that it is the duty of every teacher to implement inclusion; their response is very good. Some mentioned that some teachers treat special education teachers the same way they treat the children with special needs; there is stigmatization. However, some participant stated that mostly teachers were more concerned on completion of syllabi than on the inclusion challenge and do not pay much attention to these pupils hence some feel neglected. Nonetheless, some participants said that it is a good gesture as it allows all pupils to have equal opportunities and support each other and discuss a lot of ideas and the way it can be applied in a classroom.

Pupils
Participants mentioned that they like the concept and are ready to mix with others as they noted that it has no negative impact on the learning process. Even though, some participants said that there is stigmatization from fellow pupils and try to distant themselves from the disabled as such they feel marginalized. However, some participants showed that some pupils are not

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compatible but some learn to lend a hand to others less compatible and those learn to accept to be helped.

V. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Discussion of Results

The discussion of the research results is highlighted in five thematic areas as shown below.

Understanding of Inclusion

The research findings here indicated that most of the participants had undertaken studies in special education at 66%. Therefore, the implication with this is that these teachers were ready to handle LWDs in their classrooms. However, it remains to understand the extent to which they go in handling these learners. The results equally indicated that 34% of the participants had not undertook any studies in special education. This therefore remains a glaring challenge as the number of teachers without any training in this area is rather on the higher side. This entails that in some schools there was one or no teacher with special education training. Thus, the implementation of inclusive education would not be fulfilled accordingly. Mudenda, (2016) notes that institutions should also ensure that candidates for special learning programmes benefit in terms of varied teaching approaches and the use of technology besides a conducive learning environment. Therefore, there has to be increased efforts in sensitization as well empowering teachers with skills in special education.

The cause of the revelation above would be attributed to the awareness of inclusion. Here, the findings indicated that 92% of the participants showed that they were aware of inclusion. However, this revelation and the understanding of the term would not culminate into equitable implementation of inclusion effectively. Despite participants being aware of inclusion, its full implementation in a classroom situation is another. The requirement according to Ashby (2012) is to create a supportive, respectful environment, promote diversity and equity. The classroom climate is affected by instances of inequality directed towards the perceived inferior persons and this leads to significant negative impacts on learning. While the majority indicated that they were aware of inclusion, 6% of the participants showed the opposite with 2% among them declining to respond. Therefore, the analysis of this scenario entails, as alluded to above, not the class implementation of inclusion. Inclusion can be created by thinking about a couple of things that may include things such as dealing with pupil-to-pupil interaction in avoiding negative interaction as it were.

This argument above is highlighted by the question that was asked to the participants to define what they understood inclusion to be. 70% of the participants define it as the integration of learners, 27% said it was including all learners in a classroom as 2% of them said it was allowing learners to interact at their own time with 4% of the participants declining to define it. McManis (2017) agrees with the first two definitions of the participants when she defines the term as when all students, regardless of any challenge they may have, are placed in age appropriate general education classes that are in their own neighbourhood to receive high quality instruction, intervention, and supports that enable them to meet success in the core curriculum.

As a matter of consequence, participants also indicated their own rate of interaction of learners. The importance of interaction in a classroom is that it helps the teaching and learning process to run smoothly and it increases learners' communication. As a result, the rate of interaction that LWDs offered in a classroom as given by participants was in mind with what these LWDs showed and felt amidst their fellow pupils without disabilities. The teacher participants definitely could have had the idea that interaction poses in class entailing that all learners actively participate in the learning process.

Equally, it was discovered that slow learners and visual impairment ranked the highest among the forms of disabilities that participants observed. Slow learning would come about in a manner

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that learners completed assignments both in class and outside of class. On the other hand, visual impairment was ascribed to learners that were using contact lens and those who might have reported sight problems to the teachers and were made to sit in front to aid their vision on the chalkboard. By giving these forms of disabilities, participants agreed that there were learners with disabilities in their schools and classrooms. However, the least indicated form of disabilities was attention disorder. None of the participants indicated blindness, that is, total blindness as form of disability. The Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education (2012) identifies the category of learners with Special Educational Needs, include the hearing, visually, physically, intellectually impaired as well as the gifted/talented ones. Teachers and teacher-educators should be equipped with knowledge and skills to enable them identify, screen and assess them. They should also provide appropriate interventions to learners with Special Educational Needs in learning institutions. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a brain disorder marked by an ongoing pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development. Thus, this results in a learner not being able to control ones impulses thereby not paying attention most of the times in class. The meaning is that an awareness of the different forms of disabilities by a teacher would help one to handle learners on the same level and to ascertain the extent at which to go. In this regard, the pupils indicated in the focus group discussion that methods such as making short-sighted learners sit in front and giving of remedial work to slow learners were frequently used by teachers. The implication of this is that such teachers would want to help all learners regardless of their disability to receive the needed and quality instruction in class.

It was also discovered that 64% of the participants agreed with the prevailing status of inclusion in their schools as 20% strongly agreed when 2% strongly disagreed and 6% declined to respond. This indication could mean be analyzed that the participants enjoyed the status quo of inclusion especially to those that strongly agreed and those that agreed. However, the situation could be opposite for the rest of the participants.

Children's Right to Education Awareness for Teachers

The participants were asked to state how LWDs were treated in their respective schools and this question provided three options to which 8% said this was selective and 92% indicated that it was accommodating. Thus, the research discovered that the treatment of LWDs was conducted in the similar manner as the rest of the learners. However, what could be imperative is to understand what participants understood 'accommodating' meant in line with the treatment of learners and recommendations from statutory bodies. The discovery was such that learners from the private school had their teachers with much more concern followed by those from the mission school and then those from the government school. This picture is given as most of the teachers had not undertaken studies in special education as the revelation was made earlier. Also, it could also be the teachers from the private show much concern as they are strictly supervised to ensure that they delivered and gave equal opportunities to all learners. Chireshe (2011) agrees that treatment of learners including those with disabilities encourages initiative and model good behavior.

On awareness of the right to education for all children, the majority of the participants 98% said that they were aware and 2% of the participants indicated that they were not aware. It can therefore be said that the participants perceived the right of children to education as vital. The argument can be put forward to say that this right enhances better performance and freedom to actively in the activities of the school and consequently leading to quality education for all children. This view is echoed by UNESCO (1994) when they proclaim that education is a fundamental human right. The practice of good education towards all children was revealed when participants said that the majority 66% learnt of this right in college or university. 16% participants indicated that they learnt of this in seminars or workshops while 12% participants said they learned this through

staff meetings or briefings, 4% of them through personal study and 2% through a colleague. Therefore, emphasizing the inclusion of the rights of children to education in teacher training curricula would cater for all teachers to acquire knowledge on this subject and ultimately implement it during the execution of their duty.

In the similar manner, participants also indicated the documents that they were aware of that documented issues to do with children's right to education especially LWDs. The majority 46% picked on Educating Our Future as the document that they were aware of followed by 14% participants who said that they were aware of the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child. 12% said that they were aware of the Universal Declaration for Human Rights, 10% said that they were aware of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities while 4% participants indicated that they were aware of the United Nations Standard Roles on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and 2% were aware of the Salamanca Statement on Special Education. This discovery entails that Educating Our Future topped the list as it was one of the primary documents that was used in teacher education training and it enshrines that the Ministry will integrate pupils with special educational needs into mainstream institutions and will provide them with necessary facilities training an adequate number of teachers in special education and designing appropriate curricula and teaching materials, (MOE, 1996).

Right to Education for Pupils

Participants responded to the question on the interaction between or among LWDs against those without disabilities. 86% of the participants indicated that the interaction was accommodating, 6% said that it was discriminative as 8% of them did not respond. The discovery under this aspect entails that portray this interaction within the classroom as they work in groups or in pairs, and this increases their communication. Cushner, McClelland and Safford, (2012) contends that students learn more when they are able to talk to one another and be actively involved. This

social interaction of LWDs with their non-disabled fellows is vital in the learning process.

68% of the participants said there were programmes of special education in their schools, 24% said there were no programmes of special education in their school as 8% said they were not sure. However, participants were equally asked to indicate how these programmes were conducted. The majority 42% said this was done through lessons as 26% said this was done through clubs. 12% said this was done through personal interactions. This discovery shows that special education programmes happened and some participants were not aware of them. However, it was observed that conducting such programmes in lessons was most likely to be used as it catered for all learners at the same time as opposed to other methods that only captured selected learners.

To further understand this subject, participants were asked to ascertain if there was a component on special education in the curriculum to which 82% of the participants responded in the affirmative. From the data analysis, the participants perceived the curriculum inclusion of a component on special education to be a positive thing. It can be deduced that the training that they go through also played a role. The Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education (2012) notes that Teacher Education institutions should also include special education in their programmes in order to equip teachers with necessary knowledge, skills, positive attitudes and values in this area.

Integrating Inclusion with the Right to Education

The academic performance of learners without disabilities in comparison to the LWDs was one other area that the research sought to address. 42% of the participants indicated that the academic performance of learners without disabilities was very good. The analysis of the data given implies that the performance of LWDs could be due to many reasons but mainly from the attitudes and/or perceptions that teachers showed to these learners. As a result, LWDs feel inferior to actively participate in the learning process. Arnesen, Allen and Simonsen

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(2009) highlights that medical problems, below average intelligence, poor socio-cultural home environment and sometimes the attitudes of educators affects these learners.

In this view, 68% of the participants indicated that the rights of LWDs were respected and 22% participants said that these rights were not be respected while 10% participants were not sure if these rights were respected or not. From this data, it is clear that the rights of LWDs are respected. The respect of the rights of LWDs is done through building positive relationships, regular monitor student progress, attendance participation and welfare, (Fakolade, Adeniyi and Tella, 2009). In this way, learners feel safe and motivated.

As to whether there was a clear policy from government on the administration of inclusion, affirmatively 90% of the participants said there was and 10% said they were not sure. From this data, it was discovered that there was a clear policy from government on the administration of inclusive education as enshrined in the national policy on education 'Educating Our Future' in line with the various recommendations on special education and inclusive education in particular.

It was discovered that the insistence on inclusion in schools would be helpful. 96% of the participants responded in the affirmative as 2% were not sure and the other 2% declined to respond. This discovery is in line with the findings of IDEA (2004) who state that insistence on inclusion allows access to the general education classroom, and curriculum, peers without disabilities and equal opportunities. Therefore, this discovery enhances the conducive learning environment as envisaged by the participants. Further discovery to the follow up question was that inclusion protects learners with disabilities from harm and makes learners responsible towards one another. This was responded for at 30% and 42% of the participants respectively. This implies that insistence on inclusion makes learners appreciate one another and understanding the peculiarities of their fellow pupils.

Participants were requested to state whether inclusion can be maintained without close supervision. 82% of the participants said it was

possible and 14 of the participants said it was not possible. 4% of the participants declined to respond. From this data, it is evident that the participants recognized the need for freedom of implementers to do their job without much strictness. They observed that guidelines were supposed to be availed to those they were going to rely on administering inclusion. Sanna, Kaarina and Satu (2016) highlight that supervision can enable teacher's professional, communal, and personal development in an inclusive learning environment, but more time, resources, opportunities for supervision should be arranged for teachers. In this way, supervision provides individual and communal support within the classroom setting.

Reactions to Inclusion Actions

The retorts indicated by the participants on the responses given by parents showed that parents have varied inclinations towards inclusive education and LWDs in particular. The data presented reveals that some parents do not want their children with disabilities to be seen in the public and those whose children are without disabilities do not want them to mix with LWDs. Ndhlovu, (2008) indicates that the most important thing that parent can do is to endure that they are involved with and take an active role as a member of the Individual Education Program (IEP) team that determines a student's path. However, the discovery made from the participants indicate that parent impede the full implementation of inclusive education and ultimately have no idea and take roles in the IEP.

It was discovered that the school administrators in the target schools were ready to embrace all learners in their school. However, a revelation was made of how material support is inept in these schools. They are responsible for overseeing the programmes and services for students as noted by Ainscow, (2008). Therefore, the massive load to ensure that all learners are catered for rely on the school administrators.

Participants noted that their fellow teachers had the duty to ensure full implementation of inclusion in their classrooms. However, a discovery was made of stigmatization against

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special teachers and heavily on LWDs. Therefore, a bridge need to narrow the gap of this scenario is what this research identified as one solution. It inevitable that both special education teachers and the general education teachers undertake the same training despite different specialization.

It was observed that pupils had varied responses on the aspect of the subject. Some indicated they did not like the idea of inclusion but the majority showed that they were in tune with inclusive education. The discovery was such that some pupils loved the way the LWDs welcomed the help that was rendered to them.

B. Conclusion

The study has shown that the 100 participants perceived the following as the attitudes and perceptions of teachers in rural areas towards inclusive education. Firstly, it showed the attitudes and perceptions of participants on understanding of inclusion, the study showed that the participants had a poor to average understanding of inclusion. Further, it revealed that some teachers did not have technicality to handle inclusive classrooms. This was observation was a result of the number of the participants who had not undertaken studies in special education and worse still those who are had not come across inclusion. Furthermore, the manner in which the participants defined inclusion was worrisome to the researcher. However, the prevailing atmosphere of inclusion by the participants was encouraging even though it calls for verifiable facts to ascertain the extent to which the responses are applied in the respective schools.

Secondly, under children's right to education awareness for teachers, it was discovered that the treatment of learners especially LWDs had variations from school to school. Thus, this gives a distorted picture of how inclusion is taken by many professionals. However, what was more revealing was when participants indicated that they were aware of children's rights to education but as the discovered they could not implement what they had known effectively. Further, the discovery was made that the participants had not tangible knowledge of the various documents that discussed the issue

special education and inclusion in particular except the national policy on education 'Educating Our Future' which almost all participants said to have known.

On children's rights to education for pupils, a discovery was that interaction among learners including those LWDs was overwhelming. This discovery indicates that learners learnt to appreciate each other. It further revealed that pupils were engaged in programmes of special education and these took various forms from school to school. Equally, the research ascertained that there was a component in the curriculum which guided the principles and implementation of inclusive education in the sampled schools.

Under merging inclusion with the right to education, the research revealed that the academic performance of LWDs was below average in comparison to the non-disabled learners. The discovery was such that this was due to the attitudes and perceptions of both teachers and their fellow pupils. However, a further revelation was that the rights of LWDs were respected. In this regard, the research showed that there was a policy from government on the administration of inclusive education in schools. The research also revealed that the insistence of inclusion in schools was helpful as it enabled learners to understand and appreciate their different peculiarities. On maintaining high levels of inclusion without supervision, it was revealed that it was possible to do so.

Lastly, on response to inclusive measures, it was revealed that parents did not want their children without disabilities to mix with the disabled children. However, the school administrations had varied options owing to funds and maintenance of inclusive classrooms. Fellow teachers showed varied options. The research revealed that some were in support of inclusive as others were against it by demeaning the special education teachers. Further the research revealed that pupils were ready to support each other despite the disabilities. Overall, it was observed that teachers in rural areas had negative attitudes and perceptions towards inclusive education.

C. Recommendations

At the end of the study the researcher suggested the following recommendations:

- Schools to provide equal access to LWDs, routinely screen for any form of disability. In doing so, the study envisages that education providers will be able to appropriately place LWDs according to their needs.
- The trainers of educators and administrators are called upon to Enhance teacher training in inclusive education practices. The study underpins that this can be done by allowing and emphasizing the establishment of special education departments in all colleges of education and strengthening continuing professional development that anchors its focus on the improvement of inclusive education.
- The study equally implores policy makers to commit themselves towards learners with disabilities. It is envisaged that they can do this by coming up with legislative policies that would enhance the development of special education and inclusive education in particular.
- Parents and guardians have been called upon to have concern regarding the safety and quality of learning of experience for their children with disabilities in both inclusive and non-inclusive school settings. This is achievable if parents and guardians show concern by following up the education progress made by their children with learning disabilities.
- Provide in-service training to all teachers and strengthen Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
- Government and the ministry of education to bridge the gap in differences of inclusive education between urban areas and rural areas.
- National and international agencies should take keen interest in how inclusive education is conducted in schools.
- All stakeholders to have a binding commitment to legislation in the promotion of inclusive education. This is achievable if checks and balances are provided on the legislation regarding inclusive education.

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