



Available Online at EScience Press
International Journal of Education Foundations
ISSN: 3078-7866 (Online), 3078-7858 (Print)
<https://ijef.esciencepress.net>

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Implementing Inclusive Education for Children with Physical Disabilities: Challenges in Geita District, Tanzania

^aMingisi Mingisi Samson, ^bClara Rupia, ^bDemetria Mkulu

^a Uhuru Primary School, Geita District Council, Geita, Tanzania

^b Department of Education Foundations, St. Augustine University of Tanzania

Corresponding Author

Mingisi Mingisi Samson, Email: samsonmingis3@gmail.com

Author's Contributions

All authors contributed equally to this research.

Article History

Received: July 06, 2025; Accepted: August 11, 2025; Published: August 30, 2025.

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the challenges in implementing an inclusive education policy for children with physical disabilities in public primary schools in Geita District Council. The study was guided by system theory and utilized a mixed research approach with a convergent parallel design. A total of 110 respondents were selected through purposive and simple random sampling methods. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, observation, and questionnaires. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS version 20, while qualitative data was analyzed through content analysis. The findings revealed that the inclusive education policy is effectively implemented in public primary schools in Geita District Council, with children with physical disabilities enrolled in mainstream primary schools. Inadequate training for teachers in inclusive education, unsuitable school infrastructures, negative societal beliefs about disabled individuals, a lack of monitoring and evaluation of inclusive education policies, long distances from home to school, and insufficient emphasis on inclusive education by the government and other educational stakeholders are challenges hindering the implementation of inclusive education policies in public primary schools. The study suggests that the government, in collaboration with education stakeholders, should ensure that school infrastructure is suitable for disabled students and provide them with necessary equipment such as wheelchairs, exercise books, pens, and school uniforms. Additionally, to promote the value of disabled individuals, the government and private sectors should review their employment policies to ensure that each department or job includes at least one disabled person.

Keywords: Inclusive; education; physical disability; education access; challenges

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education aims to provide equitable and equal education for all students, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, or religious backgrounds. The goal is to create an educational environment that fosters the complete participation and development of every student, regardless of their abilities or limitations. Inclusive education policies are crucial to ensuring that every child has equal access to education and can

reach their full potential. Throughout history, discrimination against individuals with disabilities and special needs has been prevalent in the education system worldwide. Often, individuals with disabilities are segregated and provided with a separate form of schooling due to their impairments or unique characteristics. In recent decades, there has been a global focus on including students with disabilities in regular classrooms. The concept of "inclusion"

embodies the idea of all children receiving education alongside their peers of the same age.

According to the United Nations, individuals are considered disabled if they have a functional impairment that manifests as a disability or if they have impairments in one or more body parts, making it challenging for them to work, carry out daily activities, or learn (Thao, 2022). In 1993, the United Nations established standard criteria for promoting equal opportunities for people with disabilities to achieve fully integrated education in all member nations. The Salamanca Declaration was signed by governments from 90 countries in 1994 during an international conference hosted by UNESCO the following year (Bibiana et al., 2020). The Salamanca Declaration introduced the concept of inclusion and inclusive schools, emphasizing that children with special needs should learn in regular classrooms rather than in separate facilities (UN, 2014).

The Salamanca Declaration emphasizes that every child possesses unique qualities, interests, aptitudes, and learning requirements. It advocates for the integration of students in need of special education into regular schools, where they can benefit from child-centered pedagogy tailored to their needs. The Declaration underscores the importance of inclusive educational systems in combating discrimination, fostering inclusive communities, and ensuring that all children receive quality education (Thao, 2022).

De Bruin (2019) conducted a study in the USA on the impact of integrating special education students into regular classrooms on the academic achievement of their peers. The study found that there were no negative effects on students without special needs when special education students were included in regular classrooms. In fact, positive or neutral effects were observed in 81% of the outcomes, indicating that children with special needs thrive and learn effectively in mainstream schools alongside their peers.

From an African perspective, Boitumelo et al. (2020) conducted a study in Botswana to explore teachers' attitudes towards including students with impairments in regular classes. The study revealed that some teachers in Botswana hold negative attitudes towards inclusive education, expressing anger, hostility, and concerns about potential academic standards decline and lack of preparedness to work with students with disabilities in regular classes. Ajuzie (2023) conducted a study in Imo State, Nigeria, highlighting the limited progress in providing inclusive education for children with

disabilities. The study emphasizes the need for a systemic shift towards inclusive education, urging states to implement Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. To achieve inclusive education for students with disabilities, it is essential for states to allocate resources, raise awareness, develop appropriate curricula, provide teacher training tailored to students' needs, and involve parents in the educational process.

From an East African perspective, the issue of inclusive education for students with disabilities has been extensively researched. Owuor (2018) argued that in Kenya, community awareness, parental support, teacher roles in the curriculum, cultural attitudes, infrastructure facilities, and stakeholder support all play crucial roles in the implementation of inclusive education policies.

Mugiraneza et al. (2022) highlighted that Rwanda's basic education institutions have effectively implemented an inclusive education policy for students with impairments or special needs. The report emphasized that teachers ensure accessibility for students with disabilities by ensuring that wheelchairs can navigate through schools and classrooms, providing them with dedicated support personnel or nurses for guidance and counseling, and assigning appropriate educational materials based on their individual aptitude and educational level.

Tanzania has a rich history of providing educational opportunities for students with special needs. The initiative began in the 1950s at Buigiri in Dodoma, where European missionaries from the Church Missionary Society established the first special school to cater to children with visual impairments. At that time, the government had limited experience in special needs education, leading to many children with disabilities being kept at home due to ignorance, stigma, and superstitions surrounding their conditions. In 1963, Tanzanian schools started offering special education through a collaboration between the government and European missionaries. This partnership led to the opening of Dar es Salaam's Uhuru Primary School, which served as an integrated school for children with visual impairments. This innovation paved the way for the establishment of more integrated schools in Tanzania (Bhalalusesa et al., 2023).

Following the framework for action and the Salamanca Statement, the Tanzanian government initiated the establishment of inclusive schools in 1994 to cater to children with and without disabilities, ensuring they

have access to education. In 2008, the government introduced an inclusive education policy, which was implemented from 2009 to 2017. A government verification study conducted in 2016 revealed that approximately 3.5 million children with special needs were out of school. Subsequently, a new inclusive education strategy was developed and implemented from 2018 to 2021. This was followed by the introduction of a new inclusive education strategy for the period 2021–2022 to 2025–2026. The goals outlined in the 2021 government document emphasize the importance of fostering an inclusive culture among decision-makers, educators, and community members across all educational levels. These goals also focus on enhancing coordination and collaboration among stakeholders in the delivery of inclusive education and establishing a monitoring and evaluation plan for the strategy's implementation. The policy aims to ensure equitable access to quality education for students with special educational needs in inclusive settings.

In Geita District Council, there is a growing emphasis on implementing inclusive education policies to enhance access to education for children with physical disabilities in public primary schools. Despite these efforts, there is a significant gap in effectively addressing the needs and ensuring equal opportunities for these children within the education system. While there is a gradual shift towards inclusive practices, challenges persist in fully accommodating and integrating children with physical disabilities into mainstream classrooms. According to Rehema (2020), Tanzanian culture, rooted in African socialism, promotes inclusivity through the norms and values of society, where everyone is treated with respect, dignity, and equality regardless of differences. These inclusive traditions are reflected in African indigenous education, which has historically embraced inclusivity. The primary objective of the inclusive education policy is to provide all children with physical disabilities the opportunity to access education. This study aims to assess the challenges hindering the implementation of inclusive education policies in granting children with physical disabilities access to education in Tanzanian public primary schools in Geita, DC.

LITERATURE REVIEW

System Theory

System theory in this study served as the compass guiding the research. Developed in the mid-20th century by Austrian biologist and philosopher Ludwig

Von Bertalanffy in 1950, system theory is a multidisciplinary approach used to understand and analyze systems composed of interdependent and interconnected elements. The theory emphasizes a holistic viewpoint in organizations, including inclusive education systems, to comprehend system behavior by considering the interactions among its components.

The fundamental premise of system theory is that understanding a system as a whole requires prioritizing the examination of its relationships, interactions, and processes over analyzing individual components. In the context of education, a school is viewed as a complex organization comprising various entities such as the Ministry of Education, parents, the community, students, teachers, and learning resources. These components collectively contribute to achieving educational goals and objectives, facilitating an understanding of how inclusive education policies, specifically addressing access to education for children with physical impairments, are implemented in this study (Mwangeka & Trainer, 2020).

The strength of system theory lies in its holistic approach, which acknowledges the interconnectedness of different components within the education system. It examines how schools, government policies, and communities interact to either facilitate or impede access to education for children with physical disabilities. This comprehensive approach enables an analysis of not only the direct factors affecting education access, such as school infrastructure and teaching practices, but also the broader socio-economic and cultural factors that impact policy implementation. By considering the entire system, this theory enhances understanding of the complex challenges and opportunities involved in achieving inclusive education, leading to more integrated and effective solutions.

System theory is essential for ensuring the seamless operation of the entire educational system, with each member fulfilling specific duties. To promote an inquiring mindset and implement inclusive education, leaders must gather, generate, and comprehend information within a school. Collaboration within a group is prioritized over individual efforts. Teachers should have a clear understanding of what needs to be taught and when, while administrators must ensure that objectives are consistently met (Mwangeka & Trainer, 2020).

Empirical Literature Review

In this objective, the researcher reviewed the related literature from a global perspective, Africa, East Africa

as well as in Tanzania as presented below.

A study conducted by Hemmingsson and Borell (2017) in Sweden examined the impact of the physical environment of schools on students with disabilities. The study revealed that the lack of accessible infrastructure greatly impeded the participation of students with physical disabilities in regular classroom activities. Despite the presence of inclusive policies, physical barriers within school environments often hindered the full realization of these policies. The study underscored the necessity of significant investments in school infrastructure to establish truly inclusive environments that support all students, irrespective of their physical abilities.

Ruh Global Impact (2020) has identified significant challenges in implementing inclusive education policies for children with physical disabilities in the Philippines. These challenges stem from inadequate infrastructure, shortage of resources, and societal attitudes. Despite legal frameworks like the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, many schools lack essential facilities such as ramps and accessible classrooms, as well as sufficient Special Education (SpEd) centers and trained teachers. This lack of support often results in the marginalization of children with disabilities in the classroom. Additionally, poverty and societal stigma further hinder access to education, as some families either cannot afford associated costs or do not recognize the value of educating children with disabilities.

Shevlin et al. (2020) conducted a study in Ireland exploring teachers' perspectives on inclusive education. The study revealed that many educators felt unprepared to effectively teach students with disabilities due to inadequate training. This shortage of specialized training resulted in lower confidence and competence among teachers, leading to insufficient support for students with physical disabilities. Consequently, untrained teachers face challenges in adapting teaching methods and classroom environments to meet the needs of all students, hindering the successful implementation of inclusive education policies.

Despite having inclusive policies in place and schools claiming to be inclusive institutions, Mokaleng and Mowes (2020) evaluated the challenges affecting the implementation of inclusive education in Namibia. They found that there was still some exclusion due to teachers not being fully aware of inclusive education policies and practices. In Namibia, inadequate training and professional development hindered teachers from effectively implementing inclusive education policies,

leaving them ill-prepared to address the specific issues related to children with special needs.

A study conducted in Ghana by Komabu-Pomeyie (2020) examined stakeholders' perspectives on the challenges of implementing inclusive education policies. The study identified insufficient government support as a major barrier to proper implementation of inclusive education. Schools lack the necessary funding to make their environments, including classrooms, accessible to students with physical disabilities. Similarly, in Zambia, Zemba and Chipindi (2020) found that children with disabilities face obstacles in accessing education due to factors such as limited teaching and learning resources, rigid curricula, transportation difficulties, and financial constraints.

In Nigeria, a study by Adefila and Sheikh (2021) emphasized the importance of monitoring and evaluation in the success of inclusive education. The researchers highlighted that schools without effective monitoring mechanisms often fail to provide necessary accommodations for students with physical disabilities, leading to poor educational outcomes. They stressed the need for consistent and thorough monitoring to ensure schools are held accountable and inclusive education policies are effectively implemented.

In Kenya, Ruguru et al. (2020) conducted a study on the effective implementation of inclusive education using a qualitative research approach. They highlighted how physical playground barriers can result in the segregation of students with physical disabilities. Various mechanisms, many of which are unintentional and not recognized as discriminatory, contribute to playground discrimination. Marginalization occurs when policies are implemented, or specific materials and surfaces are chosen. Students with disabilities perceive school playgrounds as highly segregated environments. Inadequate teacher training to support children in physical education and negative behaviors such as bullying by non-disabled students further hinder the participation of students with disabilities in physical activities.

Another study by Musyoka et al. (2022) in Kenya examined the implementation of inclusive education policies. The study found that ineffective monitoring and evaluation systems were key factors in the poor implementation of these policies, especially in rural areas. Teachers and administrators often lacked clear guidelines and feedback on how to enhance inclusivity, resulting in inconsistent practices across schools.

Adoyo (2019) highlighted that Kenya faces obstacles in adopting inclusive education policies, such as a shortage of qualified teachers to support students with disabilities in primary schools, lack of related services, and absence of inclusive education documentation. Okech et al. (2021) noted that children with physical disabilities in Ugandan public primary schools encounter challenges due to inadequate physical infrastructure, including restrooms designed only for non-disabled children, hindering wheelchair access. The physical infrastructure has not been updated despite the introduction of inclusive education policies. Abdulle (2022) pointed out that children with physical disabilities in Somalia face difficulties in accessing education due to the long distances between schools and homes, making it challenging for them to navigate the terrain.

Kyambo et al. (2023) conducted a study examining Tanzania's implementation of inclusive education through an analysis of laws, regulations, and policies. The research utilized mixed methods to investigate the challenges faced by students with disabilities in accessing education. A significant barrier identified was the inadequate physical infrastructure in schools, particularly for students with physical disabilities. The study found that school facilities, including those funded by the PEDP, were not designed to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities. This lack of consideration resulted in difficulties for disabled students, especially those with physical or visual impairments, in navigating school premises. The physical layouts of many Tanzanian schools were found to be unsuitable for students with disabilities, with features such as lengthy staircases at building entrances that hindered wheelchair users.

Mapunda (2020) also highlighted the issue of shame and stigmatization among students through jesting and teasing. A study found that children with physical limitations face challenges in transportation to school, leading to consistent tardiness. Wheelchair users in Tanzania struggle with public transportation due to a lack of wheelchair storage facilities.

In a study by Revelian and Tibategeza (2022) in Karagwe, it was revealed that teachers' awareness of inclusive education is inadequate for effective implementation in public primary schools. Quality assurance officers in the district also lack sufficient knowledge of inclusive education, hindering their ability to provide guidance to teachers during monitoring and evaluation visits.

Furthermore, Welwel and Otieno (2022) clarified that a significant number of Tanzanian parents and guardians are unaware of their responsibilities in supporting the education of individuals with disabilities and have low participation rates in academic matters concerning these individuals. Many parents believe that they should focus on educating their non-disabled children instead of investing in the education of disabled children, viewing the latter as futile.

METHADODOLOGY

This study utilized a mixed research approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods simultaneously. The qualitative approach was emphasized over the quantitative approach. The study employed a convergent parallel design, where data collection and analysis were conducted independently for both qualitative and quantitative aspects, with equal consideration given to each method. The study was conducted in Geita District Council, which is part of the Geita Region in Tanzania. The study utilized a sample size of 110 respondents selected through simple random sampling and purposeful sampling techniques. In this study, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and observations. Quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20 to compute percentages and create tables. Qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis, which involved categorizing information into themes through data reduction and organization. This study adhered to established research principles, including obtaining informed consent, maintaining confidentiality and privacy, and avoiding plagiarism. To protect identities, pseudonyms were used in the third section. All sources used in the study were properly acknowledged following the guidelines of the APA 7th edition.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study evaluated the implementation of an inclusive education policy on access to education for children with physical disabilities in public primary schools in Geita district council. The research explored participants' perspectives on the challenges hindering the implementation of inclusive education policy. Data was collected through questionnaires, interviews, and observations, and the findings are summarized in Table 1.

The Challenges Facing TCPD on Quality Instructional Practices

Teachers often face challenges in accessing and benefiting from CPD. Therefore, Table 1 presents the results of such challenges.

Table 1. Challenges facing the implementation of inclusive education policy (n = 97).

Item	1		2		3		4	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Inadequate training of teachers in inclusive education	39	40.2	43	44.3	11	11.3	4	4.1
School infrastructures do not support children with physical disabilities to learn	33	34.0	36	37.1	18	18.6	10	10.3
Bad society beliefs on disabilities people	27	27.8	35	36.1	28	28.9	7	7.2
Shortage of monitoring and evaluation of inclusive education policy	17	17.5	37	38.1	30	30.9	13	13.4

Source: Field Data (2024)

KEY: 1= Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3 Disagree, 4= Strongly Disagree, 5= Undecided

Inadequate Training Teachers on Inclusive Education

Table 1.1 shows that 39 respondents (40.2 percent) strongly agree and 43 respondents (44.3 percent) agree that inadequate training for teachers on inclusive education is a major challenge in implementing inclusive education policies. Insufficient training can reinforce misconceptions and biases about disabilities, impacting the classroom environment. Teachers lacking knowledge in inclusive education may unknowingly create an unsupportive or unwelcoming atmosphere for children with physical disabilities. This can result in social isolation and discrimination, impeding these children's full participation in school activities. One interviewee stated:

"A major challenge in implementing inclusive education policy is the insufficient training provided to teachers. When teachers lack the necessary training, they may struggle to meet the diverse needs of children with physical disabilities. This can result in a failure to provide appropriate accommodations and support in the classroom. For instance, teachers may not be familiar with modifying lesson plans, using adaptive equipment, or implementing alternative teaching strategies that can benefit students with physical disabilities. Without these skills, students with physical disabilities may face compromised educational experiences, leading to disengagement and lower academic achievement" (Interviewee E, August 2024).

On the same thing, Interviewee D commented:

"Inadequate training for teachers in inclusive education undermines our efforts to ensure all children have equal access to quality education. Teachers are the frontline implementers of inclusive education policies, and without the necessary training, they cannot effectively address the barriers that students with disabilities face. This shortfall not only affects student outcomes but also places additional strain on school resources and support systems" (Interviewee D, August 2024).

This finding is consistent with Shevlin et al. (2020), who noted that many educators feel ill-prepared to effectively teach students with disabilities due to inadequate training. The lack of specialized training results in lower confidence and competence among teachers, leading to insufficient support for students with physical disabilities. This directly impedes the successful implementation of inclusive education policies, as untrained teachers struggle to adapt teaching methods and classroom environments to meet the needs of all students. Inadequate teacher training not only impacts individual students but also hinders the overall learning environment, reinforcing barriers to access and equity in education. Therefore, comprehensive and ongoing professional development is essential for teachers to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to implement inclusive practices effectively. This underscores the critical role of teacher training in realizing inclusive education policies and highlights the importance of targeted interventions to enhance teachers' capabilities in this area.

Mwangi (2014) supports this perspective, indicating that the professional preparation of most primary school teachers is insufficient for effectively educating children with special needs. They emphasize the importance of pursuing specialized training in special needs education to be adequately equipped to support such learners professionally.

School Infrastructures do not Support Children with Physical Disabilities to Learn

Table 1.1 shows that 33 respondents (34.0%) strongly agree, and 36 respondents (37.1%) agree that school infrastructure does not adequately support children with physical disabilities in their learning. The majority of instructors in the study believe that school infrastructure, such as latrines, playgrounds, and classrooms, does not adequately facilitate the education of children with physical impairments.

The implementation of inclusive education policies for children with physical disabilities is hindered by inadequate school infrastructure, as observed by a researcher. Many schools lack essential facilities such as wheelchair-accessible restrooms and classrooms designed to accommodate children with physical disabilities. This lack of infrastructure forces children with physical impairments to rely on others for basic tasks, limiting their independence and potentially leading to stigma. Additionally, overcrowded classrooms make it challenging for these students to receive an education equal to that of their peers.

During the interview with participant G, it was mentioned that few schools in urban areas have upgraded their infrastructure to accommodate children with physical disabilities. For instance, some schools have installed special toilets for disabled children and elevators in classrooms to facilitate the movement of physically disabled students within the school. This observation is supported by Kyambo et al. (2023), who highlight that a significant barrier for students with disabilities in accessing education is the inadequate physical infrastructure, especially for children with physical disabilities in elementary schools. The development of school facilities, including those funded by the PEDP, did not consider the needs of students with physical disabilities and other disabilities. Consequently, many disabled students face challenges navigating school premises, particularly those with physical or visual impairments. It was found that the physical layouts of many Tanzanian schools were not conducive and failed to

meet the requirements of students with physical disabilities. For example, most building entrances featured long staircases that hindered wheelchair-bound students with physical disabilities.

Bad Society Beliefs on Disabilities People

Table 1.1 shows that 27 respondents (27.8 percent) strongly agree, and 35 respondents (36.1 percent) agree that negative societal perceptions of disabled individuals present a challenge to implementing inclusive education policies, impacting access to education for children with physical disabilities in Tanzanian public primary schools. People with disabilities have the right to education, just like those without disabilities. Insufficient societal awareness about educating individuals with disabilities creates obstacles to implementing inclusive education policies that aim to provide equal educational opportunities for both disabled and non-disabled individuals.

One of the interviewees, who lives with a child with a hand disability, mentioned in the interview that society lacks sufficient understanding of disabilities, especially in rural areas where there is a lack of education on how to educate individuals with disabilities. In our village, there is a person on D Street who has a child with cerebral palsy but refuses to send him to school, claiming that he cannot be taught and is not intelligent. This observation is supported by Welwel and Otieno (2022), who noted that many Tanzanian parents and guardians are unaware of their responsibilities in promoting education for individuals with disabilities, leading to low participation in academic matters concerning these individuals. Some parents believe that they should focus on educating their non-disabled children rather than investing in the education of disabled children, viewing the latter as unlikely to succeed and equating it to throwing stones into the sea.

Shortage in Monitoring and Evaluation of Inclusive Education Policy

Table 1.1 illustrates that 17 respondents (17.5 percent) strongly agree, and 37 respondents (38.1 percent) agree that a lack of monitoring and evaluation in inclusive education policy presents a challenge to its effective implementation, thereby impeding access to education for children with physical disabilities. In an interview, a participant emphasized:

“The lack of monitoring and evaluation in inclusive education hinders the effective

implementation of this policy. Without regular oversight, it is challenging to identify and address gaps in resources and support systems needed to integrate students with disabilities successfully. This oversight deficiency can lead to unnoticed and unresolved issues such as inadequate teacher training, insufficient infrastructure, and a lack of specialized learning materials. As a result, the quality of education for students with disabilities is compromised, and the school's capacity to offer an inclusive learning environment is diminished" (Interviewee I, August 2024).

The lack of effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms poses a significant challenge to implementing inclusive education policies, especially in ensuring access to education for children with physical disabilities. Without consistent monitoring, tracking progress, identifying gaps, and making necessary adjustments become difficult. This oversight gap can result in inadequate policy enforcement, leading to children with physical disabilities not receiving the necessary support and accommodations. Additionally, without proper evaluation, assessing policy impact and making data-driven decisions to improve inclusivity in schools is challenging. Respondents also highlighted another major challenge in implementing inclusive education policies for children with physical disabilities in Tanzanian public primary schools: the distance between home and school.

Table 2. Distance from home to school (n = 97).

Items	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	70	72.2
No	27	27.8
Total	97	100.0

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 1.2 shows that 70 respondents (72.2 percent) identified the distance children have to travel from home to school as a barrier to the implementation of inclusive education policies for children with physical impairments. It was observed that the significant distance between home and school hinders the effective implementation of inclusive education programs for children with physical disabilities. These children often face challenges in traveling long

distances due to mobility impairments and limited transportation options. As a result, many children with physical disabilities either arrive late to school or are unable to attend regularly, impacting their educational experience and progress. The lack of nearby schools that are fully accessible further complicates the situation.

During the interview, Participant B stated:

Many rural schools are located far from students' homes, causing difficulties for students with physical disabilities who have to walk long distances to school. This situation leads to some students being absent from school because they do not have access to wheelchairs. For example, one student had to leave school due to severe leg pain caused by the long walk from home to school (Interviewee B, August 2024).

This issue is also highlighted by Mapunda (2020), who noted that children with physical disabilities face challenges in accessing reliable transportation to school, resulting in frequent tardiness. In Tanzania, wheelchair users encounter difficulties using public transportation as there are no provisions for wheelchair storage. It is recommended that the government and education stakeholders establish boarding facilities in every ward across the country to cater to students with special needs.

CONCLUSIONS

The study reveals that the inclusive education policy is being implemented in public primary schools in Tanzania to enhance access to education for children with physical disabilities. Students with physical disabilities are integrated into inclusive classrooms alongside their peers without disabilities in public primary schools. The government provides monthly funds for disabled children in public primary schools. The study highlights challenges in the implementation of inclusive education policy in public primary schools, including inadequate training for teachers in inclusive education, insufficient school infrastructure for children with physical disabilities, negative societal attitudes towards individuals with disabilities, lack of monitoring and evaluation of inclusive education policies, long distances between home and school, and limited emphasis on inclusive education by the government and educational stakeholders. The study highlights the importance of collaborative efforts among government, schools, communities, educational stakeholders, and policymakers for the successful implementation of inclusive education

policies for children with physical disabilities in public primary schools. Key actions include providing comprehensive in-service training for teachers on inclusive education, improving school infrastructure for accessibility, raising awareness in communities about inclusive policies, incentivizing teachers, ensuring the availability of suitable teaching and learning materials, enacting legislation to guarantee special support for students with disabilities from primary to higher education, and promoting employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities in both the public and private sectors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The school, community, educational stakeholders, and government must collaborate to ensure the effective implementation of inclusive education policies. Efforts should be made by the government and private organizations to educate the population, especially in rural areas, about the importance of educating individuals with disabilities to combat negative attitudes towards them. The government, through the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, should prioritize the training of pre-service and in-service teachers in inclusive education

to promote understanding and acceptance of individuals with disabilities. Additionally, the government, in collaboration with educational stakeholders, should ensure that school infrastructure is accessible for students with disabilities and that they have access to necessary equipment such as wheelchairs, exercise books, pencils, and school uniforms. To promote appreciation for individuals with disabilities, both the government and private sectors should revise their employment policies to ensure that each department or position includes at least one employee with a disability. The study focused on public primary schools, but there is a need to conduct research comparing private and public primary schools to achieve a more comprehensive understanding. This comparison would involve a larger sample size and broader geographical coverage, allowing for more accurate generalization of results. Future research should also assess the implementation of inclusive education policies for different types of disabilities, such as visual impairments or cerebral palsy. The study recommends conducting similar research in other regions of the country to promote inclusive education nationwide.

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