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Education Governance and Inclusive Education in Secondary Schools in Temeke District, Tanzania

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Abstract

This study examined education governance and inclusive education in Secondary schools. Inclusive education is a complex process to achieve due to the context where it is applied and the complication of translating policy into practice. There are deliberate attempts to address challenges in the provision of inclusive education in Tanzania. However, the implementation is not adequate and education opportunities for students with special needs are still minimal. The study used a qualitative research approach, where data were collected through in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and documentary review methods. The study involved 40 teachers and 48 key informants including heads of secondary schools, Education Officers, and parents. The findings showed that coordination and management of inclusive education are done at different levels of authority. Wards play the key role of linking schools and the services for the provision of education including inclusive education. However, the facilities for the provision of inclusive education are still a challenge in secondary schools. There were also challenges in the implementation of education policies attributed to limited resources and coordination issues. Despite the efforts made to provide inclusive education in secondary schools, there are still implementation challenges to the provision of this education. Therefore, there is a need to continue making concerted efforts to improve the coordination and management of inclusive education for efficiency and effectiveness. The relevant Ministry (POR-LAG) in collaboration with education stakeholders should facilitate the availability of resources and facilities for the provision of inclusive education.

Keywords: Education governance, Inclusive education, Secondary schools, Tanzania

1. Introduction

Inclusive education intends to address all forms of inequalities in access to school, participation and learning outcomes for all learners (UNESCO, 2018). However, inclusive education is a complex process to achieve due to the context where it is applied and in translating policy into practice (Azorin *et al.*, 2021). Effective management at all levels from individual schools to system-wide functions is considered among the key aspects of effective education management (UNESCO, 2017). Hence, in pursuing inclusive education policies and practices, social justice, efficiency, and equality become key dimensions of effectiveness as they ensure considerations of inclusiveness and fairness to different groups (OECD, 2015; Hernandez-Torrano *et al.*, 2020).

In the education sector, considerations of the concerns of the marginalised students (for instance, students with special needs), protection and promotion of their rights to access education services as accessed by their peers through meaningful participation are among the factors influencing the ideas of inclusive education (Boyle & Allen, 2022). The Salamanca statement and Framework for Action proposed in 1994 advocated for inclusive education in schools targeting all children, regardless of physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other abilities (Boyle & Allen, 2022). It also recognised institutions that include diversity, inclusion of every learner, response to individual needs and supportive learning (UNESCO, 2020).

However, despite the efforts to emphasize inclusive education in schools, challenges are still frequent in its implementation. Scholars (i.e., Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Zigler *et al.*, 2017) have identified two main challenges: first, the lack of clarity in the policy, which is, ambiguity about the goals for inclusion and the means through which such goals can be achieved and; secondly, various issues around the poor implementation of the policy were identified. A study in Kenya and Tanzania on the development of inclusive education identified further challenges facing the provision of inclusive education; these include high enrolment rates in schools, the lack of personnel trained in special needs, and poor infrastructure and resources (Utomo & Thaibah, 2021). In this respect, the realisation of the intended goals of inclusive education is still a challenge (Zigler *et al.*, 2017).

Tanzania ratified the Salamanca statement and committed to ensuring that every child has access to education. The ratification was instrumental in an attempt to fulfil the goals of the first conference on Education for All held in Jomtien in 1990

(Possi & Millinga, 2017). The 2018 -2021 National Strategy on inclusive education also targeted to improvement of infrastructure and learning facilities (URT, 2017).

Deliberate efforts have been made to address challenges in the provision of inclusive education in Tanzania. However, the implementation of inclusive education has not been successful yet, and education opportunities for students with special needs are still limited, creating barriers for learners with special needs globally from accessing quality education (Possi & Millinga, 2017, IDS, 2020). This study envisaged to contribute to educational governance for inclusive education in Tanzania Secondary schools. The study specifically assessed the coordination and management of inclusive education, decision-making for the implementation of inclusive education, and participation in the implementation of inclusive education.

Theoretical Framework

The study is guided by Luhmann's Social System theory, which originated from the ideas of Herbert Spencer and Emile Durkheim in the 19th century (Barry, 2023). The social system theory assumes that modern society is characterised by the process of functional differentiation. It shows that society is complex and different systems respond to a complex environment (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). The theory explains how society adapts to its environment through adjustments in its structure. It also explains how society is formed by social communication, which consists of information, messages, and understanding (Luhmann & Rasch, 2002).

According to Luhmann and Rasch (2002), society consists of different subsystems including education, religion, economics, science, and politics. They argue that principles show that people have equality in the right and freedom to enter into contracts with the functional systems, which in turn determines entry criteria (Luhmann & Rasch, 2002).

In the context of this study, the sub-systems explain different communication structures concerning inclusive education. Activities in a classroom consist of the contributions of different social subsystems. Thus, at a societal level, inclusive education takes place according to specific social systems within the society. Moreover, principles for inclusive education help to ensure the successful implementation of inclusive education. These principles include; diversity in the classroom which enriches and strengthens education, student engagement and their voice, engagement of key stakeholders, and committed inclusive teachers

with knowledge and practical skills (Grove & Laleta, 2019). The legitimisation of different subsystems in the education system is formed by policies and translated in schools through socially constructed forms of communication applied in educational systems and sub-systems in schools (Luhmann & Rasch, 2002).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Education Governance in Schools

Governance is the process of decision-making through which decisions are implemented. It can be used in various contexts such as international governance, national governance and local governance. Both formal and informal actors are involved in the decision-making and implementation of the decisions made. Governance also refers to structures and processes that are designed to ensure accountability, transparency, equity and inclusiveness, empowerment, and broad-based participation. Governance also refers to the norms, values and rules of how public affairs are managed in a transparent, participatory, inclusive, and responsive manner (Burns, Koster & Fuster, 2016).

Education governance refers broadly to authority and decision-making within an education system. The education system can transform inputs into outcomes, which includes how effective, transparent and with what level of participation, accountability and integrity key functions are performed. It is concerned with how the funding, provision, ownership, and regulation of education and training systems are coordinated at different levels: local, regional, national, and international (UNESCO, 2017). Scholars emphasised four key aspects of effective education governance, which is largely dependent on strong institutional capacity. First, the development and implementation of evidence-based education policies and programs that are well integrated into wider national development strategies. Second, setting goals, standards, and incentives and holding key actors accountable. Third, effective management at all levels, from individual schools to system-wide functions, and fourth, publishing of accurate and timely data needed for policy-makers, managers and the community including holding key education actors accountable (Baghdady & Zaki, 2019; UNESCO, 2017).

Good governance in education is concerned with how a school system prepares policies, teacher preparation for teaching and dealing with curricula. It also involves the provision of strategic directions to ensure that educational objectives are achieved through effective and efficient use of resources, participation in decision-making and accountability (Kadir, 2019). Therefore, education governance is responsible for school effectiveness, quality, and accountability

2.2 Inclusive Education from a Governance Perspective

According to scholars (Boyle & Allen, 2022), inclusive education is the process of providing education to all children irrespective of individual differences or abilities. It aims to include all students in a classroom as active participants in learning, on the assumption that the process of inclusion is beneficial to all involved. Inclusive education is reported to have several advantages for both students with special needs and those without. Inclusive settings help to increase understanding and acceptability of diversity. Hence, it provides a great opportunity for interaction with all students. Consequently, the participation of students in all school activities is strengthened, and the possibility for students to do better socially and academically is increased. Moreover, inclusive settings help professionals, such as teachers, psychologists, and social workers, to collaborate to formulate and execute educational programs (Paramanik & Barman, 2018).

According to Gupter *et al.* (2015), inclusion is said to have existed in the development discourse due to the following six reasons: First, considerations for the concerns of the poorest and marginalised in society. The second reason is legal arising from the promotion and the protection of human rights. The third, reason is economic for ensuring economic production by the current and the future generations of people (Pouw & McGregor, 2014). The fourth reason is the security arguments of enabling the poor to have access to legal means of survival and live in safety (Murshed, 2006). The fifth reason is democratic for engaging all players in decision-making and in sharing resources and prosperity (Oosthoek & Gillis, 2013); and lastly, the sixth reason is to do with relational arguments that see poverty as resulting from the actions of others. All these reasons and views have been extended to the provision of education services and

the debate on the availability and access of education services to marginalised groups.

2.3 Challenges in the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Schools

Attempts to practice inclusive education face several challenges worldwide including in Tanzania. This study highlights some of the challenges such as; lack of policy clarity on inclusion goals, poor policy implementation, and poor infrastructure and resources.

2.3.1 Lack of policy clarity on inclusion goals

According to scholars (Hunt, 2020; Siuli, 2018), the road to inclusive education is not only faced with a lack of adequate resources but also weak governance, which is characterised by the inability or unwillingness of both public and private actors to assume their roles and responsibilities in protecting rights, providing basic services and amenities to the public. Weak governance is also characterised by a weak or complete absence of some core values of good governance as promoted by the UN ESCAP (2009). Such values include participation, the rule of law, transparency, consensus, equity, inclusiveness, and accountability. If these core values of good governance are not implemented from the central government to the local government and the secondary school levels, it will be difficult for the players to realise the intended goals of inclusive education. Poor and weak governance are considered major culprits for persistent development problems. Therefore, to realise the goals of inclusive education and make inclusive education meaningful to the needy in the community and society as a whole, it is important to take into consideration the framework of good governance proposed by the UN ESCAP (2009) from the starting point of formulating policies on inclusive education to the implementation of the same.

2.3.2 Poor implementation of the policy

The consensus-oriented and inclusiveness principles of good governance for the policy formulation process are not self-sufficient approaches for guiding the effective formulation of inclusive education policies, plans, and strategies. The policy-making initiators (government actors) and those consulted (other government and non-government actors) are expected to be transparent and to show a sense of responsibility and accountability

in all phases of the policy formulation process. Similar observations are reported by Gupter *et al.* (2015) who observe that inclusive development can only be brought about through genuine interactive governance that provides the instruments and creates the conditions for adaptive learning and the empowerment of marginalised people.

In formulating inclusive education policies, plans, and strategies, policy-making actors are also expected to adhere to several principles of good governance. Some of them are inclusiveness and consensus. Kapilima (2020) views the idea of the inclusiveness principle of good governance in policy formulation as relating to the pluralism perspective, which emphasises a wide distribution of power and inclusion of diverse sets of stakeholders and interested parties and the importance of willingness to work on conflict resolution during the policy formulation process. In this sense, for inclusive education policies, plans and strategies to be well formulated and implemented effectively, a wide spectrum of stakeholders (both government and non-government) need to be consulted and involved effectively in all phases of policy-making and implementation processes. If the majority of stakeholders participate in the formulation process, inclusive education will obtain rich inputs for improvement (Kapilima, 2020).

Likewise, stakeholders would have adequate awareness of the policies made and their objectives. They would also feel a sense of ownership of the policy and share a sense of purpose and drive, which then creates enough trust between the two sides of stakeholders (Hallsworth *et al.*, 2011). With such outcomes, positive implications are derived from the implementation processes of policies, plans, and strategies for inclusive education

2.3.3 Poor infrastructure and resources

Another view is that, for inclusive education to be realised and become successful, the framework of good governance as proposed by UN ESCAP (2009), needs to be applied during the implementation of policies of inclusive education (OECD, 2017). Implementing this approach will consider infrastructures accessible to students with special needs and those, which match their impairments. The concept of inclusive education

is rooted in the philosophy of moral principles (Mwinjuma, 2019), which largely are related to those of good governance. therefore, for inclusive education to be realised and become successful, all stakeholders (officials and non-officials) at all levels in public and private institutions, including parents have to support the implementation of the policies of inclusive education. These are made by considering good governance principles of responsiveness and ensuring that there is equity, access, justice, and care for students with diverse learning needs

3. Methodology

The study was conducted in Temeke Districts in Dar –es –Salaam region. Dar es Salaam region has the highest rates of learners with disabilities in rural areas than is the case in the urban areas (URT, 2016). Temeke has a population of 1,346,674 among these, 655,137 are males and 691,537 are females. The average household size is 3.5 people per household (URT, 2022). The study employed qualitative approaches in data collection and analysis.

The study targeted Head of Schools, Educational Officers at Ward and District levels, Government Officials, teachers, parents, and guardians. The study sample size was 88 respondents including 40 teachers in secondary school level in both private and public schools. Other informants were 48 heads of secondary schools, Education Officers, and parents. The study used probability sampling techniques whereby random sampling techniques were used to select teachers and parents involved in the study. A purposive sampling technique was used to obtain key informants (Heads of schools, Educational Officers, and Government Officials who have relevant information based on their respective positions. Four secondary schools 2 public and 2 private were selected purposively for the study.

Different methods were used to collect data from the respondents. First, in-depth interview was conducted with key informants where Government officials, Education Officers, and heads of Schools were interviewed. Second, a questionnaire with open-ended questions was used to collect socio-demographic data such as age, sex, education level, marital status, and occupation. The questionnaire questions were also used to collect data from teachers and parents regarding governance in education and inclusive education for learners with special education needs (SEN). Third, document review was also employed to collect information from both written and electronic materials such as policy documents and government publications including Census Reports and Socio-Economic and Demographic Profiles. Fourth, the non-participant observation

method was used to collect information by watching various activities in the school environment related to the study.

Qualitative data were categorized and coded according to key themes based on the objectives of the study. Content analysis was used to analyse data. Ethical considerations were adhered to in the research process.

4. Findings and Discussions

The study examined education governance for inclusive education in secondary schools. The study assessed the coordination and management of inclusive education, decision-making on the implementation of inclusive education, and participation in the formulation and implementation of policies on inclusive education in secondary schools.

4.1 Co-ordination and management of inclusive Education in Secondary Schools

The study sought to find out how the provision of inclusive education is coordinated and managed in secondary schools. The interviews with the leaders in different positions (schools, wards, and districts) show that the coordination of inclusive education is done at different levels of authority and its implementation is supervised at different levels of authority. The Ministry of Education MOEST provides directives for the provision of inclusive education and other levels of authority are involved in coordination and implementation.

An Educational Official aged 52 years reported,

"The Wards play a key role in linking schools and the services for education delivery. Education provision targets all learners. The Local Government Authorities oversee the service delivery and coordination. However, there is a challenge of limited resources. Thus, stakeholders in the community are also encouraged to participate in service delivery" (August 2022).

These findings imply that coordination for the provision of inclusive education is done at various levels. Wards play a key role in linking schools and the services in the provision of education including inclusive education. Moreover, collaboration with stakeholders is encouraged to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery and school governance. This involved the mobilization and management of resources for quality service delivery. Luhman and Raph (2002) posit that organizations as social systems can coordinate

interactions and communications. Thus, schools, as centres of community life, are used to encourage and achieve social participation (Meresman, 2014).

The findings show further that all governing rules and regulations that accommodate the requirements for special needs were observed at the school level weaknesses in their implementation were identified and solutions were formulated and executed accordingly.

The head of School B reported,

"We adhere to the governing rules and regulations for the provision of special education. Examples include the provision of quality education to all students and fairness in the provision of education to learners with special needs. We consider these by giving special attention to students with special needs during teaching and learning and in other related activities. However, there is a challenge of limited resources which is reflected in inadequate facilities, inadequate assistive devices, and other learning materials for learners with special needs" (August 2022).

The findings imply that efforts were made to create a teaching and learning environment that responds to the needs of students with special needs. However, facilities for the provision of inclusive education are still a challenge in secondary schools. This suggests that the realization of fairness in the provision of education to learners with special needs is still a challenge. Accordingly, UNESCO, (2019) suggested the improvement of infrastructure and facilities for the provision of barrier-free learning environments as one of the objectives of inclusive education strategy.

4.2 Decision Making for Implementation of Inclusive Education

The study sought to find out how decision-making for the implementation of inclusive education was done. The findings show that decision-making for the implementation of teaching and learning including inclusive education involved education stakeholders and community members. An education official aged 48 years reported,

"Education stakeholders and the surrounding community members are involved in decision-making related to teaching and learning by giving their views, and opinions, and sharing important information. They participate through meetings, seminars, and social media. Parents share important information through school committees to find better solutions for improving education outcomes of students and inclusive education in particular."

These findings imply that stakeholders' involvement in decision-making and implementation of school activities was seen in the way teachers and parents were involved in seeking solutions to improve learning outcomes and the provision of inclusive education. Other studies show that the Government engages a wider range of stakeholders in the decision-making process to address public issues. The voices of grassroots education stakeholders such as parents, teachers, school management, and the community are included in formulating education policy (Dorji, 2022, Dhakal 2019). Luhmann (ibid) considers organisations such as schools as a type of social system that can make decisions. Decisions are made by members who are responsible for choices (Luhmann & Raph, 2002).

Apart from stakeholders, the political system is responsible for making collective binding decisions for the entire society. From the view point of Luhmann's social system theory, legal and legitimate authority is responsible for ensuring that all decisions are followed (Albeit, 2019). However, special attention has to be paid to the decision making process and the enhancement of justice (Luhmann & Raph, 2002).

4.3 Participation in Policies Formulation and Implementation of Inclusive Education

The findings obtained through interviews show that policies were formulated and implemented at different levels of authority. In addition, stakeholders were also involved in the formulation and implementation of policies as they had the opportunity to give their views. For instance, there were meetings between teachers and parents; teachers and students; education officials and teachers; School Committees Local Government Authority, and the surrounding school's community.

One education official aged 52 reported,

"Different stakeholders' are involved in the formulation and implementation of various educational policies. Stakeholders are the sources of education policies that are implemented; they have the opportunity to criticize, challenge, and give their contributions to the improvements of various educational policies. However, coordination and management can sometimes be challenging especially when the resources are limited".

The finding suggests further that the participation of different stakeholders in policy formulation and implementation was considered important. However, there were challenges in the implementation of education policies including limited resources and coordination issues. Other studies show that the main aim of the participatory approach in policy formulation is to hear people's opinions on policy formulation. Thus, a good policy is well formulated and implemented through wider coordination, collaboration, consultation, and dialogue with stakeholders (Dorji, 2022). In addition, the involvement of parents and the community is an important principle of quality inclusive education both in and outside the classroom. Parents, schools, and community leaders can work together to find solutions for improving learning (Meresman, 2014). Furthermore, inadequate organization resources, actors' capacity, and coordination issues can be a challenge in the implementation of education policies (Viennet & Pont, 2017).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study examined the coordination and management of inclusive education, decision-making for the implementation of inclusive education, and participation in the formulation and implementation of policies for inclusive education.

The findings indicated that the co-ordination of inclusive education is done at different levels of authority and its implementation is supervised at different levels of authority. Wards play a key role in linking schools and the services for the provision of education including inclusive education. Moreover, collaboration with stakeholders was encouraged to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery and school governance. The findings showed further that efforts have been made to create teaching and learning environments that respond to the needs of students with special needs. However, the facilities for the provision of inclusive education are still a challenge in secondary schools.

Decision-making and implementation of school activities were seen in the way teachers and parents were involved in seeking solutions to improve the teaching and learning environment. Decision-making for the implementation of teaching and learning including inclusive education involved educational stakeholders and community members. Apart from stakeholders, the political system is responsible for making collective binding decisions for the entire society.

Participation of different stakeholders in policy formulation and implementation was considered important. However, there were challenges in the

implementation of education policies including limited resources and coordination issues.

Despite the efforts made in the provision of inclusive education in schools, implementation challenges are still frequent in the provision of this education. Therefore, there is a need to continue making concerted efforts to improve the coordination and management of inclusive education in secondary schools for efficiency and effectiveness. The relevant Ministry (POR-LAG) in collaboration with education stakeholders should facilitate the availability of resources and facilities for the provision of inclusive education.

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