

**BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK**



**Challenges faced by children with disabilities in their quest for education, a case study  
of Tamandai ward 14 of Chipinge District.**

**BY  
B200051B**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE  
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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE HONOURS DEGREE IN  
SOCIAL WORK.**

**YEAR: JUNE 2024**

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this project to my beloved parents Mr and Mrs Mhlanga, my siblings and my friends who guided and supported me throughout the entire university life. I will forever thank you for pushing and motivating me to keep the good fight for the best results in life. You will forever have a place in my heart.

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May God continue to bless you all.

## ABSTRACT

*The challenges faced by children with disabilities in their quest for education study was precipitated by the increasing levels of poverty, economic downfall, poor infrastructural development, limited resources, discrimination and stigma. The study was guided by the following objectives; to assess the challenges faced by children with disabilities in their quest for education, to establish the community's knowledge on inclusive education, to explore the community's attitude towards educating children with disabilities. The study triangulated both qualitative and quantitative research designs, making use of a survey, in-depth interviews and key informant interviews as data collection methods. Simple random sampling technique was used to collect quantitative data while quota sampling technique and purposive sampling technique was used to collect qualitative data. The study found out that absolute poverty has brought unearthed myriad of complex issues that hinder children with disability from accessing quality learning. The study also revealed a lack of awareness and knowledge about the specific needs of children with disabilities in educational settings, indicating a critical gap in understanding within the community. The study again found out high prevalence of deeply ingrained stigmas and misconceptions surrounding disability within the community. The study then concludes that major barriers that hinder educational opportunities for children with disabilities are physical, social and systemic, from inaccessible school facilities, absence of specialized support services, social stigma, inadequate policies, resource allocation, discriminatory attitudes as well as misconceptions and stereotypes surrounding disability. The study recommends that there is a pressing need for comprehensive policy reforms that prioritize the integration of inclusive education practices within educational institutions. Educational institutions and stakeholders should focus on providing specialized training and professional development opportunities for educators to equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary to support diverse learning needs. Community engagement initiatives and awareness campaigns should be leveraged to challenge societal biases, promote empathy, and foster a culture of inclusivity that acknowledges the value of every child's education.*

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBRIVETIONS**

<b>CWD</b>	Children With Disability
<b>DSD</b>	Department of Social Development
<b>GoZ</b>	Government of Zimbabwe
<b>MoHCC</b>	Ministry of Health and Child Care
<b>MoPSE</b>	Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
<b>MPSLSW</b>	Ministry of Public Service Labour and Social Welfare
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>PWD</b>	Persons With Disability
<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SDO</b>	Social Development Officer
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCRC</b>	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children`s Emergency Fund.
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organisation

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

The chapter includes background information for the study, as well as the problem statement and justification of the study. This chapter will review the aim, objectives, research questions, study assumptions, delimitations, and limitations. It also includes a chapter synopsis, definitions of key words, and a conclusion.

### **1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

The integration of children with disabilities in normal school has received a lot of attention in recent years. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) emphasises the significance of inclusive education for everyone, including children with disabilities. (Majoko, 2018). The World Health Organization (WHO) defines children with disabilities as individuals who may have varying degrees of physical, mental, cognitive, or sensory impairments, either from birth or acquired at any point in their lives (WHO, 2019). The UNCRPD underscores the right of people with disabilities to fully participate and be included in society. Globally, education communities are actively working towards including children with disabilities into normal schools (Ballard, 2012, Ballard & Dymond, 2016). In the United States, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) guarantees that eligible children with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), enacted in 2006, recognises the rights of disabled children to an equal education as others and advocates for inclusive education systems that meet the diverse needs of all learners. Furthermore, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include a specific target; Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which seeks to promote inclusive and equitable quality education for all by 2030.

SADC has implemented a number of programmes and policy frameworks that recognise the value of inclusive education. The 1997-adopted SADC Protocol on Education and Training highlights the importance of inclusive education systems and acknowledges that everyone, including those with disabilities, has the right to an education (Mushore, 2010). Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), created by SADC, offers a framework for regional growth in a number of areas, including education (Mpofu & Shumba, 2012). SADC member states have implemented a number of efforts to enhance inclusive education. These include developing national strategies and legislation in order to endorse inclusivity in education, providing training as well as professional development prospects for teachers to enhance their capacity to teach students with disabilities, and improving infrastructure and resources in schools to ensure accessibility for all students. Despite these efforts, there are still significant challenges that hinder the full realization of disability inclusive education for disabled children in the SADC region. Some of the hindrances include limited resources and funding, inadequate teacher training on inclusive practices, lack of awareness and understanding about disability issues among communities and stakeholders, and societal attitudes that perpetuate discrimination and exclusion.

In Zimbabwe, there are significant efforts that are being made to endorse disability inclusive education to warrant that children living with disability have equal access to quality education. Historically, children with disabilities in Zimbabwe faced numerous challenges in accessing education as they were often excluded from mainstream schools and lacked appropriate support systems. However, according to Majoko (2017), the government of Zimbabwe, along with various stakeholders, has taken steps to address these issues and improve the educational opportunities for children with disabilities. Key developments in Zimbabwe's approach to inclusive education is the adoption of the Education Act in 1987, ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

(UNCRPD) in 2013 (Majoko, 2013). Policies implemented include the National Policy on Inclusive Education (2017) and the National Disability Mainstreaming Strategy (2016-2020). These initiatives aim to create an enabling environment for children with disabilities by providing appropriate infrastructure, trained teachers, and support services. While significant progress has been made, challenges still exist in ensuring full inclusion and equal opportunities for children with disabilities in Zimbabwe's education system. Poverty, poor infrastructural development, limited resources, including funding and trained personnel as well as attitudinal barriers and stigma towards disability in some communities remain barriers and challenges faced by children with disabilities in their quest for education.

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

In an ideal situation, children with disabilities should have equal access to education and be provided with the necessary support and accommodations to thrive academically. This would involve a comprehensive and inclusive approach that addresses the unique needs of each child, promotes their participation in mainstream schools, and ensures their rights are protected. However, due to poverty, economic downfall, poor infrastructural development, limited resources, attitudinal barriers, discrimination and stigma, children with disabilities in Zimbabwe face significant challenges in accessing quality education. These challenges include a lack of inclusive education policies and practices, limited access to specialized services and support, stigma and discrimination, limited availability of assistive technology, inadequate funding for special needs education, limited access to early childhood intervention services, and a lack of data and research on disability and education. Stigma and discrimination against children with disabilities are prevalent in Zimbabwean society, which can affect their ability to access education. There is a lack of data and research on disability and education in Zimbabwe, which makes it difficult to understand the scope of the challenges faced by children with disabilities in their quest for education. More research is



needed to identify the specific challenges faced by children with disabilities and to develop effective solutions to address these challenges.

#### **1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

With the help of this study, it will be possible to build inclusive learning settings that provide equal opportunities for all students, regardless of ability, by evaluating the obstacles experienced by disabled students in the rural village of Tamandai. The research will again establish community's knowledge on inclusive education thereby paving way for several organization and stakeholders to work towards creating inclusive educational systems that accommodate the various requirements of all students. It is imperative to note that that the study will explore the community's attitude towards educating children with disabilities as this will enact a framework that policymakers and educators can utilize to identify the specific barriers that children with disabilities face and develop strategies to overcome them. The study will dwell more on assessing how limited access to education has profound and lasting impact on children with disabilities as it can limit their access to quality educational resources, social and economic opportunities, financial, health and support services, leading to a range of negative effects on their lives and well-being. This study aims to address gaps in previous research by Majoko (2018), which identified barriers encountered in addressing the needs of disabled individuals in tertiary schools without community involvement. Understanding and tackling these obstacles can lead to the establishment of inclusive educational environments that foster equal opportunities for all children, irrespective of their capabilities. Examination of these challenges can also aid in pinpointing deficiencies in policy implementation and highlighting areas that require additional support and resources. Ultimately, by effectively confronting the challenges faced by children with disabilities in pursuing education in the Tamandai community, Zimbabwe can establish an inclusive

education system that ensures equal opportunities for all children, regardless of their abilities or disabilities.

### **1.5 AIM OF THE STUDY**

The aim of the study is to assess the challenges faced by children with disabilities in their quest for education in Tamandai, ward 14 of Chipinge district.

### **1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The aim of the study is to be achieved through the following objectives:

1. To assess the challenges faced by children with disabilities in their quest for education.
2. To establish the community's knowledge on inclusive education.
3. To explore the community's attitude towards educating children with disabilities.

### **1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What are the challenges faced by children with disabilities in their quest for education?
2. What is the community's knowledge on inclusive education?
3. What is the community's attitude towards educating children with disabilities?

### **1.8 ASSUMPTIONS**

This research will be carried out on the assumption that there are several challenges faced by children with disabilities in their quest for education in Tamandai community. There are also assumptions that the community lacks knowledge on inclusive education in mainstream schools. It is again imperative to note that the research assumes that the community has a negative attitude towards educating children with disabilities.

### **1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The prevailing economic situation will have its toll on the research as transport and other costs related to the study can heavily militate against the research; the student will hence rely

on friends and family for funds to finance the research project. The study can again possibly face challenges on time management in conjunction with power-cuts/ load-shedding, therefore the student will make use of online learning with the supervisor sometimes communicating and working at odd hours to make progress.

### **1.10 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study is centred in Chipinge district in Tamandai community. It is also imperative to note that the study will be carried out in rural areas, and hence the results cannot be a true reflection of what is happening in non-rural areas of Zimbabwe; the results will thus have a bias of rural areas and might not reflect the urban areas. The sample of the study will also be small and the results cannot be overgeneralised to the larger population of Zimbabwe.

### **1.11 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

**Assistive Devices-** Assistive devices, also known as assistive technology, refer to tools, equipment, or products that are designed to help individuals with disabilities perform tasks that they would otherwise have difficulty accomplishing (Johnson, 2017).

**Children-** The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the constitution of Zimbabwe defines children as all human beings below the age of 18 years (Brown, 2019).

**Disability-** Disability, according to a prominent definition from the World Bank (2019) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2020), is a complicated phenomenon that arises from the interaction of an individual's physical attributes with the aspects of their community and surroundings.

**Inclusive Education-** As defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2020), inclusive education is characterized as a system that respects diversity and endeavors to offer equal educational opportunities to all learners, irrespective of their background or ability.

**Mainstream schools-** schools can be defined as schools that are designed for and serve students with disabilities alongside their non-disabled peers. These schools aim to provide a learning environment that is as similar as possible to that of the general population, while still accommodating the unique needs of students with disabilities (Gartner & Allen, 2007).

## **1.12 PROJECT OUTLINE**

**Chapter One:** This chapter deals with the theoretical background, problem statement and justification of the study. It is an opening chapter which also constitute aim, objectives and research questions. Definition of key terms and conclusion is also given at the end of the chapter.

**Chapter Two:** This chapter encompasses literature review by sorely writing on what is based on other academics' perspectives on the investigation of the subject at hand. This study was built using a variety of theories and concepts from various academics, and the applicability of their ideas will also be evaluated. The study will adopt the social model, which reveals disability as a socially constructed occurrence.

**Chapter Three:** The researcher's method for gathering data is the main focus of the chapter. It concentrates on the research methodology, research design, research tools, target population, sample techniques, data collection methods, data presentation and ethical considerations. This helps to defend the researcher's strategy for completing the chapter one study objectives. The researcher discusses the application of the research methodology in more detail in chapter.

**Chapter Four:** This chapter dwells on data presentation, interpretation and analysis of research findings. Discussion of the findings will also be done in this chapter and the findings will be presented thematically.

**Chapter 5:** This chapter centres on the summary, taking into account the objectives of the study and the data from the preceding chapter. It also underlines the research findings' conclusion and recommendations.

### **1.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The study's introduction was the chapter's main topic. It largely concentrated on the background of the study, problem statement, justification of the study, aim, objectives, research questions, the definition of key terms as well as delimitations and limitations. This chapter serves as an introduction to the study and paves the way for the subsequent chapter's establishment of the facts.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

The chapter focuses on literature review. The chapter focuses on writing that is based on other academics' perspectives on the investigation of the subject at hand. This study was built using a variety of theories and concepts from various academics, and the applicability of their ideas will also be evaluated. The study will implement and examine the applicability of the Social model of disability to the research.

### **2.2. THE SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY**

The social model of disability, as proposed by Oliver (1990), is a theoretical framework that highlights the influence of society and its structures in establishing and perpetuating barriers for individuals with disabilities. This model contends that it is the social, attitudinal, and environmental obstacles that obstruct people with disabilities, rather than their impairments themselves (Purtell, 2013). This perspective stands in contrast to the traditional medical model, which primarily centres on the individual's impairment and its impact on their functioning. The social model of disability offers an alternative approach to comprehending and addressing the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. Barnes, Mercer & Shakespeare (2010) underscore the significance of social factors, such as societal attitudes, physical environments, and discriminatory practices, in moulding the experiences of disabled individuals. Oliver & Barnes (1998) contend that by acknowledging the influence of these external factors, the social model provides a more intricate comprehension of disability and advocates for the creation of more inclusive and accessible societies. In its broadest sense, the social model of disability revolves around a clear focus on the economic, environmental, and cultural barriers experienced by individuals perceived by others as having some form of impairment – whether physical, sensory, or intellectual (Oliver & Barnes, 2012). Lastly, the social model does not overlook inquiries and concerns related to impairment and/or the significance of medical and therapeutic treatments. It recognizes that in many cases, the

challenges associated with disabled lifestyles stem primarily from the absence of medical and other services.

Various scholars have outlined challenges faced by children in accessing education in mainstream schools and it is through the use of the social model that the research will recognize how physical, social, and attitudinal barriers can prevent children who have disabilities from acquiring education. The social model also suggests that the barriers faced by children in their quest for education are largely caused by the way society is structured. The study will then employ the aforementioned model in finding out barriers that children with disabilities face as the result of a lack of understanding and accommodation by society, rather than the child's disability itself. Additionally, negative attitudes and misconceptions in societies about disability which can lead to exclusion and discrimination will be also explored using this social model. To address these challenges, the social model emphasizes the need for inclusivity, equity, and social justice. It calls for measures such as providing equivalent access to quality education, embracing diversity in curriculum and teaching practices, eliminating biases and discrimination, and involving parents and communities in creating a supportive learning environment. Lastly the social model perspective draws robust conclusion that it is by addressing these social factors that children can better navigate the challenges they face in their quest for education, hence the theory act as a baseline for the study.

### **2.3. CHALLENGES FACED BY CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN THEIR QUEST FOR EDUCATION**

In recent years, there has been significant progress in guaranteeing that children with disabilities receive education. In the United States, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has been in place since 1990, providing a legal framework to ensure equal opportunities for people with disabilities (Campbell & Feinberg, 2016). However, some

schools still struggle with providing adequate accommodations and accessibility for students with disabilities. For instance, ramps and elevators may not be present in older school buildings, making it difficult for students with mobility issues to access all areas of the school. A study by Shogren, Wehmeyer, Palmer, Soukup, Little, Garner & Lawrence (2018) examined the experiences of learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms and revealed that inadequate backing and training for teachers were major obstacles to successful inclusion. Furthermore, students with disabilities often face social isolation and stigma due to their differences, which can impact their overall educational experience (Shogren et al., 2018). In England, the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) was implemented in 1995, and later replaced by the Equality Act 2010, but still faces challenges in providing adequate funding for building modifications and accessible transportation options which hinder the educational experience of children with disabilities (Hepple, & O’Cinneide, 2012). Research by Dyson & Millward (2015) highlights that many mainstream schools struggle to fulfil the diverse requirements of disabled children. A study by Cuskelly, Hoyer, Auld & Shilbury (2018) explored the perceptions of parents of who have children with disabilities in Australia and found that inadequate funding for support staff, assistive technology, and professional development for teachers impeded their children’s educational opportunities.

It is vital to note that Ethiopia is one of the nations with high prevalent of children with disabilities who face several barriers to education. One of the primary challenges is the lack of accessible infrastructure, such as ramps and specially designed classrooms for wheelchair users. Furthermore, the shortage of trained teachers who can effectively teach students with disabilities is another significant issue. Additionally, the high cost of assistive devices and transportation makes it difficult for families to provide their children with the necessary support to attend school. Recent scholars have investigated these challenges in Ethiopia. For example, a study by Assefa, Berhanu & Alemu (2019) highlights the importance of inclusive



education in addressing these barriers. The study emphasizes the need for the government to allocate more resources to special education and to train teachers to effectively teach children with disabilities. In Zambia, children with disabilities encounter various challenges when seeking education. One major obstacle is the shortage of trained teachers who can effectively cater to their needs. A study conducted by Munsanje, Mwale & Njobvu (2019) highlighted the scarcity of teachers trained in special needs education in the country. This shortage leads to a lack of inclusive practices and appropriate support for children with disabilities within mainstream schools. Similarly, Malawi faces several challenges in providing inclusive education for children with disabilities. One significant barrier is the negative societal attitudes towards disability, which often result in stigmatization and discrimination against these children (Gondwe, Chilimampunga & Makwinja, 2020). Such attitudes contribute to limited access to education for children with disabilities as they are often excluded from mainstream schools. Inadequate funding and resource allocation also pose significant challenges to inclusive education in Malawi (MacLachlan & Mannan, 2014)

Many studies on children with disabilities in Zimbabwe have focused primarily on their educational outcomes, rather than their own experiences and perspectives. Studies have often overlooked on societal knowledge, attitude and cultural beliefs towards inclusive education as well as educating children with disabilities in Zimbabwe. According to the collaboration between the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe (2019), it is approximated that only around 10% of children with disabilities have educational access. In Zimbabwe, the current inclusive and education-supportive stance predominantly centres on disability rather than the barriers encountered by the students (Sithole & Mafa, 2017). Another aspect reveals that specific individuals, families, and communities have upheld traditional attitudes, and their treatment and perception of the disabled have remained unchanged (Wa Munyi, 2012). Like any other

third world countries, children with disabilities in Zimbabwe face significant barriers to accessing education. Limited infrastructure and resources make it difficult for these children to attend school. According to a study by Mlambo-Ngcuka and Chitsiko (2018), inadequate physical infrastructure, such as ramps and accessible toilets, makes it challenging for children with disabilities to navigate school environments. Additionally, a lack of specialized teaching materials and assistive devices further hampers their learning experience (Kaseke & Chiparausha, 2019).

#### **2.4. THE COMMUNITY'S KNOWLEDGE ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

Globally, inclusive education has gained significant attention and has been the subject of extensive research particularly in developed countries such as the USA, England, Germany, and Australia. Recent studies in the United States have focused on various aspects of inclusive education, including its impact on academic achievement, social integration, and long-term outcomes for students with disabilities as well as community sensitization. The study by Kozleski, Artiles & Waitoller (2019) emphasized the importance of collaboration between the community, parents and special educators in providing effective support for students with diverse needs. It again highlighted that several community people are firmly knowledgeable on inclusive education. The same notion applies in England where inclusive education is a fundamental principle outlined in national policies and legislation. Recent studies have focused on various aspects of inclusive education in England, including community and parent education, teacher training, curriculum adaptation, and the impact on student outcomes. One study by Florian, Black-Hawkins & Rouse (2019) investigated the role of community and teacher collaboration in promoting inclusive practices in English schools. The research highlighted the need for continuous professional development to equip teachers and parents with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively support diverse learners. In Germany, inclusive education has been a topic of discussion and research in

recent years. Scholars have examined various aspects of inclusive education, including teacher attitudes, parental involvement, and the impact on students' social and emotional well-being. A study by Beelmann, Pfingsten & Lösel (2020) investigated the role of parental involvement in promoting inclusive education in Germany. The major global findings highlighted that vast knowledge by the community on inclusive education is of greater importance in creating inclusive learning environments and supporting the needs of students with disabilities.

The level of awareness regarding inclusive education in developing countries can vary depending on various factors such as government policies, cultural beliefs, socio-economic conditions, and educational infrastructure. Scholars have conducted studies to assess the awareness and understanding of inclusive education within communities as societies of these contexts. Scholars have also identified positive initiatives and efforts made by governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community stakeholders to promote inclusive education. In Kenya, a study conducted by Smith and Johnson (2018) examined the level of awareness and understanding of inclusive education among teachers and people in communities. The study found that while some teachers and parents had a basic understanding of the concept, there was a lack of comprehensive knowledge regarding its implementation strategies and benefits. The study recommended the need for targeted professional development programs to enhance teacher capacity in implementing inclusive practices. Another research study by Garcia & Johnson (2019) focused on the perceptions of parents towards inclusive education Ethiopia. The study revealed that parents had limited awareness about inclusive education but expressed a desire for their children to be included in mainstream schools. The findings emphasized the importance of raising awareness among guardians as well as including them in all the decision-making procedures which is line to their children's education. In India, A study conducted by Patel and Sharma (2020) explored

the challenges faced by schools in implementing inclusive education such as lack of support services from communities, culture and lack of knowledge including limited teacher training. The study highlighted the need for policy reforms, resource allocation, and collaborative efforts among stakeholders to overcome these challenges. In conclusion, the awareness of inclusive education in developing countries varies depending on multiple factors. While there are challenges and barriers to its implementation, scholars have conducted studies to assess the level of awareness and understanding among communities, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders. These studies highlight the need for targeted interventions, policy reforms, and collaborative efforts to promote inclusive education in developing countries.

Recent studies in Zimbabwe has again limited engagement with communities and stakeholders in conscientising them on inclusive education. Another aspect demonstrates that particular individuals, families, and communities have upheld traditional values, and their treatment and viewpoint of the disabled have remained unchanged (Wa Munyi, 2012). This vastly implies that several Zimbabwean communities still lack vital information on inclusive education. A study conducted by Chireshe, Munyoro & Makuvara (2018) titled “The State of Inclusive Education in Zimbabwe: Perceptions of School Heads” explored the perceptions of school heads and their understanding of disability-inclusive education in Zimbabwe. The study revealed that although school heads had some knowledge about inclusive education, their understanding was often limited to physical accessibility rather than the broader concept of inclusivity. The research by Chireshe & Makuvara (2017) highlighted various factors hindering the successful implementation of inclusive education, including limited resources, poor awareness strategies, bad attitudes towards disabilities, and inadequate training for teachers. Engaging communities and raising awareness about inclusive education is crucial for its successful implementation. A study by Kurebwa (2019) titled “Community Engagement in Promoting Inclusive Education in Zimbabwe” explored the role of

community engagement in promoting inclusive education. The research emphasized the need for sensitization programs targeting parents, community leaders, and other stakeholders to foster a supportive environment for inclusive education. Furthermore, Mutasa (2019) investigated the perceptions and attitudes of teachers, parents, and school administrators towards inclusive education. The study revealed the need for awareness campaigns and professional development programs to enhance understanding and acceptance of inclusive education.

## **2.5. THE COMMUNITY'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS EDUCATING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

In first world countries, the community's attitude towards providing education to learners with disabilities has evolved significantly over the years. It can be argued that the community's attitude towards educating children with disabilities has become increasingly positive (Kozleski et al., 2019). One such example is the United States, where the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was enacted in 1975. With the help of this legislation, children with disabilities will always have access to a public education that is appropriate, affordable, and catered to their specific requirements. Since then, many countries have adopted similar policies to promote inclusive education. In Canada, there has been a rise in awareness about the value of inclusive education, with many parents advocating for their children's right to be educated alongside their peers without disabilities. This increased awareness has led to a push for more resources and support for inclusive education, as well as a greater emphasis on professional development for teachers to ensure they are furnished to encounter the diverse needs of all pupils. The United Kingdom approved the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (The SENDA) in 2001, and later the Children and Families Act in 2014, these acts emphasize the importance of including children with special needs in mainstream schools and ensuring they receive the necessary support to succeed academically and socially, thereby increasing positive minds in communities towards

educating children with disabilities (Florian et al., 2019). Scholars have also played a crucial role in shaping the community's attitude towards educating children with disabilities. Dr. Giangreco's research (1997) has shown that inclusive education promotes social and emotional development, improves academic outcomes, and reduces the stigma in communities associated with disabilities.

In developing countries like India, the studies have shown that the Right to Education Act of 2009 requires all children, including those with disabilities, to receive a free and obligatory education for the age range of 6 to 14. However, despite these legal provisions, the implementation of inclusive education faces challenges due to various societal attitudes. A study conducted by Nambissan and Rao (2014) examined the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education in India. It revealed that while some teachers were supportive and believed in the potential of children with disabilities, others held negative attitudes due to lack of training, resources, and support. Negative attitudes were often influenced by stereotypes and misconceptions about disability. Furthermore, scholars like Mitra (2005) argue that societal attitudes play a significant role in hindering inclusive education in India. Stigma and discrimination against individuals with disabilities are prevalent, leading to exclusion from mainstream schools and deprived access to quality educational experiences. In Kenya, their attitudes towards educating children who has disabilities have been gradually shifting towards inclusion. The Kenyan government has taken steps to promote disability-inclusive education through policies which include the Special Needs Education Policy (2009) and the Basic Education Act (2013). These policies aim to cater equivalent opportunities for every child with disabilities in mainstream schools. A study by Eisele et al. (2015) examined attitudes of teachers towards disability-inclusive learning in Kenya. It found that while some teachers had positive attitudes and were willing to include learners with disabilities in classrooms, others faced challenges due to limited resources, lack of training,

and negative societal attitudes. Negative attitudes were often rooted in cultural beliefs and misconceptions about disability. However, there are inspiring examples of communities promoting inclusive education in Kenya. The Kakamega Integrated School, founded in 2004, is an inclusive school that provides education for both children with and without disabilities. This school has been successful in fostering a supportive environment where all children can learn and grow together.

Traditionally, Zimbabwean communities had limited understanding of disabilities and often stigmatized children with disabilities. In many cases, these children were marginalized and excluded from society. However, with the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2013, Zimbabwe began to prioritize the rights of persons with disabilities, including educational rights. This marked a turning point in the country's approach to disability and paved the way for more inclusive education policies. Community attitudes towards educating children with disabilities have also been gradually changing. A study conducted in 2013 by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) found that there was an increase in the enrolment of children with disabilities in mainstream schools, indicating a shift in community attitudes. However, there are still challenges, such as lack of resources, inadequate training for teachers, and stigma within the community. In Zimbabwe, a number of domestic and foreign organisations have been promoting inclusive education. These groups, which include the Zimbabwe National Association of the Deaf (ZNAD) and the Zimbabwe Association of the Physically Disabled (ZAPD), have been promoting policy changes, educating the public, and offering assistance to families and children with disabilities. Finally, one can argue that the attitudes towards educating children with disabilities in Zimbabwe have improved significantly over the years, thanks to government policies, community awareness, and the efforts of various

organizations. However, there is still a long way to go in guaranteeing that every child with a disability has access to excellent education and are treated with respect and dignity.

## **2.6. CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The literature review in this chapter was done with consideration for the objectives of the study. Examining the theoretical framework that guided the research has been also another focus of this chapter. The Social model has been adopted and its application to the research has been acknowledged. It also looked at the global, regional and local overview of the topic. The following chapter will look at research methodology used by the researcher to collect the information.



## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is going to highlight the methodology, research design which was used in the study and how the research was carried out. It also highlights the instruments used to collect data. The chapter will describe the population, sample and the sampling techniques to be employed in the study. It will further explore the way the data was analysed and presented as well as ethical considerations.

### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The study triangulated qualitative and quantitative research designs. Mixed methodology, as described by Creswell (2014), refers to the integration of qualitative and quantitative research methods in a single research project. Creswell (2014), offers several advantages of mixed methodology in research as it enhances the validity of findings, leverages the complementary strengths of qualitative and quantitative methods, and offers increased flexibility in research design. By integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches, researchers can conduct more robust and insightful studies that contribute to a deeper understanding of complex social phenomena (Maxwell, 2013).

### **3.3 RESEARCH METHODS**

A survey was used to collect quantitative data, while in-depth interviews and key informants interviews were employed to collect qualitative data. One definition of an in-depth interview as a qualitative research method entails that a thorough and detailed exploration of a participant's experiences, thoughts, and feelings on a particular topic (Creswell, 2014). Researchers can benefit from conducting in-depth interviews in a number of ways, including the opportunity to acquire a deep understanding of participants' perspectives, gather high-quality data, building trust and rapport with participants, gather contextual data, and provide valuable insights into participants' experiences and attitudes (Yin, 2017). Creswell (2014)

highlighted several advantages of using surveys in research. These include efficiency and cost-effectiveness, standardization and comparability, anonymity and confidentiality.

### **3.4 RESEARCH TOOLS**

The study made use of questionnaires to collect quantitative data while interview guides were used to collect qualitative data. Questionnaires are efficient, cost-effective, and provide standardized data collection methods (Yin, 2017). The anonymity and flexibility of questionnaires encourage honest responses and allow for both quantitative and qualitative data collection. Interviews with interview guides are more flexible for the interviewers, and the interview receives a higher response rate than questions sent by mail. Additionally, those who are illiterate can still participate in the interview process.

### **3.5 TARGET POPULATION**

The study targeted households with children with disabilities in Tamandai community in Chipinge district rural ward 14. The Department of Social Development Chipinge District Office reveals that the 2022 census shows there are 1085 households in Tamandai rural community where 85 households has children with disabilities. The study also targeted five key informants from the Department of Social Development. According to is defined as the aggregate of individuals, families, groups, or communities who share common characteristics and are the focus of a particular study or intervention. Kumar (2014) defines a population as a group of people who have certain traits which assist the researcher in addressing the problem statement of the study.

### **3.6 SAMPLING**

Simple random sampling technique was used to identify 20 respondents from households with children with disabilities. Simple random sampling is a probability sampling technique where participants are selected randomly from a larger population. The advantages of simple random sampling include that every participant has an identical opportunities of being chosen

and there is also minimal bias (Neuman, 2014). Quota sampling technique was used to identify 8 children with disabilities. Creswell (2014) highlights several advantages of using quota sampling as it is flexible in participant selection and practicality in situations where probability sampling methods may not be feasible. Purposive sampling technique was used to identify 5 key informants and this type of non-probability sampling notes that participants are selected based on their ability to provide valuable insights into the research topic and is hence it is easier to get a sample of subjects with particular desired characteristics. A sample is a representative subset of the population that is being used to collect data (De Vos, Straydom, Flouche, and Delport 2011). Sampling is the procedure of choosing a limited number of components from a wider, predetermined target set of components such that the data collected (De Vos, et al, 2011).

### **3.7 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

Data was collected from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2024 in Chipinge rural ward 14 in Tamandai community. The researcher interviewed eight children with disabilities as well as other twenty respondents from the households with children with disabilities. The researcher also interviewed five Social Development Officers (SDOs) who work at the Department of Social Development (DSD), Chipinge district office. There were no challenges encountered in collecting data.

### **3.8 RESEARCH ETHICS**

The research was guided by quite a number of ethical considerations such as confidentiality, informed consent, voluntary participation and avoidance of harm.

**Confidentiality** – the researcher took measures to protect the confidentiality of participants' personal information. This includes ensuring that data is stored securely, using anonymization techniques when reporting results, and obtaining necessary permissions for

data sharing or publication. By protecting privacy, researchers and participants can continue to have a trusting relationship and avoid potential harm or confidentiality violations.

**Informed Consent** – Participants were fully informed of what the research is all about and were informed on their right not to participate in the research. All the respondents were informed on how the study was to be done. Every participant was informed of the academic goal of the research as well as their freedom to decline and withdraw from study at any time during the course.

**Voluntary Participation** – Information gathered from this research was voluntarily given by the respondents. No one was forced to provide information against their will.

**Avoidance of harm** –Participants were not harmed in any way when participating in the research.

### **3.9 DATA ANALYSIS**

Quantitative data was analysed using excel, whilst qualitative data was analysed thematically using NVivo.

### **3.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The methodology utilised to gather data for the study was presented by the Chapter. The population, sample, and sampling techniques, data collection tools, ethical considerations, research design, and brief discussion of data analysis were all covered in the chapter. In essence, the chapter described the methodology used for the study, and hence the following chapter presents data analysis as well as the discussion the findings.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The chapter deals with data presentation, analysis and interpretation of data in relation to the objectives of the study. The chapter also covered the discussion of the findings linking with related literature.

### **4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

The majority of the respondents 60% were females as compared to 40% who were males as shown in table 4.1 below. Most of the respondents 30% were from the age group 30 -35 years, these were followed by 20 % of the respondents who were from the age groups of 36-41 years and 42-47 years. Fifteen percent (15%) were from the age group 48-53 years. Ten (10) % of the respondents were from the age group 54-59 years. Five percent (5%) of the respondents were from the age group 24-29 years. There were no respondents from the age group of 18-23 years and 60 years and above. The majority of the respondents, 70%, were married while 15 % of the respondents were widows and single. None of the respondents were divorced and widowed. Most of the respondents, 65%, attended secondary education, these were followed by 20% of respondents who attended primary education. Five (5%) of the respondents attended tertiary education while the least, 10%, never attended school.

**Table 4.1: Percentage distribution of respondents' demographic information.**

Variables	Sex	Number	Percentage
	Females	12	60%
	Males	8	40%
Age	Females	Males	
18-23	0	0	0%
24-29	1	0	5%
30-35	4	2	30%
36-41	1	3	20%
42-47	3	1	20%
48-53	2	1	15%
54-59	1	1	10%
60+	0	0	0%
Marital status	Female	Males	
Married	9	5	70%
Single	0	3	15%
Widow	3	0	15%
Divorced	0	0	0%
Widower	0	0	0%
Level of education	Females	Males	
Primary	3	1	20%
Secondary	8	5	65%
Tertiary	0	1	5%
Never	1	1	10%

N=20

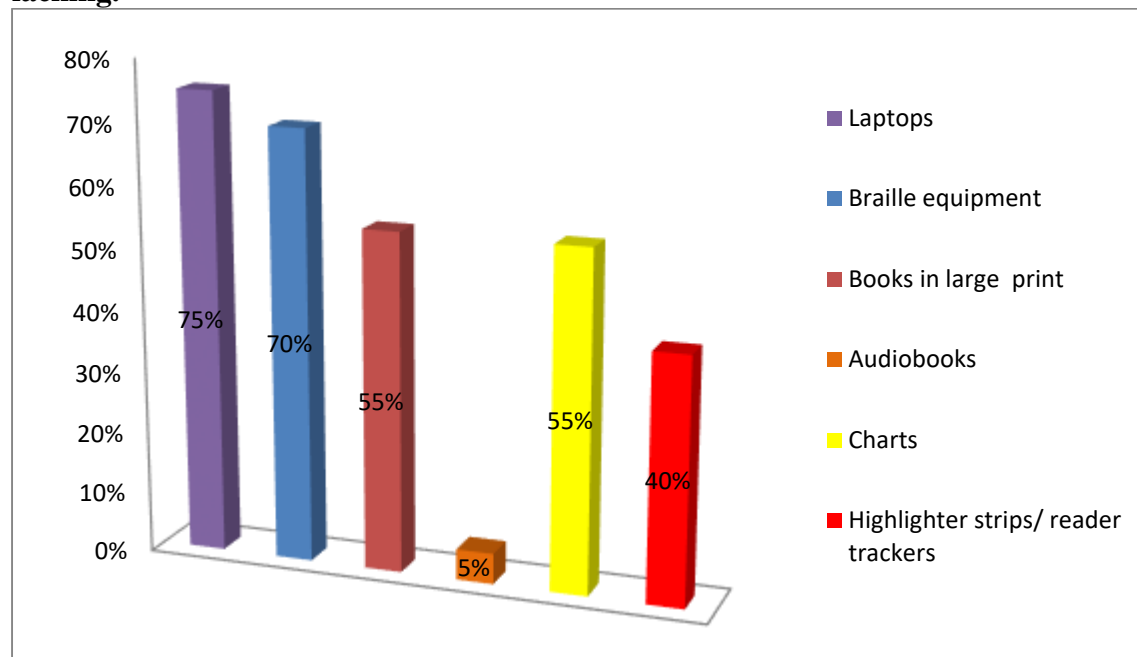
#### **4.3. CHALLENGES FACED BY CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN THEIR QUEST FOR EDUCATION.**

The research unanimously yielded out that children with disabilities face complex challenges in their quest for education. The majority of the respondents, 80%, indicated that children with disability are marred by multifaceted challenges in their quest for education in mainstream schools. The remaining 20% of the respondents voted against the idea that children with disabilities face complex challenges in their quest for education. Consistent with qualitative findings, the research revealed that the challenges children with disabilities face in their quest for education include shortage of trained teachers, lack of teaching material, poor infrastructural development, poverty, discrimination, lack of community support as well as limited resource allocation. One respondent said;

*Many of the challenge we face are as a result of poverty, discrimination, lack of community support, poorly built infrastructure, lack of resources channelled towards disabled children as well as unavailability of trained teachers to take care of us.*

When asked about which teaching materials were lacking, the majority of the respondents, 75%, reported that laptops were scarce in mainstream school which then affected education of children with disabilities (Figure 1 below). Another bunch of respondents, 70%, indicated that braille equipment was another lacking teaching material. Fifty-five percent (55%) of the respondents indicated that books in large print and charts to aid the disadvantaged children in schools were lacking. Highlighter strips or reader trackers were another material in shortage and indicated by 40% of the respondents. Lastly, very few respondents of about 5% recorded that audiobooks were again an essential material which is lacking in mainstream schools. This was also supported by the qualitative data which reported that the most essential lacking teaching materials are laptops, braille equipment, books and charts and this vastly leads to a decline in children's ability to perform well in academics since they could not afford to perform the way children with no disability does.

**Figure 1: Percentage distribution of respondent's view on which teaching material were lacking.**



N=20

The majority, 75% of the respondents reported that children with disability are discriminated, whilst 20% of the respondents disagreed with the above notion. Other 5% of the respondents reported that they are not sure if children with disability face discrimination or not. This was again supported by the qualitative data which reported that most disabled children are victims of abuse, social discrimination and stigmatisation in families, communities and schools because of their inability to perform other duties and activities. Key informants also reported that discriminatory traditional treatment of persons with disabilities by families and communities has an adverse impact on the educational experiences and opportunities of children with disabilities, and hence leading to social exclusion and hindering their overall well-being. One respondent remarked;

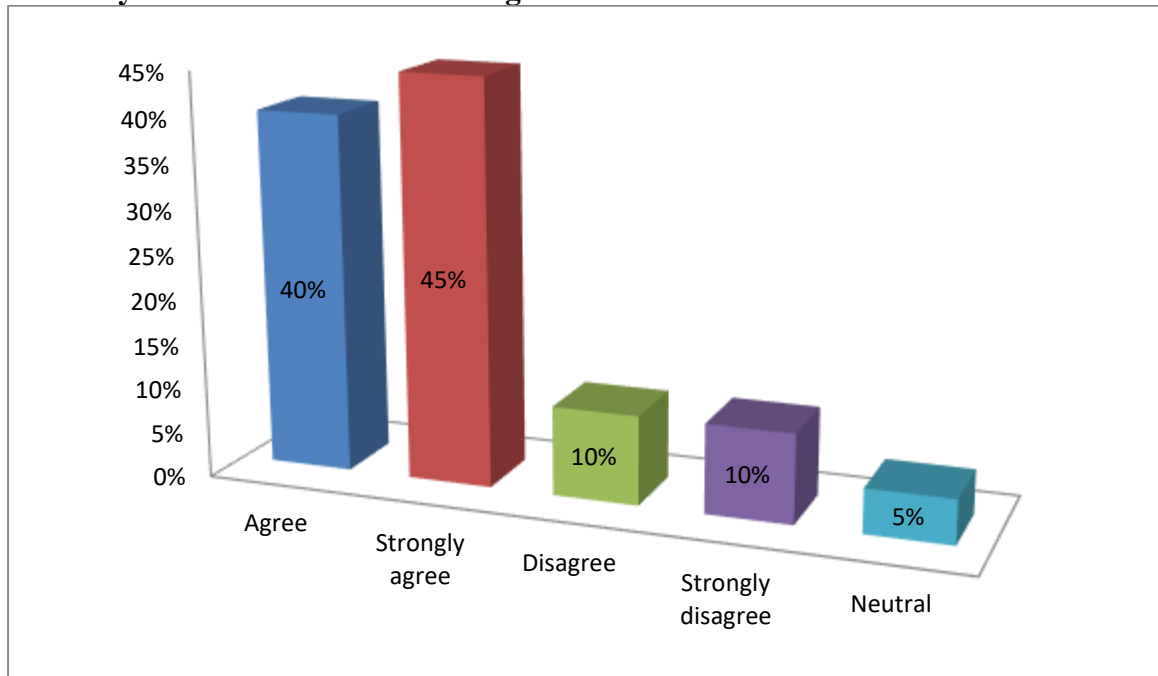
*We're more vulnerable to discrimination on a daily basis beginning from family members, community, classmates and even the environment we stay since we cannot perform day to day activities without aid from colleagues and*



*as a result, this is a major tool in killing our personality, self-esteem, future and opportunities.*

The findings revealed that most of the respondents, 45% strongly agreed that students with disabilities often face social isolation and stigma due to their differences, which can impact their overall educational experience (Figure 2 below). It is important to note that 40% of the respondents were on the agreeing portion. On the other hand, 10% of the respondents chose to disagree and strongly disagree portion whilst only 5% of the respondents were on the neutral side. The qualitative data hence indicated that most of the children with either physical or mental disability suffer segregation and isolation on a daily basis due to their inability to perform normally without aids and will hence be left out in many opportunities which therefore bring negative educational experience and outcome.

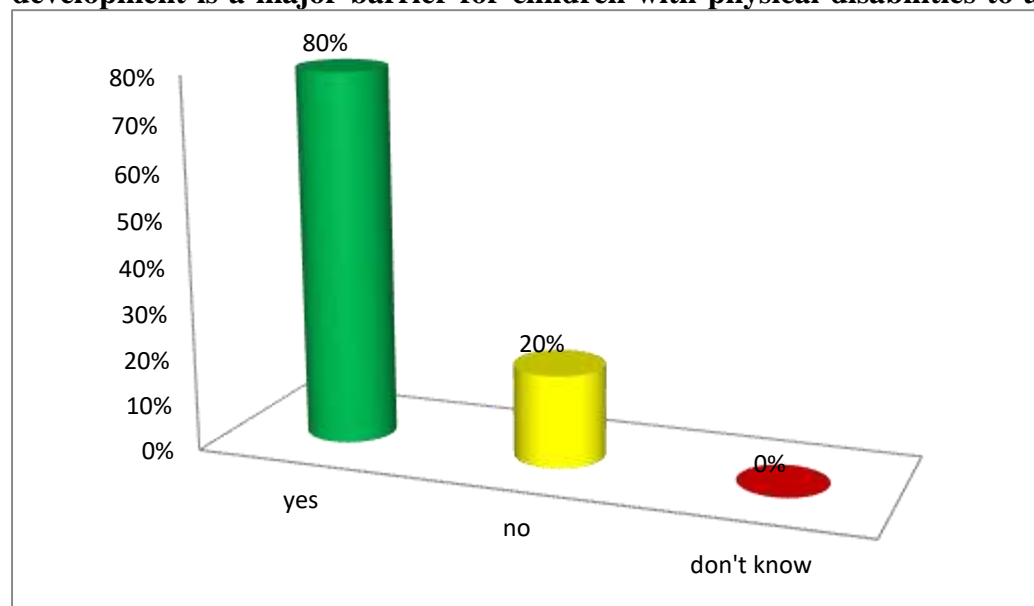
**Figure 2: Percentage distribution of the respondents who believe that students with disability face social isolation and stigma due to their differences.**



**N=20**

The majority of the respondents, 85%, believed that poor infrastructural development is a major barrier for children with disability to attend school whilst the remaining 20% of the respondents were against that opinion (figure 3 below). Consistent with the qualitative findings, poor infrastructure in schools has significantly impeded the ability of children with physical disabilities to learn. It has been reported that physical environment of surrounding schools is often difficult for children with physical disabilities to access, both in terms of getting to school and moving around the premises. Further qualitative findings reported that there is a general lack of essential facilities such as ramps to help children with physical disabilities enter and move around the school. There has been again a major concern on how school toilets make it impossible for students on wheel chairs to use, which is a greater barrier for children with physical disabilities to attend school.

**Figure 3: Percentage distribution of respondents who believe that poor infrastructural development is a major barrier for children with physical disabilities to attend school.**

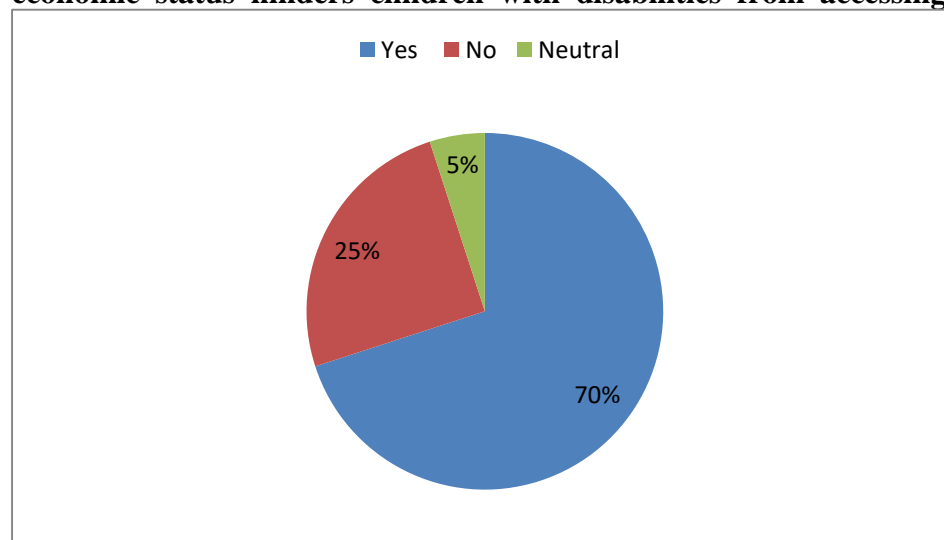


N=20

Absolute poverty in community as a result of low economic status of the nation was believed to be a major factor hindering children with disabilities from accessing quality education. Figure 4 below presents that the majority of the respondents, 70%, reported that poverty and

low economic status hinders children with disabilities from accessing quality education whereas 25% of the respondents were against the idea, while 5% remained neutral. In support of the above data, qualitative report indicated that poverty and low economic status is a significant barrier to children with disabilities from accessing quality education due to resource scarcity and poor support systems in place to accommodate their specific needs. Children from in poverty-stricken families face numerous barriers to accessing education leading to lower educational achievement. Key informants also reported that lower-income children, including those with disabilities, are generally producing poor performance as compared to their wealthier counterparts, and hence highlighting the impact of poverty on educational outcomes. Low-income often results in lack the resources for good health and high-quality schools, which can directly impact the educational opportunities available to children with disabilities. Key informants again pointed how the intersectionality of poverty and low economic status is gruesome in creating a thorny environment for children with disabilities which then further exacerbate the barriers they face in acquiring quality education.

**Figure 4: Percentage distribution of respondents who believed poverty and low economic status hinders children with disabilities from accessing quality education.**



N=20

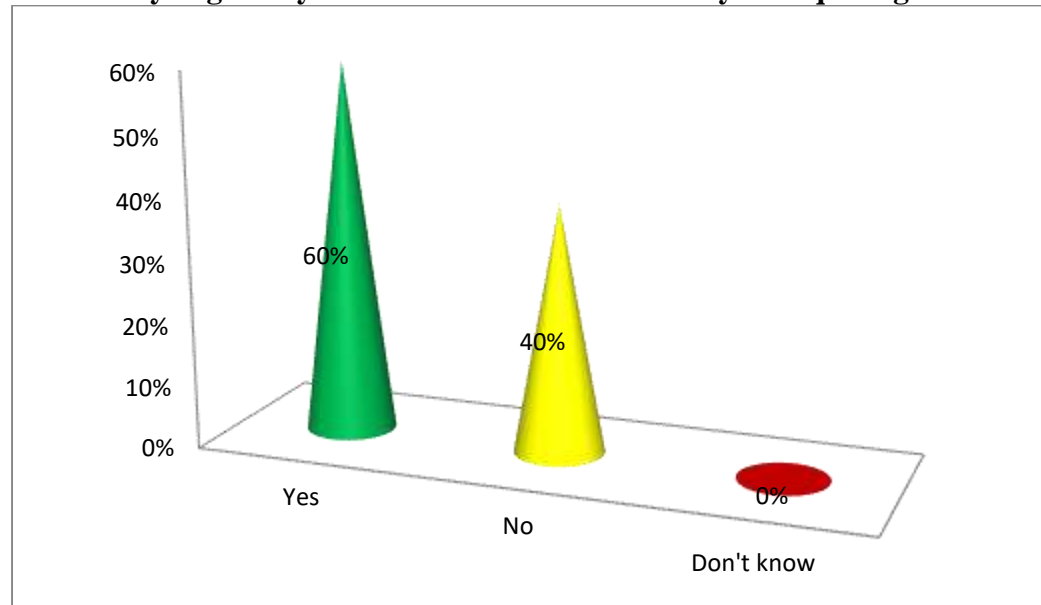
The majority of the respondents 75% of highlighted that there are shortages of trained teachers to work children with disabilities in mainstream schools. On the other hand, 15% of the respondents indicated against the idea that there are shortages of trained teachers to work children with disabilities in mainstream schools whilst the remaining 10% of the respondents were not aware of the condition in schools. Qualitative findings then revealed several challenges to children with disabilities in mainstream schools due to lack of trained teachers. It was reported that there is a shortage of properly trained and experienced special education teachers, which affects schools most acutely and presents significant challenges in providing appropriate education for students with disabilities. Key informants elaborated how mainstream teachers have expressed concerns about inclusive education for students with disabilities, indicating that finding ways to meet the learning needs of these students can be challenging, especially due to the lack of properly trained teachers. One respondent has this to say;

*The shortage of teachers in schools is a national crisis that requires significant attention whilst the rural schools estranged in poverty are highly affected and there are very few trained teachers to work with our specially-abled children which then affect their enrolment and attendance.*

The majority of the respondents, 60%, revealed that lack of support from community negatively affects children with disability in acquiring education while the smaller portion of the respondents, 40% reported that against the above mentioned idea (Figure 5 below). Quantitative findings also noted that children with disabilities are facing limited access to educational resources and support services due to the lack of community involvement and advocacy for inclusive education. Lack of community support results in children with disabilities experiencing social exclusion, and hence leads to feelings of isolation and a lack of belonging at school. The absence of community support contributes to the persistence of

barriers to inclusive education, hindering the implementation of inclusive practices and accommodations for children with disabilities. The research again found out that lack of community support leads to limited advocacy efforts and awareness about the rights and needs of children with disabilities, further intensifying the challenges they face in accessing quality education.

**Figure 5: Percentage distribution of respondents who believe lack of support from community negatively affects children with disability in acquiring education.**



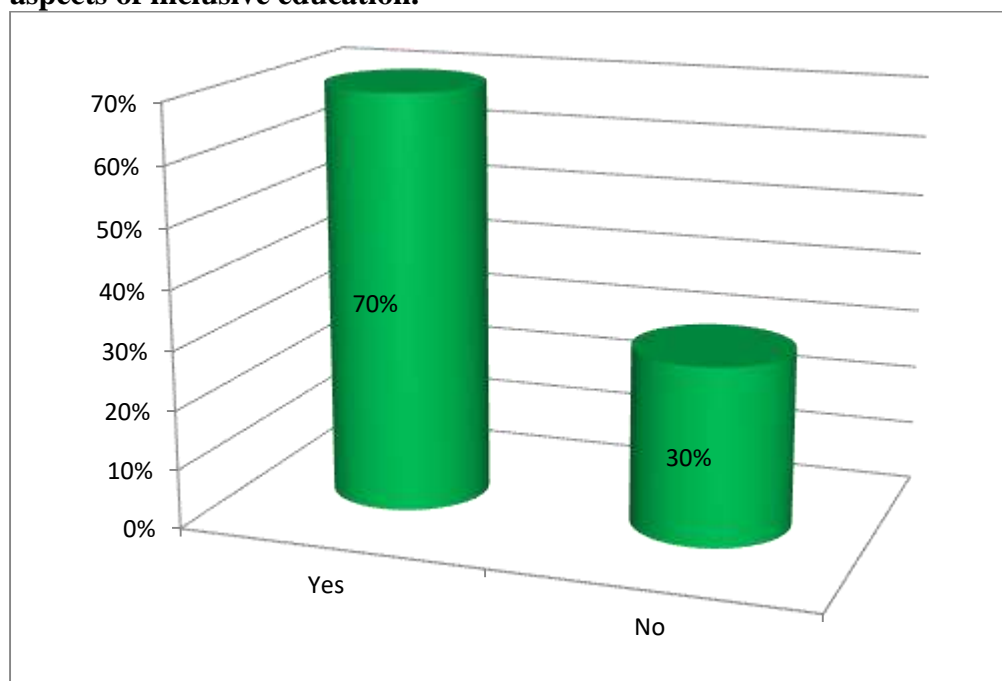
N=20

#### **4.4. THE COMMUNITY'S KNOWLEDGE ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION.**

When asked about inclusive education, the majority of the respondents, 70%, indicated that the community is fully aware of various aspects of inclusive education (Figure 6 below). However, 30% of the respondents reported that they had no idea on any aspects of inclusive education. The qualitative data found that inclusive education is referred to as an accommodative approach where all students with and without disabilities are mixed in the same classroom, providing equal learning opportunities, therefore promoting collaboration and barrier reduction for all children, both those with and without disabilities. Another view from the respondents was that inclusive education upholds accessibility where students have

access to and can participate in the general education environment, given the appropriate support.

**Figure 6: Percentage distribution of respondents if the community was aware of various aspects of inclusive education.**

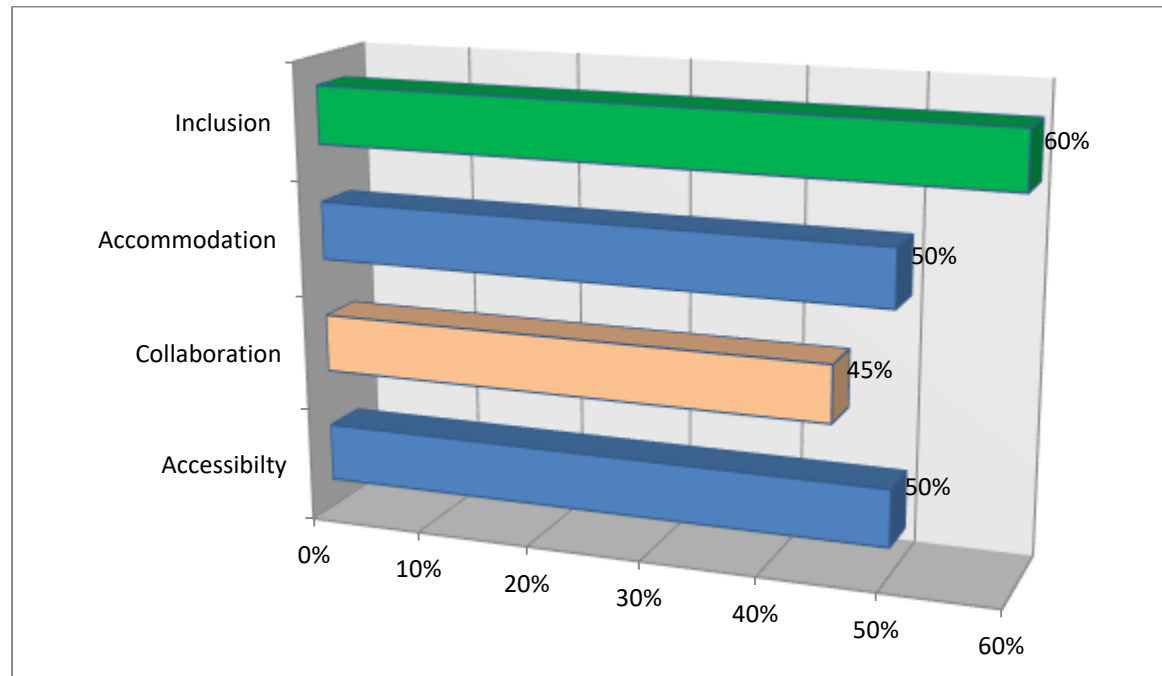


N=20

The majority of the respondents, 60%, responded that inclusivity is one of the major aspects of inclusive education followed by accessibility and accommodation which both recorded 50% of the respondents (Figure 7 below). Forty-five percent (45%) of the respondents indicated on collaboration as an aspect of inclusive education. The general consensus from the qualitative findings reported that inclusive education encompasses enabling environments and resources to be physically accessible as well as eroding barriers that hinder the participation of students with disabilities in education. Also, it was reported that inclusive education involves the act of fostering a culture where by everyone, despite abilities, be given opportunity to learn together as well as accommodating other special learning needs to facilitate the inclusion of students with diverse abilities. Successful inclusive classrooms

require teachers to collaborate with and receive the support of all members of the school community, fostering a stronger and more inclusive learning environment.

**Figure 7: Percentage distribution of respondents' indication on the aspects of inclusive education**

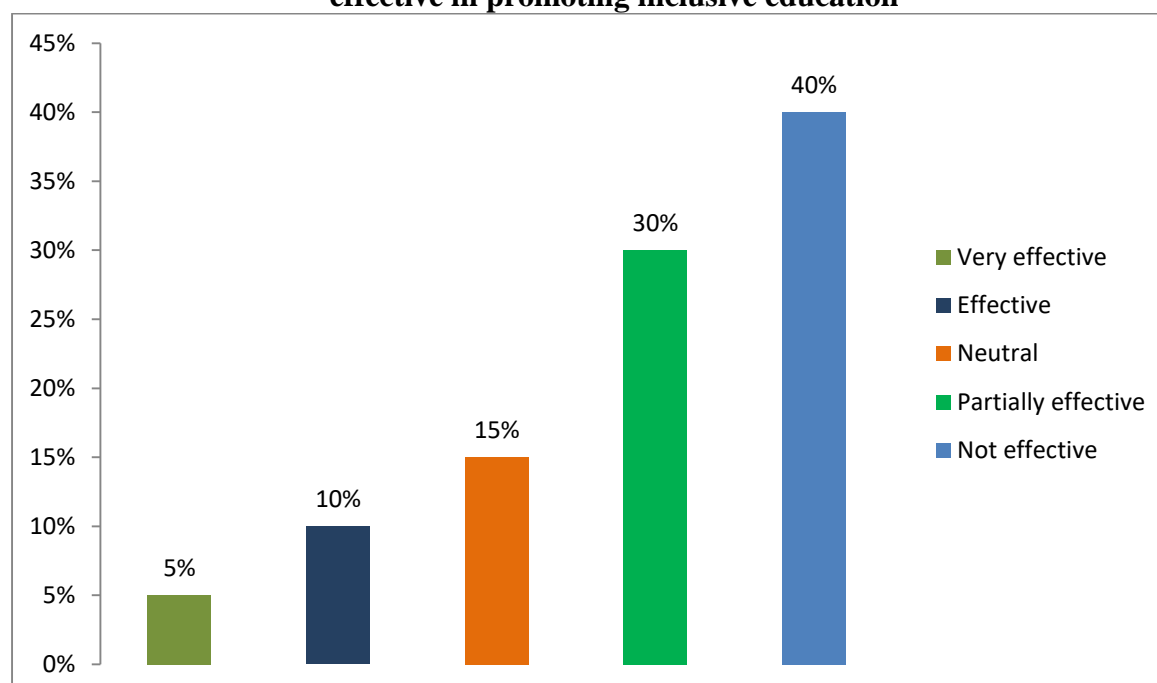


N=20

The majority of the respondents, 40% reported that the community engagement is not effective in promoting inclusive education (Figure 8 below). Thirty percent (30%) of the respondents indicated that the community is partially effective in promoting inclusive education whilst 15% of the respondents remained neutral on this idea. The very effective and effective portion received 5% and 10% of the respondents respectively. In parallel with the above findings, qualitative data reveals how community engagement fosters a supportive and well equitable environment for children with disabilities, promoting their participation and creating a more inclusive society for individuals with disabilities. The research indicated that community engagement is again a tool used to advocate and promoting community programs that facilitate inclusive participation. It was noted that although community engagement plays a crucial role in promoting disability inclusive education, the community

still lag behind due to low participation in empowering an inclusive and equitable society as well as poor advocating strategies for inclusive participation in community programs.

**Figure 8: Percentage distribution of respondents on if the community engagement is effective in promoting inclusive education**



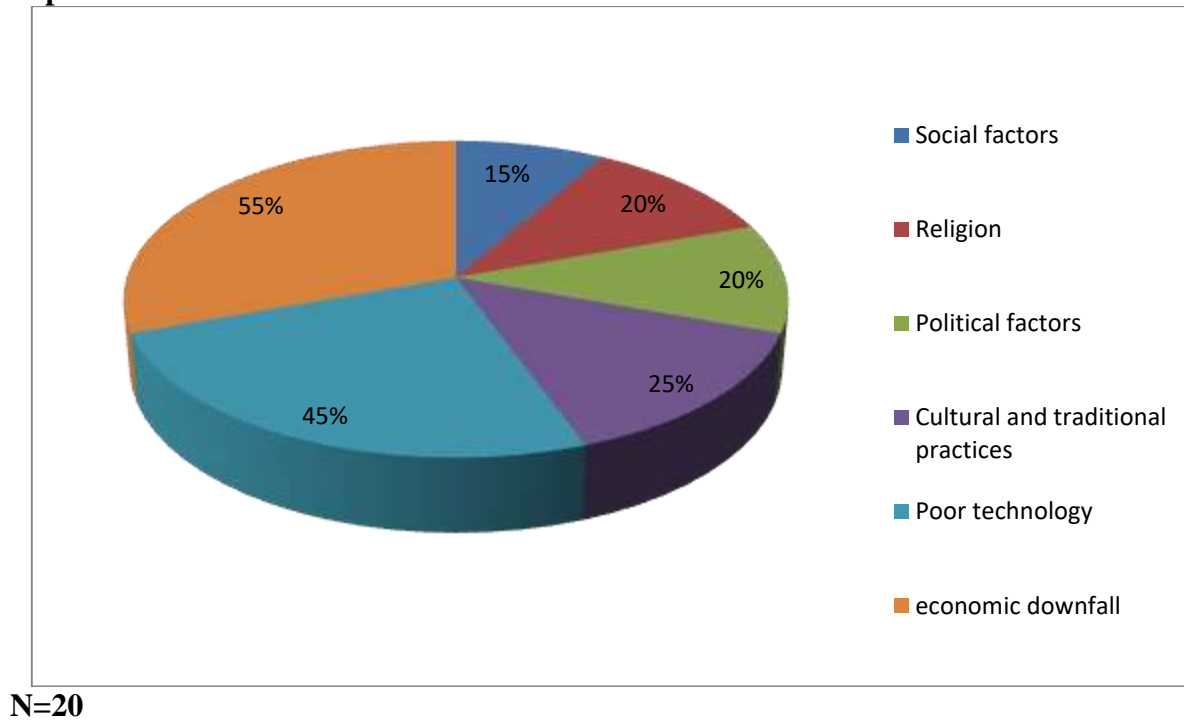
N=20

The majority of the respondents, 55%, reported that economic downfall is among of the factors hindering the successful implementation of inclusive education (Figure 9 below). Forty-five percent (45%) highlighted poor technology as another impeding factor of successful implementation of inclusive education. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the respondents argued that cultural and traditional practices again hinder the successful implementation of inclusive education while 20% of the respondents indicated political factors and religion. Social factors were ranked last which recorded 10% of the respondents. The qualitative findings of research reveal the need to address political factors which include administrative structures to lobby and ensure the availability of resources. Issues such as limited resources, including funding, specialized staff, and assistive technologies were derived to be major factors hindering the successful implementation of inclusive education.



Key informants stressed on social factors such as attitudinal barriers, negative stereotypes and assumptions about the quality of life for individuals with disabilities as hindrances to the successful inclusive education implementation.

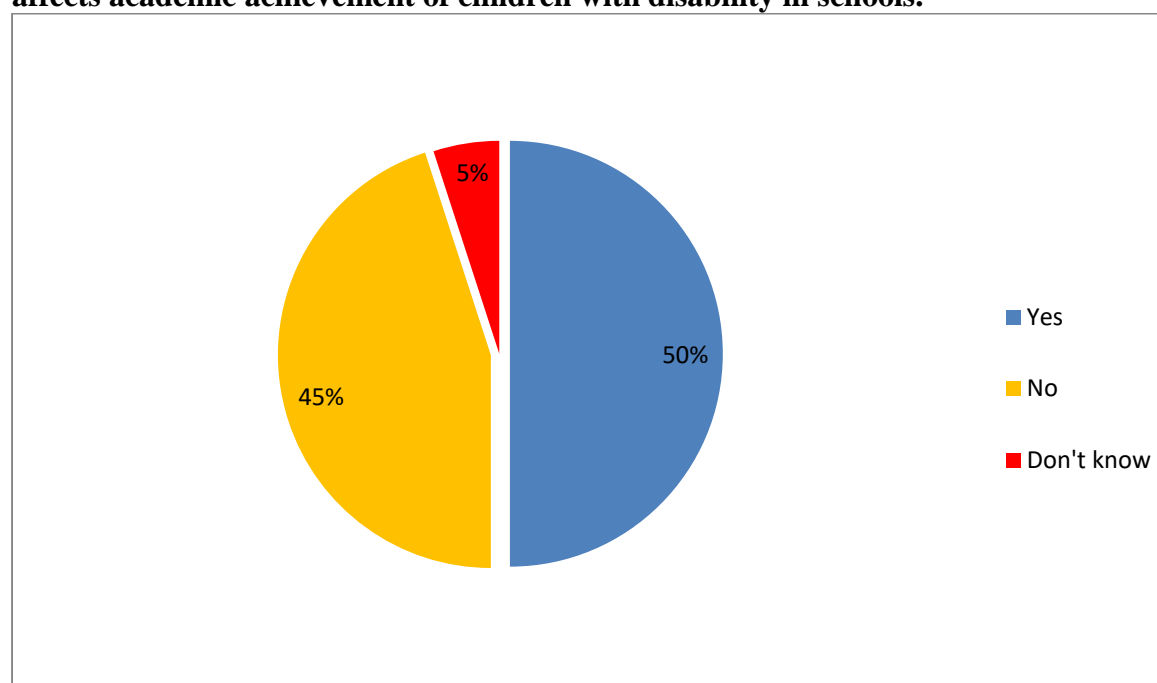
**Figure 9: Percentage distribution of respondents on the factors hindering the successful implementation of inclusive education.**



Quantitative data revealed a narrow gap on if inclusive education affects academic achievement of children with disability in schools (Figure 10 below). Fifty percent (50%) of the respondents were on the agreeing side, while 45% of the respondents indicated against the idea that inclusive education affects academic achievement of children with disability in schools whereas the remaining 5% of the respondents were not aware of the above notion. The quantitative results indicated that inclusive education has the potential to positively impact the academic achievement of children with disabilities by providing a conducive learning environment. However, challenges such as misperceptions and potential negative impacts on academic performance still exist, highlighting the need for on-going efforts to

address these issues and ensure the successful implementation of inclusive education for all students.

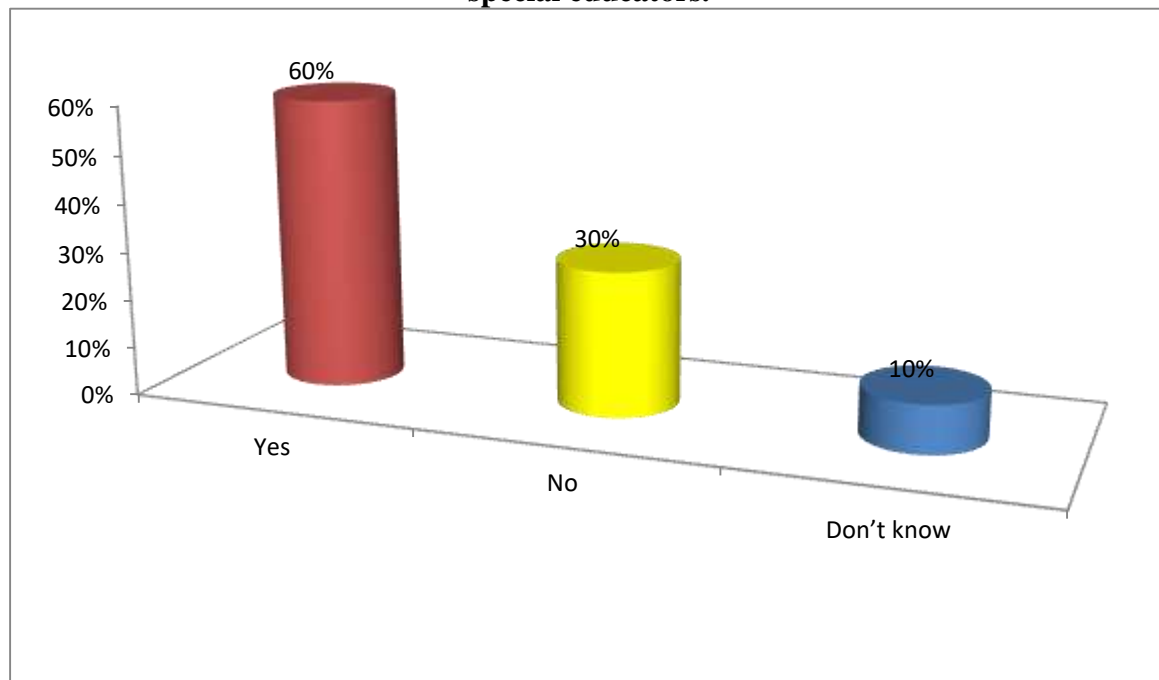
**Figure 10: Percentage distribution of respondents who indicated if inclusive education affects academic achievement of children with disability in schools.**



N=20

The majority of the respondents, 60% indicated that mainstream schools have special educators, while 30% of the respondents were against that (Figure 11 below). The least percentage of the respondents (10%) remained neutral, meaning that they were not even aware if mainstream schools have special educators or not. Qualitative data indicated that there are no or very few special educators who vital roles in providing tailored support to students with diverse needs. Key informants though reported the scarcity of special educators, on the other hand hailed their expertise and dedication as essential in creating inclusive and supportive environments that facilitate the academic and developmental progress of all students.

**Figure 11: Percentage distribution of respondents who believe mainstream schools have special educators.**



N=20

The majority of the respondents, 95%, unanimously showed that the community still lacks vital information on inclusive education. However, the remaining proportion of the respondents, 5%, indicated that the community is fully aware of the vital information on inclusive education. Converging with the quantitative results, qualitative results indicated that there is a lack of community and teacher collaboration which is pivotal in promoting inclusive practices in schools. Key informants further revealed the need for community sensitization about inclusive education as it brings long-term outcomes for students with disabilities by fostering a supportive environment that extends beyond the school setting. One respondent said;

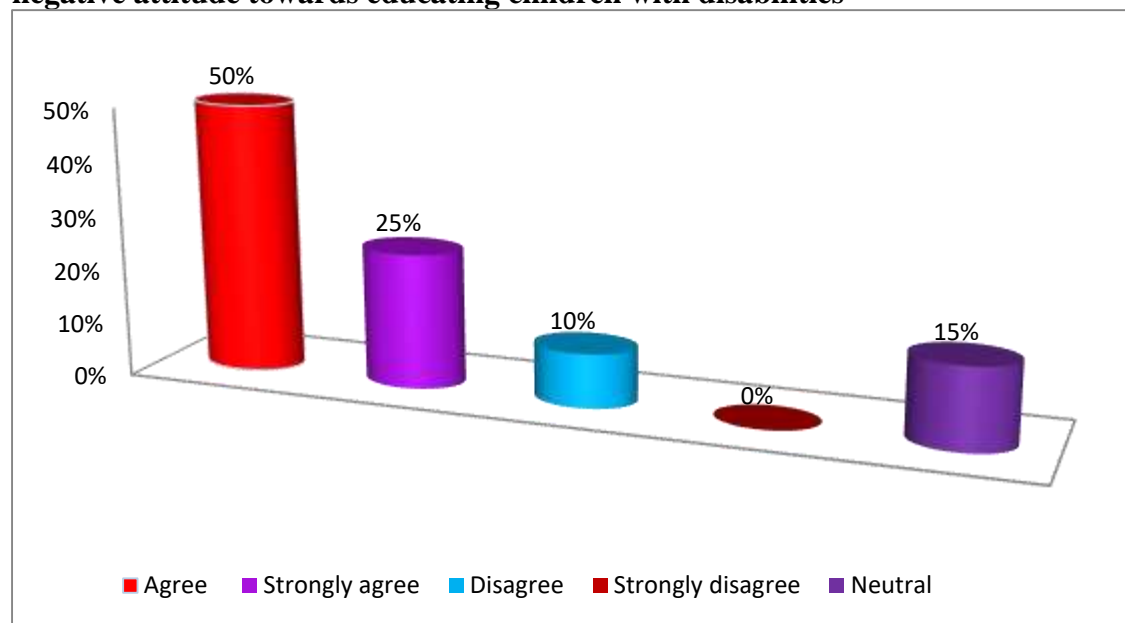
*If our communities were well-informed about the importance of inclusive education, they were more likely to actively advocate for the rights of students with disabilities, thereby creating a more inclusive society which leads to the*

*development of community-based support systems and resources that complement the efforts of schools in providing inclusive education*

#### **4.5. THE COMMUNITY'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS EDUCATING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

The majority of the respondents, 50%, agreed that societies still hold negative attitude towards educating children with disabilities while 25% of the respondents strongly agreed to the aforementioned notion (Figure 12 below). A 10% of the respondents had different opinion whilst 5% of the respondents remained neutral. Qualitative results revealed that negative attitudes towards educating children with disabilities persist, despite efforts to promote inclusion. These attitudes contribute to disparities in educational opportunities and outcomes, impacting the overall equality of people with disabilities. Addressing these negative attitudes is essential for creating a more equitable and supportive educational environment for all children, regardless of their abilities.

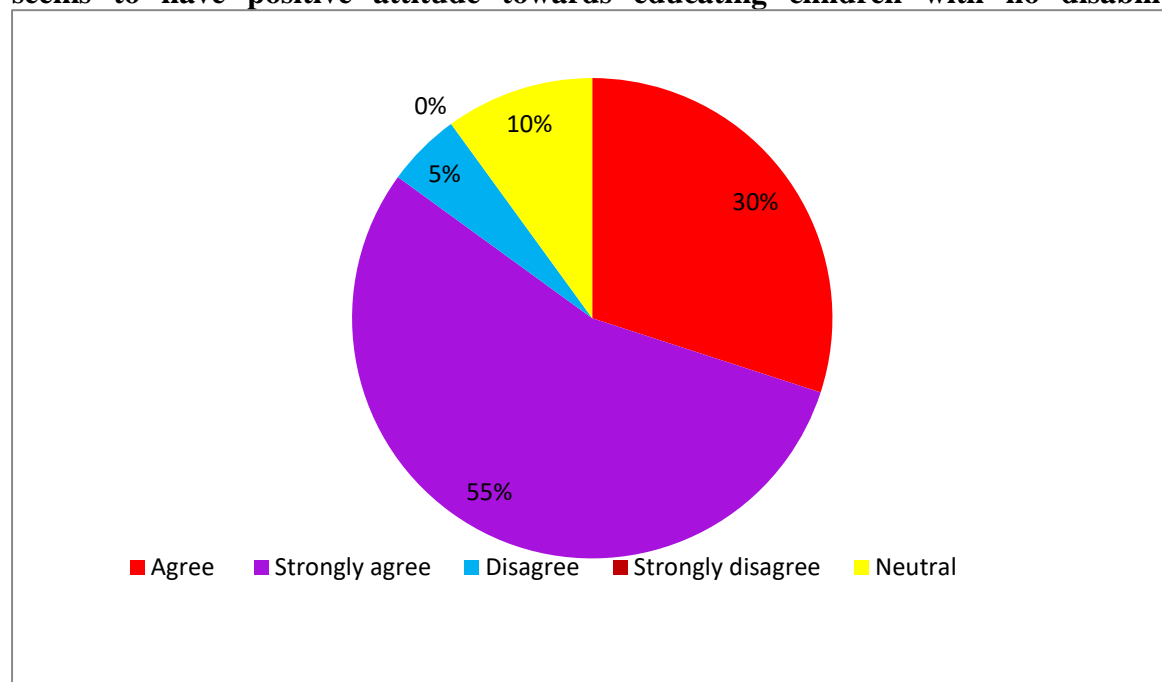
**Figure 12: Percentage distribution of respondents who believe societies still hold negative attitude towards educating children with disabilities**



**N=20**

The majority of the respondents, 55%, strongly agreed that the community seems to have positive attitude towards educating children with no disabilities (Figure 13 below). Thirty percent (30%) of the respondents agreed while 10% of the respondents remained neutral on this notion. The other 5% of the respondents disagreed while no one strongly disagreed the notion that the community seems to have positive attitude towards educating children with no disabilities only. In support with the quantitative data, qualitative findings postulates that attitudes towards educating children with and without disabilities differ significantly as children without disabilities are viewed as first priority, superior and are more readily accepted into mainstream educational settings. One noted that receive the necessary support, resources, and attention to thrive in the educational system unlike children with disabilities who usually face negative attitudes and unequal opportunities.

**Figure 13: Percentage distribution of respondents who believe that the community seems to have positive attitude towards educating children with no disabilities.**

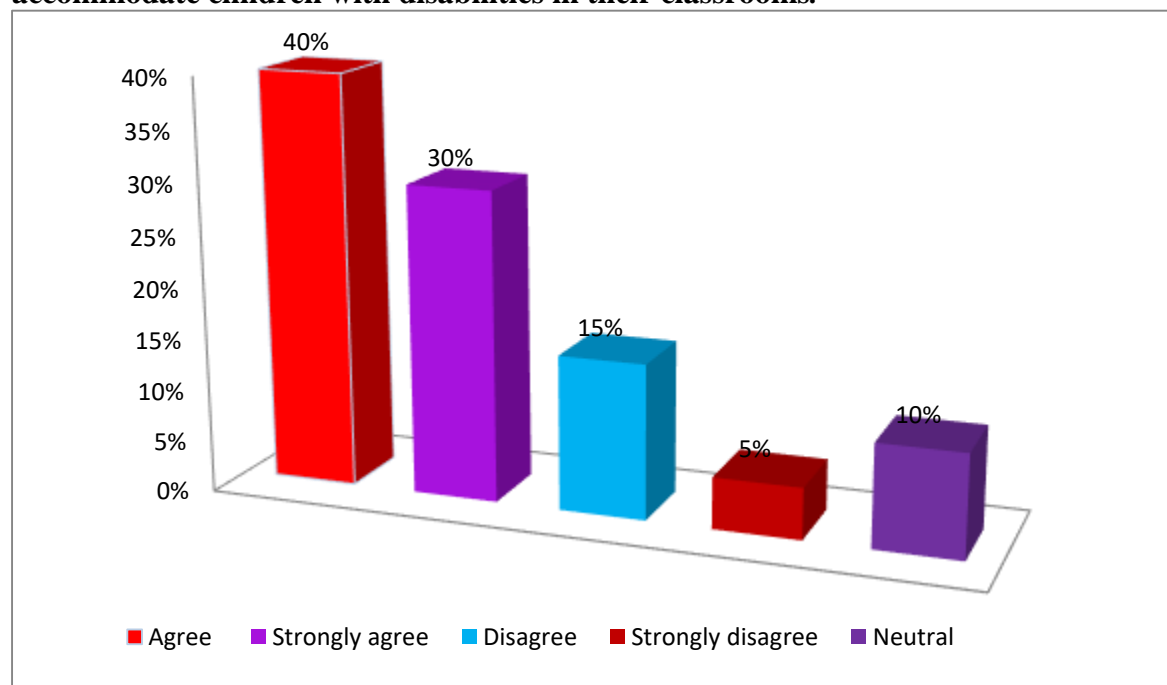


N=20

The quantitative data recorded that the majority of the respondents, 40%, agreed that many teachers fail to accommodate children with disabilities in their classrooms while 30% of the

respondents strongly agreed to the aforementioned notion (Figure 14 below). Fifteen percent (15%) of the respondents disagreed, while again another 5% of the respondents strongly disagreed. The last 5% of the respondents remained neutral. Qualitative data stretched that many general education teachers feel unprepared to work with students with disabilities, leading to pessimism about their ability to effectively support these students. The results further expatriated that the main argued cause is the absence of necessary resources and support which then furthers the complexity nature of inclusive education.

**Figure 14: Percentage distribution of respondents who believe that many teachers fail to accommodate children with disabilities in their classrooms.**

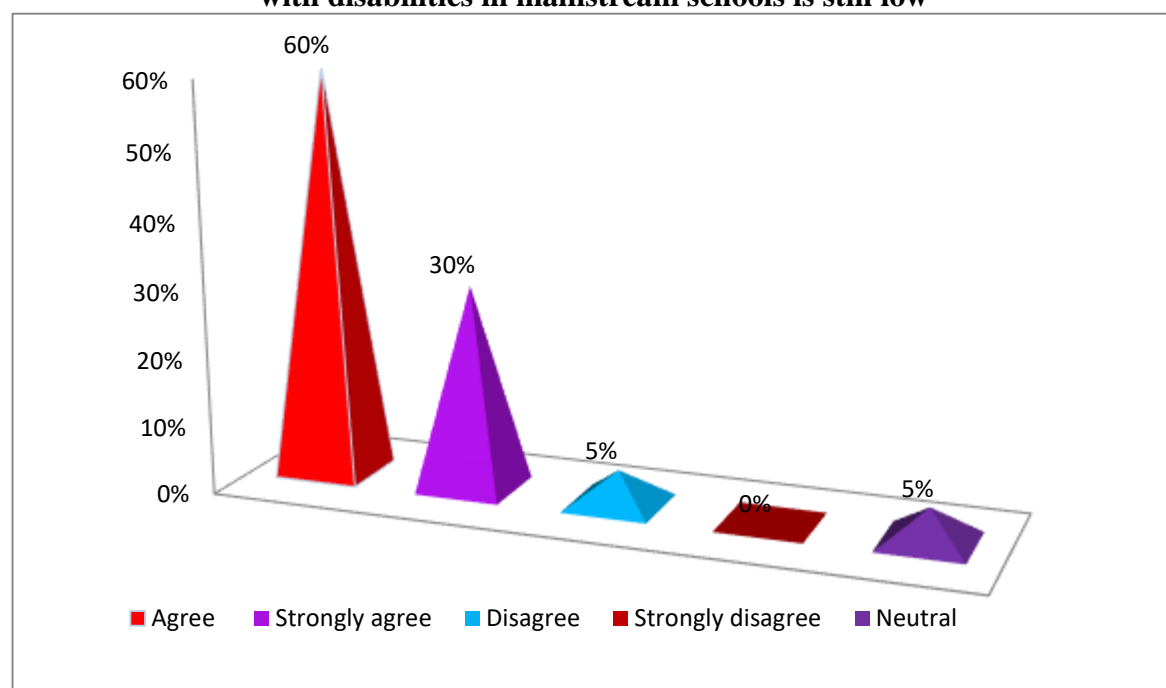


**N=20**

The findings pointed out that the majority of the respondents, 60%, agreed that the enrolment of children with disabilities in mainstream schools is still low (Figure 15 below). The second better respondents' percentage was 30, which still hold more confidence that the enrolment of children with disabilities in mainstream schools is yet to rise. On the other hand, 5% of the respondents voted against the idea that the enrolment of children with disabilities in mainstream schools still low while 5% of the respondents remained neutral. As also

supported by the qualitative data, the low enrolment of children with disabilities in mainstream schools has been exacerbated by the lack of inclusive educational systems and policies, therefore barring children with disabilities from attending mainstream schools. One has reported that faced challenges in accessing support and accommodations in mainstream educational settings lead to constant dropout rates. The research again revealed the societal stigma and lack of awareness about the rights of children with disabilities which has led to their exclusion from mainstream schools.

**Figure 15: Percentage distribution of respondents who believe the enrolment of children with disabilities in mainstream schools is still low**

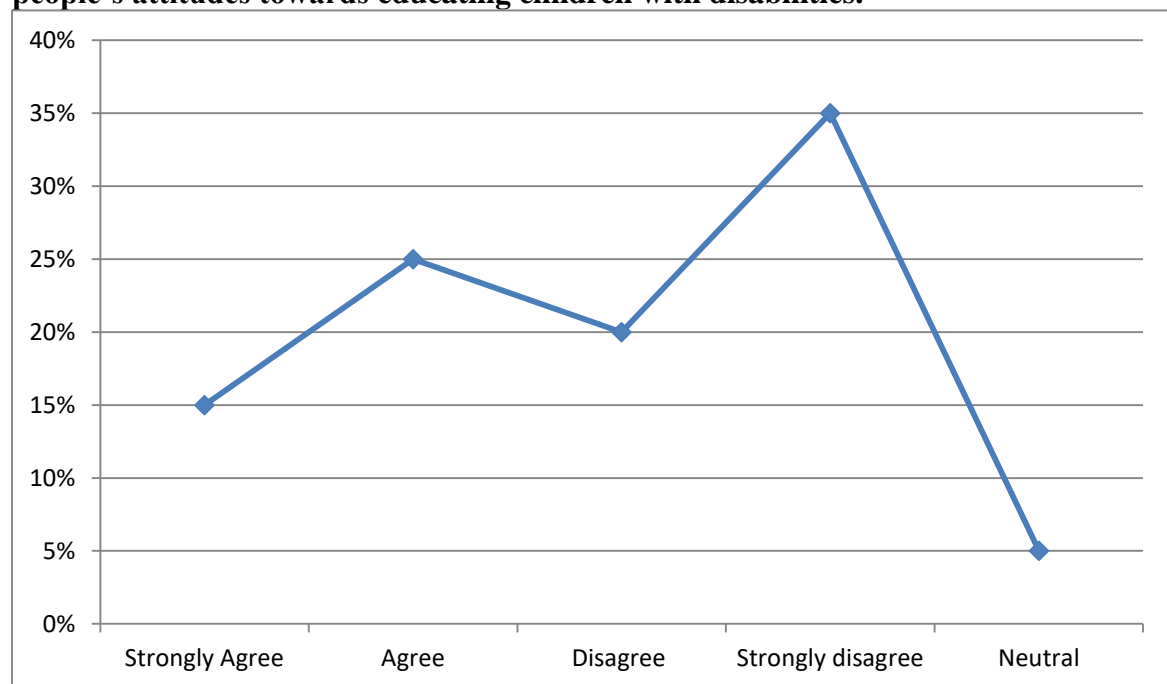


**N=20**

The majority of respondents, 35%, strongly disagreed to the notion that cultural factors affect people's attitudes towards educating children with disabilities (Figure 16 below). Twenty percent (20%) of the respondents again disagreed to the above notion. However, 25% and 15% of the respondents were on the agreeing and strong agreeing portion respectively, on the phenomenon that cultural factors affect people's attitudes towards educating children with disabilities. The last 5% the respondents remained neutral to the above notion. Qualitative

data further revealed that attitudes towards educating children with disabilities are deeply rooted into cultural factors including societal perceptions, negative attitudes, religious beliefs, and access to education. The research pointed out that the above mentioned factors impact the experiences of children with disabilities within educational settings, emphasizing the need for culturally sensitive approaches to inclusive education.

**Figure 16: Percentage distribution of respondents who believe cultural factors affect people's attitudes towards educating children with disabilities.**



**N=20**

#### **4.6. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The study found out that children with disabilities face unearthed myriad of complex issues including systemic barriers. This concurs with Kaseke & Chiparausha (2019) who argue that there is a lack of specialized teaching materials and assistive devices which further hampers children with disability's learning experience. Furthermore, Mlambo-Ngcuka and Chitsiko (2018) also support that inadequate physical infrastructure, such as ramps and accessible toilets, makes it challenging for children with disabilities to navigate school environments. Hence, once can argue that children with disabilities across remote Zimbabwean societies



encounter multifaceted challenges which encompass physical inaccessibility, unavailability of specialized resources and lack of trained educators.

Another emerging theme from the study is the general lack of awareness and understanding among community members on inclusive education. This then aligns with Wa Munyi (2012) who argues that certain individuals, families and communities have remained traditional and their treatment and perspective of the disabled have not changed. Again, Smith and Johnson (2018) also found out that there is a lack of comprehensive community knowledge regarding implementation strategies and benefits of inclusive education. It is imperative to note that limited knowledge on inclusive education reflects a major gap in understanding within the Zimbabwean community.

The research also found out that there is high prevalence of deeply ingrained stigmas and misconceptions surrounding disability within the community. In concurrence to a study by Eisele et al. (2015), negative attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education were often rooted in cultural beliefs and misconceptions about disability. This is however in contrast to Kozleski (2019) who reveals that the community's attitude towards educating children with disabilities has evolved significantly and become increasingly positive over the years. It is then argued that there is need for advocacy initiatives aimed at addressing and challenging these stigmas as well as training and awareness programs within every community.

Lastly, the study found out that there is high prevalence of poor collaboration among community members in promoting a deeper understanding of disability. This is in line with Kurebwa (2019) who emphasized the need for sensitization programs targeting parents, community leaders, and other stakeholders to foster a supportive environment for inclusive education. Furthermore, Mutasa (2019) in the study revealed the need for awareness campaigns and professional development programs to enhance understanding of disability. It

can be therefore noted that through active involvement, there is need to stress the importance of understanding cultural nuances to address the lack of understanding in disability inclusive education

#### **4.7. CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The chapter presented, analysed and discussed data which was gathered from the study. The chapter has again explored the discussions of the findings in relation to the study. The following final chapter will include a conclusion and recommendations that were drawn from the findings of the study.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This final chapter provides a summary and conclusion of the research study. The researcher's conclusions from the research findings are summarized in this chapter along with a review of the earlier chapters. The chapter highlights the conclusion and recommendations on the data analysed and presented in the previous four chapters.

### **5.2 SUMMARY**

The research study consisted of five chapters, of which the chapter one began as an introductory one which had the problem statement and the objectives of the study which laid out on what the study was going to carry out. The next chapter which was chapter two, focused on literature review wherein it reviewed literature on other findings that were in relation with the objectives of the study, the literature was also used to understand the findings of other studies in relation to the current study and also to develop the data collection tools of the study. The third chapter dealt with the research methodology which was a design on how the data was going to be collected and the fourth chapter presented the findings of the study and the discussion of the study findings. Finally, the fifth chapter is a concluding chapter which also includes summary, conclusion and recommendations that were drawn from the findings of the study.

### **5.3 CONCLUSIONS OF THE FINDINGS**

The study concludes that physical, social, and systemic barriers hinder their educational opportunities for children with disabilities. From inaccessible school facilities to the absence of specialized support services, these children encounter significant challenges. Social stigma and discriminatory attitudes further compound their exclusion from the educational sphere. The study further concludes that, misconceptions and stereotypes surrounding disability were found to perpetuate the exclusion of these children from educational opportunities. Moreover, inadequate policies and resource allocation exacerbate these difficulties. The study derived

how cultural and societal norms play a significant role in shaping negative attitudes towards educating children with disability, often leading to exclusion and hindering their integration into mainstream educational settings.

## **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations were made;

- There is a pressing need for comprehensive policy reforms that prioritize the integration of inclusive education practices within educational institutions.
- Educational institutions and stakeholders should focus on providing specialized training and professional development opportunities for educators to equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary to support diverse learning needs.
- Community engagement initiatives and awareness campaigns should be leveraged to challenge societal biases, promote empathy, and foster a culture of inclusivity that acknowledges the value of every child's education.
- Conducting targeted educational programs and workshops must be done to raise awareness about the needs and rights of children with disabilities in the context of education.
- There should be collaborative efforts between government agencies, educational institutions, and advocacy groups to drive systemic changes and ensure that children with disabilities are provided with the support they need to thrive academically and socially.

## **5.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

An overview of the research findings was provided in this chapter. It also included a summary of the study's recommendations. The study achieved its objective since it was able to effectively address the research questions.

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## APPENDIX 1 CONSENT FORM

My name is Lincoln Mhlanga, a student at Bindura University of Science Education studying towards a Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Social Work. I am carrying out a study entitled "Challenges faced by children with disabilities in their quest for education, a case study of Tamandai ward 14 of Chipinge district."

During the entire data collection, the study will be guided by research ethics which include confidentiality, informed consent, voluntary participation and avoidance of harm. The research will use pseudo names for protecting participants' information. It is voluntary to participate in this study and whenever the participant feels uncomfortable, they are allowed to withdraw without any consequences.

Having been fully informed about the nature and requirements of the study, the participant is therefore required to put a signature as an approval to take part in the research.

**Contact details:** [mhlangalincoln24@gmail.com](mailto:mhlangalincoln24@gmail.com) / 0774369800 or 0716094540

Participant's Signature..... Date.....

Enumerator's Signature..... Date.....

## APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE

### **SECTION A** (TICK YOUR ANSWERS IN THE BOXES)

#### **DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

##### **1. Sex of the respondents.**

- i. Female ☐
- ii. Male ☐

##### **2. Respondent's age.**

- i. 18 – 23 ☐
- ii. 24 – 29 ☐
- iii. 30 – 35 ☐
- iv. 36 – 41 ☐
- v. 42 – 47 ☐
- vi. 48 – 53 ☐
- vii. 54 – 59 ☐
- viii. 60+ ☐

##### **3. Marital status.**

- i. Married ☐
- ii. Single ☐
- iii. Divorced ☐
- iv. Widow ☐
- v. Widower ☐
- vi. Other specify-----

##### **4. Level of education.**

- i. Primary ☐
- ii. Secondary ☐
- iii. Tertiary ☐
- iv. Never ☐
- v. Other specify-----

### **SECTION B**

#### **Challenges faced by children with disabilities in their quest for education**

##### **1. Children with disabilities face complex challenges in their quest for education.**

- i. Yes ☐
- ii. No ☐

**2. Lack of teaching materials leads to a decline in performance of children with disabilities at schools.**

i. Yes ☐

ii. No ☐

iii. Other specify-----

**3. Which teaching materials are lacking?**

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| i. Laptops                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii. Braille equipment                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iii. Books in large print               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iv. Audiobooks                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| v. Charts                               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| vi. Highlighter strips/ reader trackers | <input type="checkbox"/> |

vii. Other specify-----

**4. Are children with disability discriminated?**

- |                 |                          |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| i. Yes          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii. No          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iii. Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> |

iv. Other specify-----

**5. Students with disabilities often face social isolation and stigma due to their differences, which can impact their overall educational experience.**

- |                      |                          |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| i. Strongly agree    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii. Agree            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iii. Neutral         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iv. Disagree         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| v. Strongly disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> |

vi. Other specify-----

**6. Poor infrastructural development is a major barrier for children with physical disabilities to attend school.**

- |                 |                          |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| i. Yes          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii. No          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iii. Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> |

iv. Other specify-----



**7. Poverty and low economic status hinders children with disabilities from accessing quality education.**

- i. Yes ☐
- ii. No ☐
- iii. Don't know ☐
- iv. Other specify-----

**8. There are shortages of trained teachers to work children with disabilities in mainstream schools.**

- i. Yes ☐
- ii. No ☐
- iii. Other specify-----

**9. Limited resource allocation makes it difficult for specially abled children to attend school.**

- i. Yes ☐
- ii. No ☐
- iii. Other specify-----

**10. Discriminatory traditional treatment by certain individuals affects children with disability in acquiring education.**

- i. Yes ☐
- ii. No ☐
- iii. Other specify-----

**11. Lack of support from community negatively affects children with disability in acquiring education.**

- i. Yes ☐
- ii. No ☐
- iii. Other specify-----

**The community's knowledge on inclusive education.**

**1. Community engagement is effective in promoting inclusive education?**

- i. Very effective ☐
- ii. Effective ☐
- iii. Neutral ☐

- iv. Partially effective ☐
- v. Not effective ☐

**2. The community is aware of various aspects of inclusive education.**

- i. Yes ☐
- ii. No ☐
- iii. Other specify-----

**3. Which of the following are aspects of inclusive education?**

- i. Accessibility ☐
- ii. Collaboration ☐
- iii. Accommodation ☐
- iv. Inclusion ☐

**4. Which among the following are factors hindering the successful implementation of inclusive education?**

- i. Poor technology ☐
- ii. Economic downfall ☐
- iii. Cultural and traditional practices ☐
- iv. Political factors ☐
- v. Social factors ☐
- vi. Religion ☐
- vii. Other specify-----

**5. Inclusive education affects academic achievement of children with disability in schools.**

- i. Yes ☐
- ii. No ☐
- iii. Other specify-----

**6. Do mainstream schools have special educators?**

- i. Yes ☐
- ii. No ☐
- iii. Other specify-----

**7. The community still lack vital information on inclusive education.**

- i. Yes ☐
- ii. No ☐
- iii. Other specify-----

**The community's attitude towards educating children with disabilities**

**1. Societies still hold negative attitude towards educating children with disabilities.**

- |      |                   |                          |
|------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| i.   | Agree             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii.  | Strongly agree    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iii. | Neutral           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iv.  | Disagree          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| v.   | Strongly disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**2. The community seems to have positive attitude towards educating children with no disabilities.**

- |      |                    |                          |
|------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| i.   | Agree              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii.  | Strongly agree     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iii. | Neutral            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iv.  | Disagree           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| v.   | Strongly disagree  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| vi.  | Other specify----- |                          |

**3. Many teachers fail to accommodate children with disabilities in their classrooms.**

- |      |                    |                          |
|------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| i.   | Agree              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii.  | Strongly agree     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iii. | Neutral            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iv.  | Disagree           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| v.   | Strongly disagree  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| vi.  | Other specify----- |                          |

**4. The enrolment of children with disabilities in mainstream schools is still low.**

- |      |                    |                          |
|------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| i.   | Agree              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii.  | Strongly agree     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iii. | Neutral            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iv.  | Disagree           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| v.   | Strongly disagree  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| vi.  | Other specify----- |                          |

**5. Cultural factors affect people's attitudes towards educating children with disabilities.**

- |      |                    |                          |
|------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| i.   | Agree              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii.  | Strongly agree     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iii. | Neutral            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iv.  | Disagree           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| v.   | Strongly disagree  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| vi.  | Other specify----- |                          |

## **APPENDIX 3: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE**

### **SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

1. Sex.....

2. Age .....

3. Marital status.....

4. Level of education attained

Never been to school ☐

Primary ☐

Secondary ☐

### **SECTION B**

#### **CHALLENGES FACED BY CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN THEIR QUEST FOR EDUCATION**

1. What are some of the challenges children with disabilities face in their quest for education?

2. How does poor infrastructure make it difficult for these children to attend school?

3. How does a limited resource allocation make it difficult for these children to attend school?

4. How does lack of teaching materials affects performance of children with disabilities at schools?

5. What is the role of poverty in hindering children with disabilities from accessing education?
6. How does lack of trained teachers poses a major challenge to children with disabilities in mainstream schools?
7. How does discriminatory traditional treatment and perspective of the disabled by certain individuals affect children with disability in acquiring education?
8. How does discriminatory traditional treatment and perspective of the disabled by certain families affect children with disability in acquiring education?
9. How does discriminatory traditional treatment and perspective of the disabled by certain communities affect children with disability in acquiring education?

#### **THE COMMUNITY'S KNOWLEDGE ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION.**

1. What is inclusive education?
2. What is the role of community engagement in promoting inclusive education?
3. What is hindering the successful implementation of inclusive education?
4. How does inclusive education affect academic achievement of children with disability in schools?
5. What are various aspects of inclusive education?
6. What are the roles special educators in providing effective support for students with diverse needs?
7. What is the role of community and teacher collaboration in promoting inclusive practices in schools?

8. How does community sensitization about inclusive education brings long-term outcomes for students with disabilities?

### **THE COMMUNITY'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS EDUCATING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

1. What is the societal attitude towards educating children with disabilities?
2. What is the community's attitude towards educating children with no disabilities?
3. What causes many teachers in mainstream schools to choose to accommodate very few or no children with disabilities in their classrooms?
4. How does community's attitude towards educating children with disabilities affect the enrolment of children with disabilities in mainstream schools?
5. What are the cultural factors that affect people's attitudes towards educating children with disabilities?

#### **APPENDIX 4: KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEW GUIDE**

1. What are the challenges children with disabilities face in their quest for education?
2. How does poor infrastructure in mainstream schools make it difficult for children with physical disabilities to attend school?
3. How does poverty in communities hinder children with disabilities from accessing quality education?
4. How does lack of trained teachers pose a major challenge to children with disabilities in mainstream schools?
5. Which teaching materials affect performance of children with disabilities at schools?
6. How does discriminatory traditional treatment and perspective of the disabled by certain individuals affect children with disability in acquiring education?
7. What do know about inclusive education?
8. What are some of the barriers you face in implementing inclusive education?
9. Why does inclusive education negatively affect academic achievement of children with disability in schools?
10. What type of attitude does the community have towards educating children with disabilities?
11. Why do many teachers fail to accommodate children with disabilities in their classrooms?
12. Why is the enrolment of children with disabilities in mainstream schools still low?
13. Which cultural factors affect people's attitudes towards educating children with disabilities?

## APPENDIX 5: PERMISSION LETTER

*Official communications should  
not be addressed to individuals*



DEPT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT  
CHIPINGE DISTRICT OFFICE  
MANICALAND

Telephone: (027)2042372

ZIMBABWE



10 April 2024

Mr. Lincoln Mhlangu

Dear Sir

**RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT AN ACCADEMIC RESEARCH ON THE TOPIC  
ENTITLED "CHALLENGES FACED BY CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN THEIR  
QUEST FOR EDUCATION, A CASE STUDY OF TAMANDAI WARD 14 OF  
CHIPINGE DISTRICT."**

We acknowledge receipt of your letter of even reference dated 22 November 2023.

Please be advised that permission is hereby granted for you to carry out a research on a topic entitled "Challenges faced by children with disabilities in their quest for education. A case study of Tamandai ward 14 of Chipinge district." Permission is granted strictly on condition that the research is for academic purposes of your degree in Social Work and that the collected data should not be shared to third parties.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "P. Hove".

P. Hove

For The District Social Development Officer