

**INCLUSIVE EDUCATION INITIATIVES ON ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE: A CASE OF PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN RORYA
DISTRICT, TANZANIA**

AYOUB SAMSON MURIMI

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION IN
ADMINISTRATION, PLANNING AND POLICY STUDIES (MED-APPS)
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION
OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA**

2025

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certifies that she has read and hereby recommends for acceptance by the Open University of Tanzania, a dissertation entitled; **“Inclusive Education Initiative on Academic Performance in Public Primary Schools: A Case of Rorya District, Tanzania”** partial fulfillment of the requirements for Masters of Education in Administration, Planning and Policy Studies (MED-APPS).

.....

Dr. Theresia J. Shavega
(Supervisor)

.....

Date

.....

Dr. Daphina Libent Mabagala
(Supervisor)

.....

Date

COPYRIGHT

No part of this dissertation may be reproduced, stored in any retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior written permission of the author or the Open University of Tanzania in that behalf.

DECLARATION

I, **Ayoub Samson Murimi**, declare that the work displayed in this dissertation is the first instance. It has never been submitted to any other University or Institution. Where other people's works came to be employed, references have been given. It is in this respect that I affirm this work as surely mine. It is therefore presented in partial fulfillment of the prerequisites for the Degree of Master of Education in Administration, Planning and Policy Studies (MED -APPS) of the Open University of Tanzania.

.....

Signature

.....

Date

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late beloved Father, Samson Murimi, and my mother, Anna Mwita Chacha Gesero. They have been a constant source of inspiration and support throughout my academic journey. My heartfelt appreciation is also dedicated to my beloved wife, Gatty Joel Nyamtara, and my children: Josephine, Joan, Joyce, and Joel. Their tireless prayers, encouragement, and unwavering belief in my abilities have been instrumental in the completion of this research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I extend my genuine gratitude to Almighty God, the source of all wisdom and strength, for guiding me through the challenging journey of writing this dissertation. Special appreciation goes to my parents, the late Samson Sawi Murimi and my mother, Anna Mwita Chacha for their love, support, and the values they imparted me.

I am profoundly thankful to my wife, Gatty Joel, whose unwavering encouragement and understanding made this journey possible. Her love and support sustained me through the highs and lows of the dissertation writing process. Sincere thanks to my supervisors, Dr. Theresia Shavega and Dr. Daphina Mabagala, for their invaluable guidance, constructive feedback, and steadfast support. Their expertise and mentorship were instrumental in shaping the outcome of this research.

I also extend my gratitude to Dr. Asha Katamba, my Region coordinator, for her instructions and supervision during the research phase. Her insights and oversight played a crucial role in the successful completion of this dissertation. I appreciate my staff mate and all others, including my Head of Department, Mr. Geoffrey Kabyemela, Mr. Mlekwa Nuhu and Kisyeri Newland whose contributions and support were integral to this determination. For conciseness, I can't mention them by name, but their efforts have not gone unnoticed.

This accomplishment would not have been possible without the collective support and encouragement from these individuals, to whom I am profoundly grateful.

ABSTRACT

The study examined the impact of inclusive education initiatives on the academic performance of pupils with special needs in public primary schools in Rorya District, Tanzania. Guided by Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, it explored influencing factors, identified current, and examined challenges in implementation. A qualitative case study design was employed, using semi-structured interviews with 14 purposively selected participants, including school administrators, teachers, parents, pupils with special needs, and education officers. Findings showed that teacher preparedness, resource availability, infrastructure, and societal attitudes strongly influence inclusive education. Positive initiatives such as teacher training, policy application, and stakeholder awareness were noted. However, challenges persist, including inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, stigma, and limited parental involvement. The study concludes that inclusive education remains inconsistently implemented and often falls short of policy expectations. Sustainable inclusion requires systemic reform, accessible infrastructure, continuous teacher training, and supportive community attitudes. Bridging the policy-practice gap demands stronger government funding, family engagement, and stakeholder collaboration. The study offers practical insights for building an equitable system where no learner is left behind.

Keywords: *Education, Academic Performance, Public Primary Schools, School.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CERTIFICATION	ii
COPYRIGHT	iii
DECLARATION.....	iv
DEDICATION.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	vi
ABSTRACT	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xiii
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Overview	1
1.2 Background of the Problem	1
1.3 Statement of the Problem.....	5
1.4 Research Objective	5
1.5 Specific Objectives	5
1.6 Specific Research Questions.....	6
1.7 Significance of the Study	6
1.8 Scope of the Study	7
1.9 Limitation of the Study	7
1.10 Delimitation of the Study.....	8
1.11 Definition of Operational Key Terms	8

CHAPTER TWO	11
LITERATURE REVIEW	11
2.1 Overview	11
2.2 Theoretical Literature Review	11
2.2.1 Social cultural and Social Model of Disability Theories	11
2.3 Empirical Literature Review	14
2.3.1 Factors Influencing Inclusive Education Initiatives on Academic Performance	14
2.3.2 Inclusive Education Initiatives Implemented.....	17
2.3.3 Challenges of Inclusive Education on Academic Performance	21
CHAPTER THREE	27
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	27
3.1 Introduction.....	27
3.2 Research Paradigm.....	27
3.3 Research Approach	27
3.4 Research Design.....	28
3.5 Area of the Study and Rationale	28
3.6 Population of the Study.....	28
3.7 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size	29
3.7.1 Sampling Techniques.....	29
3.8 Source of Data.....	29
3.9 Data Collection Methods	30
3.10 Data Collection Instruments	31
3.11 Data Analysis Procedure.....	31

3.12	Ethical Considerations	32
CHAPTER FOUR.....		33
DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS		33
4.1	Overview	33
4.2	Factors Influencing Inclusive Education Initiatives.....	34
4.2.1	Teacher Preparedness	35
4.2.2	Resource Availability	39
4.2.3	Infrastructure	43
4.2.4	Societal Attitudes and Stigma	45
4.2.5	Administrative Support	48
4.3	Inclusive Education Initiatives in Public Primary Schools	49
4.3.1	Adoption of Inclusive Education Policies.....	50
4.3.2	Teacher Training and Professional Development	51
4.3.3	Stakeholder Sensitization Campaigns	52
4.4	Challenges of Inclusive Education on Academic Performance in Rorya District	54
4.4.1	Inadequate Funding.....	55
4.4.2	Inadequate of Teacher Preparedness	57
4.4.3	Societal Stigma and Cultural Attitudes	59
4.4.4	Ineffective Policy Implementation and Support	61
4.4.5	Inadequate Infrastructure	64
CHAPTER FIVE		69
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....		69
5.1	Overview	69

5.2	Summary of Findings.....	69
5.3	Conclusion	70
5.4	Recommendations.....	72
5.5	Suggestions for Future Studies	73
REFERENCES.....		75
APPENDICES		84

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: The Demographic Profiles of the Participants	34
Table 4.2: Distribution of Pupils by Class Level and Special Needs	
Status at School MX	65

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DEO	District Education Officer
ETP	Education and Training Policy
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individualized Education Program
KISE	The Kenya Institute of Special Education
MED -APPS	Master of Education in Administration, Planning and Policy Studies
NCFBTE	National Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (Tanzania)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This chapter introduces the study by presenting its key components, beginning with the background; which provides context for understanding the research problem and the global, regional, and national importance of inclusive education. The statement of the problem follows, highlighting the challenges faced in implementing inclusive education in Rorya District, Tanzania. The chapter then outlines the research objectives and questions, which guide the investigation into the factors influencing inclusive education and its impact on academic performance.

Additionally, the significance of the study is discussed, emphasizing its potential contribution to improving educational policies and practices in Tanzania. The scope and delimitation sections clarify the geographical and thematic focus of the study, while the definition of key terms ensures clarity in understanding the specific concepts explored. This introduction sets the stage for the study, offering a comprehensive overview of the research aims and contexts.

1.2 Background of the Problem

In recent decades, there has been a global transformation in the education sector; with increasing emphasis on inclusive education initiatives and efforts aimed at promoting equal access to quality education for all learners, regardless the ability or background. These initiatives emphasize integrating pupils with disabilities, learning difficulties, and other special needs into regular classrooms, supported by adaptive teaching strategies, accessible infrastructure, and responsive learning environments

(Ashraf et al., 2020). The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) advocates for inclusive and equitable quality education, pushing nations to reform their policies and practices by 2030 (Burbules, et al., 2020).

Internationally, inclusive education initiatives have been implemented in various countries with varying degrees of success. Studies conducted in countries such as the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom have highlighted the positive impact of inclusive education on academic performance, social integration, and overall well-being among pupils with diverse needs (Molina Roldán et al., 2021). These initiatives often involve the provision of support services, teacher training, curriculum adaptations, and inclusive classroom practices aimed at accommodating the diverse learning needs of all students.

In Africa, inclusive education has gained increasing attention as governments strive to achieve universal primary education and address disparities in educational access and quality. Despite significant progress in expanding access to education across the continent, challenges persist, particularly in ensuring the inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups such as pupils with disabilities, those from low-income families, and those living in remote areas. Limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, and cultural barriers often hinder efforts to implement effective inclusive education initiatives (Majoko & Dudu, 2022).

Kenya has made significant strides in promoting inclusive education, aligning with international frameworks such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), emphasize integrating children with disabilities, marginalized communities

and economically disadvantaged backgrounds into mainstream education. These efforts include specialized teacher training, provision of teaching materials, and infrastructural adaptations (Mackatiani et al., 2023). The Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) supports these initiatives by developing inclusive curricula and training educators.

Despite these advancements, challenges remain, including inadequate funding, insufficiently trained teachers, and societal stigma towards children with special needs. Rural areas in particular, face resource and accessibility constraints. Nevertheless, Kenya's ongoing commitment to inclusive education, bolstered by national policies and international partnerships, continues to foster progress towards equitable educational opportunities for all children. Understanding Kenya's approach offers valuable insights into the successes and obstacles in implementing inclusive education in East Africa (Ohba & Malenya, 2022).

In Tanzania, inclusive education is formally supported through key policy documents, including the Education and Training Policy (2014) and the National Strategy on Inclusive Education (2009–2017). These articulate the government's commitment to fostering inclusive education initiatives aimed at enhancing the academic performance of pupils with special needs. Concrete efforts have included deploying special needs education officers at the district level, incorporating inclusive pedagogy into teacher training curricula, and piloting Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) to address diverse learning needs (Laiser, 2023; Ndale, 2025), however, translating these policy ideals into meaningful classroom practice remains a significant challenge. For example, Milinga, et al., (2023) reported that

schools in Mbeya experience an acute shortage of trained special needs education teachers. Even where teachers express willingness to implement inclusive practices, overcrowded classrooms with averages exceeding 70 pupils make individualized instruction difficult. The lack of essential assistive devices such as Braille materials or hearing aids further marginalizes students with disabilities, rendering them passive participants in the learning process.

Similarly, a study by Mohammed et al. (2021) in Moshi District revealed that many schools lack basic accessibility infrastructure such as ramps and adapted toilets, as well as teaching materials suited for learners with disabilities. Teachers frequently reported feeling unprepared for inclusive teaching due to insufficient training and institutional support. As one headteacher candidly observed, *“We have children who need special seating or visual materials, but we don’t even have chalk sometimes. Inclusion is on paper, but not yet practical.”* These concerns are echoed by Kambuga (2023), who highlighted a persistent gap between national inclusive education policy and school-level implementation. Their findings noted severe overcrowding—some classrooms hosting up to 120 pupils as well as widespread lack of special education training and pervasive negative societal attitudes towards disability.

Rorya District is not an exception to these challenges. While the inclusive education policy framework exists, its practical implementation in rural settings like Rorya remains limited. Public primary schools in the district are burdened by high pupil-to-teacher ratios, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient teacher preparedness in special needs education. In some cases, classrooms accommodate between 70 and

200 pupils, making it nearly impossible to deliver tailored instruction. As a result, learners with special needs often remain physically present but are academically and socially excluded due to a lack of individualized support, limited resources, and low community awareness (Tieng'o, 2019; Rorya District Education Office, 2022).

1.3 Statement of the Problem

In Tanzania, policies such as the Education and Training Policy (2014) and the National Strategy on Inclusive Education aim to ensure equal learning for all pupils, including those with special needs. These efforts align with global goals like SDG 4. Despite these policies, pupils with special needs in public primary schools, especially in rural areas like Rorya District, often perform below their peers. This raises concerns on how inclusive education is being implemented and whether existing efforts are effective. This study explores factors influencing inclusive education, identifies current practices in the district's schools, and examines issues affecting the performance of pupils with special needs. The aim is to improve inclusive education outcomes.

1.4 Research Objective

To investigate the effectiveness of inclusive education initiatives on academic performance in public primary schools within Rorya District, Tanzania.

1.5 Specific Objectives

1. To assess factors influencing inclusive education initiatives on academic performance for pupils with special needs in Rorya District, Tanzania.
2. To examine the inclusive education initiatives implemented in public primary schools within Rorya District, Tanzania.

3. To analyze the challenges of inclusive education on academic performance in Rorya District.

1.6 Specific Research Questions

1. What factors influence inclusive education initiatives on academic performance within Rorya District?
2. What are the inclusive education initiatives implemented in public primary schools within Rorya District?
3. What challenges are encountered in the implementation of inclusive education initiatives on academic performance of students in public primary schools within Rorya District?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lay in its aim to fill a critical gap and provide valuable insights for educational policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders. The findings offered empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of inclusive education initiatives on academic performance in a resource-constrained setting such as Rorya District. Understanding the effectiveness of these initiatives was crucial for informing evidence-based policy decisions aimed at improving educational outcomes for all students, particularly those with diverse learning needs. Furthermore, the study had broader implications for inclusive education practices in Tanzania and similar contexts. By shedding light on the factors that influenced the effectiveness of inclusive education initiatives, the study informed policy and practice at the national level, guiding efforts to promote inclusive and equitable

education for all students across the country.

1.8 Scope of the Study

This study was specifically conducted in Rorya District, Tanzania, from July to December 2024. It focused on assessing how inclusive education initiatives affect the academic performance of pupils with special needs in selected public primary schools. The scope was confined to government-owned primary schools that serve children with disabilities and learning difficulties. The study did not cover private schools, secondary education, or other socio-economic factors unrelated to inclusive education. Its general objective was to assess the effectiveness of inclusive education initiatives, while the specific objectives focused on exploring influencing factors, identifying current practices, and examining issues that affect the academic performance of learners with special needs in the district.

1.9 Limitation of the Study

This study was limited to selected public primary schools in Rorya District and therefore may not fully represent the situation in other regions or private schools. The use of a qualitative approach and purposive sampling limited the generalizability of findings, as data were drawn from a small group of participants, including teachers, pupils, parents, and education officers. Additionally, some participants were hesitant to discuss sensitive issues related to disability, which may have affected the depth of some responses. Time constraints and logistical challenges in reaching remote schools also limited the scope of data collection. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the realities of inclusive education at the grassroots level in a rural Tanzanian context.

1.10 Delimitation of the Study

The study was delimited to Rorya District, Tanzania, situated in the Mara Region, and focused exclusively on public primary schools within this district. Private schools and secondary education institutions were excluded. Firstly, the study examined inclusive education initiatives aimed at students with diverse learning needs, including disabilities and learning difficulties. It did not encompass broader educational interventions unrelated to inclusive education practices.

Secondly, socio-economic factors that did not directly relate to inclusive education or academic performance were excluded from the study's scope. The focus remained on understanding the effectiveness of inclusive education initiatives rather than broader socio-economic contexts. Thirdly, the study emphasized recent developments and current practices within Rorya District; historical aspects or trends predating the study period were not extensively covered unless directly relevant to understanding the current state of inclusive education initiatives.

1.11 Definition of Operational Key Terms

Inclusive Education: Refers to an educational model where students of all abilities, including those with disabilities, are integrated into the same classroom environment with accommodations to meet diverse learning needs. This definition emphasizes the inclusion of students with special needs in public primary schools in Rorya District.

Hearing Impairment: Defined as partial or complete loss of hearing, requiring accommodations such as hearing aids or sign language. This condition is considered in relation to its impact on academic performance in inclusive settings in Rorya District.

Teacher Preparedness: Refers to the extent to which teachers possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to teach students with disabilities effectively. This includes formal training and access to appropriate teaching materials, particularly in the context of diverse learners in Rorya District.

Assistive Teaching Methods: in this study are defined as specific tools, strategies, and technologies that facilitate the learning of students with special needs, such as the use of sign language, Braille, or visual aids. This study specifically looks at how these methods are applied to support the academic performance of students with disabilities in Rorya District's public primary schools. The same definition will be used here.

Parental Involvement: is defined as active participation by parents in their child's education, including communication with teachers and engagement with school activities, specifically focusing on how parents support students with disabilities. This operational definition applies to the study's focus on inclusive education initiatives in Rorya District. The definition remains consistent throughout.

Infrastructure Challenges: Refers to physical barriers in schools, such as inaccessible classrooms, lack of ramps, or inadequate restrooms, which prevent students with disabilities from fully accessing education.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): in this study is defined as a personalized educational plan that outlines specific academic and behavioral goals for students with disabilities, as well as the support services and accommodations needed to help them succeed. This operational definition applies to how IEPs are implemented and used in public primary schools in Rorya District. The same definition will be consistently applied in this study.

Public Primary Schools: Government-funded institutions that provide free or low-cost education to children, with an emphasis on those offering inclusive education to students with disabilities in Rorya District.

Academic Performance: Refers to measurable achievements, such as test scores, grades, and other assessments, reflecting students' understanding and mastery of the curriculum.

Initiatives: refer to organized efforts, programs, or strategies that aim to improve inclusive education, such as teacher training, curriculum development, or infrastructure improvements, specifically to enhance the learning of students with disabilities in public primary schools in Rorya District. The same definition is used throughout the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

Chapter Two presents a comprehensive literature review on inclusive education initiatives and their effect on academic performance among pupils with special needs in Rorya District. It begins with the theoretical framework, integrating Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and the Social Model of Disability to explain how learning and inclusion are influenced by social interaction and structural environments. The chapter then reviews empirical studies aligned with the research objectives: factors influencing inclusive education, initiatives implemented, and challenges encountered in practice. Literature is drawn from global, African, and Tanzanian contexts to highlight what has been studied and what remains unexplored. A key gap identified is the limited empirical evidence on how inclusive education initiatives are executed in rural districts like Rorya, particularly regarding class size, teacher capacity, and community support. The chapter concludes with a literature summary and justification for the study.

2.2 Theoretical Literature Review

2.2.1 Social cultural and Social Model of Disability Theories

This study was informed by two interrelated theoretical frameworks: Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and the Social Model of Disability, both of which offered valuable lenses for analyzing how inclusive education initiatives influence academic performance among pupils with special needs in Rorya District. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 2014) posits that cognitive development is largely

a socially mediated process, shaped by interaction with more knowledgeable others and the cultural tools available in a given learning context. This theory introduces the concept of the *Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)*, which represents the range between what a learner can achieve independently and what they can accomplish with guidance. In inclusive classrooms, this concept underscores the importance of scaffolding support—especially for learners with special needs—through peer tutoring, collaborative learning, and teacher facilitation (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

In Rorya District, however, most classrooms are overcrowded, ranging from 70 to over 200 pupils per room (Rorya District Education Office, 2023). This learning environment severely limits the application of ZPD in practice, as teachers cannot provide personalized guidance due to high pupil–teacher ratios and limited special education expertise.

The Social Model of Disability provides a complementary perspective by shifting the understanding of disability from an individual’s impairment to the systemic barriers that hinder full participation (Thacher, 2024). According to this model, disability arises not from the child's condition but from societal structures, attitudes, and environments that exclude or fail to accommodate diversity in learning needs (Owens, 2015). Within Rorya’s context, barriers such as inadequate infrastructure (e.g., lack of ramps or adapted toilets), insufficient assistive teaching materials, and negative community perceptions on disability contribute to the marginalization of pupils with special needs (Tieng’o, 2019). Moreover, schools in Rorya rarely implement *Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)*, despite their recognized importance in inclusive systems globally (UNESCO, 2020).

These two theories, when applied together, offer a holistic understanding of the dynamics influencing academic performance in inclusive settings. While Vygotsky's theory highlights the pedagogical necessity of responsive teaching strategies and social mediation, the Social Model demands a critical examination of policy implementation, resource allocation, and societal attitudes. This dual-theoretical approach was therefore vital in assessing both, teacher–pupil interaction and structural - policy dimensions of inclusive education.

For example, although Tanzania's Education and Training Policy (2014) and the National Strategy on Inclusive Education (2009–2017) support inclusive education, Rorya's schools still lack adequate implementation mechanisms. Teachers often have no formal training in inclusive pedagogy, leading to the physical presence of learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms but with little engagement or academic performance improvement (Roldán, et al., 2021) . This aligns with findings from other rural African settings where educational exclusion is more a result of structural neglect than inherent learner limitations (Opoku, et al., 2021) (Musenyente, et al., 2022) .

Therefore, applying Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory guided the investigation of classroom-level interactions and their alignment with inclusive pedagogical practices, while the Social Model of Disability directed focus towards systemic enablers and constraints including teacher preparedness, infrastructure, parental engagement, and community beliefs. These frameworks together informed the design of research tools, data interpretation, and recommendations aimed at improving the academic outcomes of pupils with special needs in Rorya's public

primary schools.

2.3 Empirical Literature Review

2.3.1 Factors Influencing Inclusive Education Initiatives on Academic Performance

In German, Heyder, et al., (2020) conducted a mixed-methods study about teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in urban primary schools. They surveyed 120 teachers and held in-depth interviews with 20 of them. This research demonstrated that positive teacher attitudes and specialized training correlated with improved academic outcomes for pupils with disabilities. However, the study was mainly urban and did not explore resource limitations leaving a gap in understanding how inclusive practices operate in low-resource or overcrowded classrooms. The current study in Rorya addressed this by focusing on resource-poor rural schools and examining how teacher preparedness interacts with infrastructural constraints to influence academic performance.

mixed-methods study conducted by Lewis and Norwich (2004) investigated the implementation of differentiated instruction and co-teaching strategies in three mainstream primary schools in England, with a specific focus on their impact on learners with special educational needs (SEN). The study employed classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis to explore how inclusive teaching methods were applied in real-life settings. Findings revealed that when teachers collaborated closely and adapted their instructional techniques to meet diverse learning needs, pupils with SEN demonstrated improved engagement, better social interaction, and increased participation in classroom activities.

Teachers reported greater awareness of individual learning differences and acknowledged the importance of shared responsibility in supporting inclusive education. However, despite these positive developments, the study did not address the long-term sustainability of such inclusive strategies, nor did it examine how teachers' beliefs and attitudes toward inclusion might change over time with continued practice and professional development. In contrast, the Rorya-based study adopted a context-sensitive approach that involved reflective interviews with teachers working in resource-constrained public primary schools.

This study not only explored teachers' evolving confidence and commitment toward inclusive practices but also placed strong emphasis on the sustainability of such initiatives in environments marked by limited funding, inadequate teaching materials, and a shortage of specialized staff. The comparative insight between the two contexts underscores the significance of situational realities in shaping the effectiveness and continuity of inclusive education efforts.

Similarly, in Saudi Arabia, Alnahdi, et al., (2022) conducted a quasi-experimental study in three primary schools, assessing the impact of differentiated instruction and co-teaching on student outcomes. They used pre- and post-tests to measure academic gains among 60 learners with special needs. The study confirmed statistically significant improvements in those students' performance. Nevertheless, it did not investigate long-term sustainability or how teacher attitudes evolved over time. In contrast, the Rorya-based study involved reflective interviews with teachers to capture their evolving confidence, and will consider sustainability within resource-constrained settings.

Mbamba, et al., (2022) carried out a quantitative study in Ghana, distributing questionnaires to 200 teachers and 150 parents across three rural districts. They found that positive teacher attitudes and active community participation were strongly associated with improved inclusion practices. Yet, the researchers did not address the influence of classroom size or the presence of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). In Rorya, this study extended their findings by evaluating how teacher attitudes translate into measurable academic outcomes, particularly in overcrowded classrooms and whether IEPs are prepared and implemented.

These findings are echoed in research from East Africa, where similar challenges and opportunities exist. Mukhopadhyay and Das (2021) in Kenya noted that teacher training and resource allocation were critical for the success of inclusive education. Inadequate training of teachers and insufficient resources were identified as significant barriers to the full implementation of inclusive practices. However, addressing these gaps through targeted interventions, such as providing specialized training and ensuring adequate resource allocation, can significantly improve the outcomes of inclusive education initiatives.

In Tanzania, factors such as inadequate teacher training, limited resources, and societal attitudes significantly influence the effectiveness of inclusive education initiatives. Milinga, et al., (2023) conducted a survey and focus-group research in Mbeya, examining how teacher preparedness and material availability affect inclusion. They discovered that 68 % of teachers felt untrained, and 75 % said classrooms lacked assistive devices. Their study, however, did not address strategies like individualized education plans (IEPs) or peer support initiatives—areas this

study in Rorya will explore through interviews and classroom observations. Tieng'o (2019) conducted an ethnographic study in rural Rorya District using classroom observations and interviews with 10 teachers. The study exposed infrastructural deficits—classes of up to 120 pupils and few accessible facilities—alongside cultural stigma against pupils with disabilities. Yet, it did not assess the actual academic outcomes of learners. The current study seeks to fill this gap by collecting qualitative data alongside performance indicators to understand how these contextual factors translate into lowered academic and social outcomes.

2.3.2 Inclusive Education Initiatives Implemented

According, West et al. (2023) Inclusive education initiatives implemented in various parts of the world had demonstrated a range of strategies and models aimed at ensuring equitable learning opportunities for all students, particularly those with special needs. These initiatives included the development of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), teacher training programs, curriculum modifications, peer-assisted learning, co-teaching strategies, and infrastructural adjustments. While such interventions had produced varying degrees of success globally, their implementation in resource-limited contexts such as Rorya District remained uneven and constrained by systemic challenges.

One of the most widely adopted inclusive education initiatives was the use of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). In countries such as the United States, under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), IEPs were a legal requirement for every learner identified with a disability, West, et al., (2023) conducted a policy analysis and case study in selected U.S. school districts and

found that IEPs, coupled with co-teaching strategies, significantly improved learning outcomes. These strategies were complemented by supportive technologies and regular assessments. However, these studies primarily focused on urban and resource-rich contexts, where implementation was supported by strong infrastructure and funding. In contrast, in Rorya District, the application of IEPs remained minimal or nonexistent due to lack of trained personnel, poor understanding of disability needs, and absence of official monitoring systems.

Teacher training and professional development formed another critical component of inclusive education efforts. In Australia, for example, Timothy and Agbenyega (2022) surveyed 150 primary school teachers and found that schools that offered regular training in inclusive pedagogy reported higher student engagement and improved test scores. Similarly, in South Africa, Genovesi et al. (2022) highlighted the effectiveness of targeted workshops and coaching sessions for teachers in implementing differentiated instruction and adapting classroom strategies to meet diverse learner needs. Despite these efforts, both studies emphasized that inclusive education success was dependent on sustained teacher support and manageable classroom sizes. In Rorya District, where classrooms often hosted between 70 to 200 pupils, the effectiveness of such practices remained severely limited without proper teacher training and manageable workloads.

Another important initiative was curriculum modification and flexible teaching strategies. In Ghana, Opoku et al. (2021) reported on the incorporation of adapted teaching materials and the use of peer tutoring methods in three rural schools. These measures improved participation among learners with special needs, although the

lack of adequate materials and prepared teachers hampered their sustainability. In Rorya, while some schools made informal attempts to simplify content or provide peer support, these efforts were neither structured nor guided by a formal policy framework. Curriculum rigidity, language barriers, and lack of differentiated learning materials continued to limit the effectiveness of teaching strategies.

Infrastructural adaptation and assistive technologies also formed an important part of inclusive education implementation. In South Africa, Education White Paper 6 recommended the redesigning of school infrastructure to accommodate learners with disabilities, including ramps, accessible toilets, and learning resource rooms. Genovesi, et al., (2022) reported moderate success in township schools where government partnerships facilitated infrastructure improvements. However, similar efforts had not been replicated extensively in rural Tanzanian settings. A study by Ngussa (2017) in Iringa and Ruvuma revealed that most schools lacked basic accessible infrastructure, which deterred school attendance among children with disabilities. In Rorya, most public schools had not been upgraded to meet accessibility standards, and children with physical impairments struggled to attend or fully participate in class activities.

Community-based initiatives emerged as a promising model in East Africa, particularly in Uganda practices. Musenyete, et al., (2022) studied four rural schools and found that strong collaboration between schools, parents, and local leaders helped mobilize resources and promote awareness of inclusive education. Although these community-driven efforts were informal, they had tangible impacts in creating supportive learning environments. In Rorya, such community engagement remained

underdeveloped. Many parents were unaware of inclusive education policies or their roles in supporting learners with special needs, and traditional beliefs often perpetuated stigma against disability. Nevertheless, some schools had initiated awareness campaigns and parent–teacher meetings aimed at encouraging greater community participation.

Peer-assisted learning and co-teaching models were other strategies used to support inclusive education. In both, Ghana and Australia, peer tutoring was found to foster positive academic and social outcomes for students with disabilities teaching (Timothy & Agbenyega, 2022). In Rorya District, such methods were rarely formalized but occurred sporadically when motivated teachers or headteachers introduced them. Due to large class sizes and lack of training, however, many teachers were unable to organize effective peer tutoring systems or manage classroom diversity adequately.

In addition, various governments had implemented inclusive education policy frameworks. Tanzania’s own Education and Training Policy (ETP) of 2014 and National Inclusive Education Strategy (2021/2022–2025/2026) outlined goals to enhance equity and access. These frameworks called for integration of inclusive education in teacher training colleges, appointment of district special needs coordinators, and adaptation of examination formats. However, as Yu et al. (2024) noted, implementation at the district level was fragmented and often lacked proper guidance, resources, and evaluation mechanisms. In Rorya, schools were aware of inclusive education as a concept, but lacked clear directives on how to translate policy into action.

Donor and NGO-supported programs had also been instrumental in piloting inclusive practices in several regions of Tanzania. Projects by organizations such as ADD International, Leonard Cheshire, and UNICEF introduced pilot initiatives including early disability screening, teacher training workshops, and distribution of mobility aids. While such programs showed initial success, they were often short-lived and dependent on external funding. In Rorya, a few schools benefited from occasional support by faith-based or charitable organizations, but the reach and sustainability of these initiatives remained limited.

Despite these positive developments, significant challenges persist in the implementation of inclusive education policies. Tieng'o (2020) underscores that while policies such as the ETP provide a strong framework, their inconsistent application across schools undermines their potential impact. Barriers such as insufficient funding, societal stigma, and inadequate monitoring mechanisms further hinder progress. For instance, many schools in Rorya District still lack essential resources, such as assistive devices and disability-friendly infrastructure, which are crucial for fostering an inclusive learning environment. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that involves not only policy enforcement but also active community engagement, sustained investment in education, and continuous teacher development to create a truly inclusive educational system.

2.3.3 Challenges of Inclusive Education on Academic Performance

The implementation of inclusive education, while globally endorsed and locally acknowledged in policy frameworks, has faced several critical challenges that directly affect its impact on academic performance, especially in low-resource

settings like Rorya District. These challenges span structural, pedagogical, cultural, economic, and policy-related dimensions, collectively hindering the realization of inclusive learning environments for pupils with special needs.

One of the most persistent challenges has been the lack of adequately trained teachers in inclusive pedagogy. Studies have consistently shown that when teachers lack training in special needs education, they struggle to identify, support, and differentiate instruction for learners with disabilities or learning difficulties. For example Qu (2022) surveyed 500 general education teachers in urban China and found that the vast majority felt unprepared to teach students with disabilities due to minimal exposure to inclusive training and lack of supportive tools. This inadequacy translated into poorer academic performance for affected students.

In the Tanzanian context, Nilsson (2003) noted that although inclusive education was included in the teacher education curriculum, the coverage was too superficial to translate into effective classroom practices. In Rorya District, similar trends have been observed. Teachers often face overcrowded classrooms, have little to no access to professional development in inclusive strategies, and lack specialist support staff, which collectively diminishes their ability to meet the diverse learning needs of pupils.

Inadequate infrastructure further compounds the challenge. Physical environments that are not adapted to the needs of learners with disabilities—such as the absence of ramps, inaccessible toilets, lack of tactile learning resources, and overcrowded classrooms—undermine student engagement and attendance.(Ngussa, 2017),

through an audit of 20 rural schools in Iringa and Ruvuma, revealed that many schools had physical layouts that made it difficult for children with disabilities to attend classes consistently. Sánchez, et al., (2019) studying underfunded Latin American schools, found a direct link between poor infrastructure (lack of Braille books, hearing aids, and accessible classrooms) and declining academic performance among learners with special needs. In Rorya District, where class sizes often range between 70 and 200 pupils and most schools lack basic amenities, students with physical or sensory impairments face even greater academic exclusion.

Another substantial barrier is limited funding and scarcity of teaching and learning resources. Inclusive education is resource-intensive, requiring customized materials, assistive devices, and specialized personnel. Yet many governments, including Tanzania's, allocate limited budgets to inclusive education, and such allocations often fail to trickle down effectively to the school level. Yu, et al., (2024) conducted a policy implementation review in five rural Tanzanian districts, including Rorya, and found that despite strong policy commitments, budgetary constraints impeded the realization of inclusive goals. Schools in Rorya typically operate on tight financial margins, which restrict their ability to acquire assistive tools such as Braille materials, audio devices, or even simple visual aids. As a result, learners with special needs are often left to cope without the necessary accommodations, severely affecting their academic performance.

Cultural and societal attitudes also present significant challenges to inclusive education. In many communities, disability is still viewed through stigmatizing lenses, often linked to superstition or perceived as a family burden. Sheftel, et al.,

(2024), in a narrative study conducted in southern Tanzania, reported that such cultural perceptions affected parental willingness to support schooling for children with disabilities. These deep-seated beliefs often translate into neglect, isolation, and low expectations for children with disabilities, both at home and in schools. In Rorya District, anecdotal evidence and field reports suggest that learners with disabilities are sometimes hidden at home, ridiculed by peers, or ignored by overburdened teachers, all of which undermine their academic confidence and achievement.

Furthermore, language and communication barriers limit learning opportunities for pupils with hearing or speech impairments. Shank Lauwo (2022) emphasized that most Tanzanian classrooms rely exclusively on Kiswahili without sign language support, creating an exclusionary environment for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. These students miss critical content and social interactions, thereby falling behind in academic performance. In Rorya, where Total Communication strategies (use of signs, gestures and visuals) are rarely practiced due to lack of training and resources, learners with communication challenges are especially disadvantaged.

Another often overlooked obstacle is parental economic status and participation. Carraro et al. (2023), through economic and attendance surveys in six Tanzanian districts, revealed that many parents could not afford transportation or assistive tools for their children with disabilities, leading to chronic absenteeism. In Rorya District, economic hardship is widespread, and for many families, securing basic needs takes precedence over schooling. This reality not only affects school attendance but also the ability of families to engage meaningfully with schools to support inclusive education.

Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for inclusive education also remain weak. Chowdhury and Bunt (2023) noted in their review of inclusive education programs across South Asia that inconsistent follow-up and data tracking undermined program success. Similarly, Yu et al. (2024) observed that while inclusive education policies existed in Tanzania, there was a lack of systematic monitoring at the district and school levels. In Rorya, the absence of a functioning data system to track progress, identify gaps, or allocate resources effectively further compromises the ability to ensure accountability and sustained improvements in inclusive education delivery.

Lastly, policy-practice gaps persist as a core barrier. Although Tanzania has made substantial policy commitments—such as the Education and Training Policy (2014) and the National Strategy for Inclusive Education (2021/2022–2025/2026)—actual implementation remains limited. Many schools in Rorya lack awareness of the content of these policies or the capacity to translate them into action. Musenyente et al. (2022) emphasized that policies often remain aspirational when not accompanied by operational guidelines, training, and localized support systems.

2.4 Literature Summary and Gap

Empirical literature reviewed across global, regional, and local contexts has highlighted key factors influencing inclusive education, including teacher training, resource availability, and societal attitudes. Various countries have implemented initiatives such as Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), co-teaching, and community-based models to enhance inclusion. However, challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, lack of trained teachers, inadequate infrastructure, and weak policy implementation persist especially in low resource settings like rural

Tanzania.

Despite Tanzania's policy commitment to inclusive education, practical implementation remains inconsistent. There are no clear guidelines on the number of special needs pupils per classroom, making inclusion difficult, particularly in overcrowded environments where class sizes range from 70 to 200 pupils. Additionally, limited community awareness and the absence of structured IEPs hinder effective support and contribute to poor academic performance among students with disabilities.

This study addresses these gaps by examining the current inclusive education practices in Rorya District's public primary schools and evaluating their impact on the academic outcomes of pupils with special needs, offering a contextual understanding often missing in broader policy assessments.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlined the research methodology employed in the study. It detailed Research Paradigm the research approach, research design and strategy, area of the study, population of the study, sample and sampling technique, data collection, data collection tools, data analysis, data cleaning and processing, as well as ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Paradigm

This study is guided by the interpretivist research paradigm, which aligns with the qualitative research approach used. Interpretivism assumes that reality is socially constructed and can be best understood through people's lived experiences and personal interpretations. Given that the study focuses on inclusive education and its influence on academic performance of pupils with special needs in Rorya District, this paradigm allowed the researcher to explore how different stakeholders such as teachers, parents, pupils, and education officers understand and experience inclusive education. Interpretivism supports the use of flexible and interactive methods such as interviews and focus group discussions. These tools are appropriate for collecting in-depth data, enabling the study to capture real meanings, beliefs, and attitudes surrounding inclusive education practices in rural public primary schools.

3.3 Research Approach

A qualitative research approach was selected to facilitate an in-depth understanding of the intricate dynamics at play within Rorya District. Qualitative methods were

well-suited for exploring complex social phenomena, allowing researchers to delve into the subjective perspectives and lived experiences of participants (Hanckel et al., 2021). By embracing a qualitative approach, the study aimed to uncover the underlying mechanisms and contextual factors that shaped the effectiveness of inclusive education initiatives on academic performance in the target area.

3.4 Research Design

The study adopted a case study design. The choice of a case study design reflected a deliberate decision to focus on a specific context and delve deeply into its intricacies. Rorya District served as a microcosm of broader educational challenges in Tanzania, making it a compelling case for detailed examination. The case study design offered the flexibility to explore multifaceted issues within a real-life context, enabling the generation of rich, contextually embedded insights (Hudon et al., 2021).

3.5 Area of the Study and Rationale

The study was conducted in Rorya District, Mara Region, Tanzania. The selection of Rorya District was justified by its significance as a representative setting for examining the impact of inclusive education initiatives on academic performance. Situating the study within this specific northern part of Tanzania, particularly in Rorya District, allowed for a nuanced understanding of the local dynamics and challenges, contributing to the relevance and applicability of the research findings.

3.6 Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised key stakeholders involved in inclusive education within Rorya District, as reported by the District Education Officer (2024).

These included 134 public primary school administrators responsible for school-level implementation, and 1,132 primary school teachers, of whom only 18 had received training in inclusive education. In addition, there were 204 parents of pupils with special needs, whose involvement is crucial in supporting inclusive practices, as well as all pupils with special needs enrolled in public primary schools across the district. The population also included district education officers charged with policy supervision and implementation. This diverse population formed the basis from which relevant participants were sampled to provide critical insights into inclusive education initiatives in Rorya District.

3.7 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

3.7.1 Sampling Techniques

This study employed a purposive sampling technique to select participants who possessed the knowledge, experience, and involvement relevant to the study objectives. According to Denieffe (2020), purposive sampling allows the researcher to intentionally select individuals based on predefined criteria aligned with the research focus. This approach ensured that participants were information-rich and capable of providing in-depth insights into the implementation and impact of inclusive education initiatives in Rorya District. Stakeholders were chosen based on their direct roles in planning, implementing, or experiencing inclusive education at different levels.

3.8 Source of Data

Data for this study were obtained from both, individuals directly involved in inclusive education and from official documents related to the subject. Information

was gathered through interviews and focus group discussions with teachers, school administrators, pupils with special needs, parents, and district education officers. Teachers shared their experiences in delivering inclusive instruction, adapting teaching methods, and the level of support available in schools. School administrators provided insights into how inclusive programs are planned, coordinated and monitored at the school level.

Pupils with special needs described their learning experiences, the support they receive, and the challenges they face. Parents discussed their involvement in supporting their children's learning and the relationship between home and school. Education officers offered perspectives on how inclusive education policies are implemented and supervised across the district. Additional information was drawn from official education policy guidelines, school records, and published materials that helped to contextualize the findings and offer a broader view of inclusive education practices and challenges in Rorya District.

3.9 Data Collection Methods

This study employed qualitative data collection methods to gain an in-depth understanding of inclusive education initiatives in Rorya District. The main methods used were interviews and focus group discussions. Interviews were conducted with school administrators, teachers trained in inclusive education, district education officers, and parents of pupils with special needs. These interviews allowed for detailed, individualized responses concerning experiences, challenges and perceptions of inclusive education. Focus group discussions were held with pupils with special needs to encourage open interaction and sharing of personal experiences

in a supportive environment. These methods were selected to capture diverse perspectives and generate rich, descriptive data relevant to the research objectives.

3.10 Data Collection Instruments

To facilitate data collection, the study utilized interview guides and focus group discussion guides. The interview guide contained open-ended questions designed to explore participants' knowledge, practices, and experiences regarding inclusive education. It was flexible enough to allow probing and follow-up questions where necessary. The focus group discussion guide was structured to promote engagement among pupils, using simple and age-appropriate language to ensure understanding and participation. Both instruments were carefully developed to align with the research objectives and were reviewed for clarity and relevance prior to data collection.

3.11 Data Analysis Procedure

The qualitative data collected through interviews and focus group discussions were analyzed using thematic analysis. This process involved several systematic steps to identify, organize, and interpret patterns of meaning within the data. First, all audio-recorded responses were transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy and completeness. The transcripts were then read multiple times to familiarize the researcher with the content. After that, initial codes were generated by highlighting significant statements and phrases that related to the research objectives. These codes were then grouped into broader categories and recurring themes that reflected participants' views and experiences regarding inclusive education. Themes were refined and interpreted to develop a coherent narrative that addressed the research questions. The

analysis maintained a close connection to the raw data to ensure that findings were grounded in participants' actual responses. This method allowed for a deep understanding of the context, challenges, and practices associated with inclusive education in Rorya District.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are crucial in research involving human participants. In this study, ethical guidelines were strictly followed, including obtaining informed consent from all participants, ensuring confidentiality of participant information, and allowing voluntary participation with the right to withdraw at any time without consequences. Additionally, measures were taken to minimize any potential harm or discomfort to participants, thereby upholding the ethical integrity and dignity of all individuals involved in the research process.

The researcher obtained a permit from the Open University of Tanzania for data collection and a permit from the Ministry of Education and the regional educational officer to allow the researcher to collect data from schools and district educational offices.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

This chapter presents and critically analyzes the findings derived from interviews with administrators, teachers, students, parents, and District Education Officers (DEOs) in Rorya District regarding inclusive education initiatives and their impact on the academic performance of pupils with special needs. Guided by the specific objectives and research questions, the analysis integrates empirical evidence from the participants' responses with insights from relevant literature and the sociocultural theory underpinning this study.

The findings aim to address the following research questions: What factors influence inclusive education initiatives on academic performance within Rorya District? What inclusive education initiatives are currently implemented in public primary schools in Rorya District? What challenges are encountered in implementing inclusive education initiatives, and how do these challenges impact the academic performance of pupils with special needs? These questions align with the specific objectives of exploring influential factors, identifying current initiatives, and investigating the challenges in implementing inclusive education in the district.

The responses from the diverse participants provide rich and contextualized data, illustrating the interplay between policy, practice, and lived experiences within inclusive education. These findings are situated within the broader discourse of inclusive education and analyzed through the lens of sociocultural theory, emphasizing the role of societal, institutional, and interpersonal dynamics in shaping

educational outcomes for pupils with special needs. Through this approach, the chapter seeks to illuminate both, the successes and gaps in the current efforts toward achieving meaningful inclusivity in education.

Table 4.1: The Demographic Profiles of the Participants

Participant Group	Number of Participants	Gender (Male/Female)	Age Range	Experience/Role in Inclusive Education	Relevance to the Study
Administrators	2	1 Male / 1 Female	35–55 years	Headteachers with 5–20 years of administrative experience.	Oversee the implementation of inclusive education policies.
Teachers	4	2 Male / 2 Female	25–50 years	2–15 years of teaching experience; varied training in special needs.	Directly interact with students in classrooms.
Students	3	1 Male / 2 Female	10–15 years	Includes 2 students with hearing impairments and 1 with physical disabilities.	Provide first-hand accounts of their challenges and experiences.
Parents	3	1 Male / 4 Female	30–50 years	Parents of children with and without disabilities.	Offer insights into societal attitudes and home-school collaboration.
District Education Officers (DEOs)	2	2 Male	48–55 years	10–30 years in education management, focusing on policy and resource allocation.	Provide guidance on the implementation of inclusive education initiatives.

Source: Field data, 2024.

The study involved 14 participants: 2 school administrators, 3 teachers trained in inclusive education, 3 parents of children with special needs, 3 pupils with special needs, and 2 district education officers. They represented a mix of professional roles, experiences, and backgrounds relevant to inclusive education in Rorya District.

4.2 Factors Influencing Inclusive Education Initiatives

This section addresses the first research question: *What factors influence inclusive education initiatives on academic performance within Rorya District?* The findings

highlight several factors, including teacher preparedness, resource availability, infrastructure, societal attitudes, and administrative support.

4.2.1 Teacher Preparedness

Teacher preparedness emerged as a significant factor influencing the success of inclusive education initiatives. Utilizing Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which emphasizes the role of social interactions and cultural tools in learning, it becomes evident that teachers must be adequately prepared to scaffold the learning of pupils with special needs. The theory suggests that teachers act as mediators in students' learning processes, making their preparedness pivotal in implementing inclusive education effectively.

Participants highlighted a disparity between teachers' willingness and their actual ability to handle students with special needs due to inadequate training and exposure.

Teacher Participant T3 remarked:

We are genuinely willing to support pupils with special needs and are committed to ensuring that every student receives the attention and assistance they deserve. However, a major challenge we face is that most of us have not received adequate training on how to assist these students effectively. While we may have a general understanding of the importance of inclusion, we lack the specific knowledge, skills, and strategies necessary to meet the diverse needs of students with various disabilities. This lack of professional development and training leaves us feeling unsure about how to best support students with special needs in the classroom. We want to provide the best learning environment for all students, but without the proper training, we often struggle to implement inclusive practices that would help these students succeed academically and socially. The absence of specialized training also creates a gap in our ability to differentiate lessons and assessments in a way that accommodates the individual needs of each student. (Interview, September 2024).

Similarly, DEO D2 noted:

Teachers need regular workshops and hands-on training to deal with different types of disabilities effectively. Without continuous professional development, it becomes challenging to address the diverse needs of

students with disabilities, which can hinder their academic progress and overall inclusion in the classroom. (Interview, September 2024).

Parents and students also echoed these concerns. Parent P1 observed,

Some teachers do not know how to effectively handle children with hearing impairments or visual challenges. They often treat them the same way as other students, which is not helpful because it fails to address their unique learning needs and can lead to frustration and disengagement (Interview, September 2024).

Student Participant S4 added:

There are many times when teachers don't fully understand the specific challenges we face as students with hearing impairments. For example, some teachers don't use sign language, even though it's an essential way for us to communicate and understand lessons. Sign language isn't just a tool; it's our primary language, and using it in the classroom ensures we're not left behind. When teachers neglect this, it feels like they're not making an effort to include us. Additionally, hearing aids can only do so much. They amplify sound but don't always clarify it, especially in noisy classrooms or when teachers don't face us while speaking. Sometimes teachers move around the room or talk while writing on the board, which makes it impossible for us to lip-read or catch what they're saying. This lack of awareness creates gaps in our understanding, forcing us to rely on guesswork or fall behind in lessons. (Interview, September 2024).

These findings are consistent with Mokoro (2020), highlighting the critical role of inclusive education in promoting equitable learning opportunities for students with disabilities Kurth, et al., (2021), insisted the critical role of teacher preparedness in the success of inclusive education. They emphasize that equipping teachers with practical, hands-on experience in working with students with disabilities is fundamental for creating an inclusive classroom environment. Teacher preparedness goes beyond theoretical knowledge; it involves developing skills and strategies to address diverse learning needs effectively. This demonstrates that, beyond policy, the actual skills, strategies, and ongoing support for teachers are necessary to meet the diverse needs of learners.

Therefore, the findings of this study are consistent with the literature, as they both identify teacher preparedness and inclusive practices as key factors in ensuring that students with disabilities are fully supported and able to participate equally in classroom learning. For example, one school in Rorya District recognized the need to enhance teacher preparedness by organizing a short training program focused on sign language and assistive teaching methods. While the initiative was a step in the right direction, it highlighted significant gaps in adequately equipping teachers for inclusive education.

The training provided an introduction to sign language and basic strategies for supporting students with disabilities. However, teachers expressed concerns that the program lacked depth and practical components, leaving them unsure about how to apply these techniques effectively in the classroom. Many felt that the training did not prepare them to address real-world challenges, such as creating inclusive lesson plans or adapting teaching methods for diverse learning needs.

This example highlights the importance of comprehensive and ongoing teacher development programs. Effective teacher preparedness requires not only introductory workshops but also sustained professional development that includes hands-on experience, mentorship, and access to resources. Without these, even well-intentioned initiatives may fall short of empowering teachers to foster truly inclusive learning environment

Headteacher HT2 explained,

The training was brief and only covered the basics, which left many of our teachers feeling ill-equipped to support students with complex

disabilities. As a result, they struggle to address the diverse needs of students, particularly those with more severe challenges. (Interview, September, 2024).

Such limited efforts indicate the need for sustained and comprehensive training initiatives.

The insufficiency of preparedness is further intensified by systemic challenges, including a lack of inclusion-focused modules in teacher education curricula and insufficient policy enforcement at the district level. As DEO D3 highlighted,

Teacher training colleges should incorporate more inclusive education modules into their curricula to ensure that all teachers graduate with at least a foundational understanding of special needs education. This would better equip educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to support a diverse range of students, including those with disabilities. By integrating these modules, colleges can foster a more inclusive teaching environment and prepare teachers to effectively address the challenges of working with students who have varying needs and abilities (Interview, September, 2024).

Teacher preparedness is fundamental to the success of inclusive education, as it directly impacts how effectively educators can address the diverse needs of their students. The literature emphasizes that without sufficient readiness, the goals of inclusion may not be fully realized. For instance, Johnson et al. (2023) emphasize the necessity for teachers to engage in practical, hands-on experiences with students with disabilities to build confidence and competence in managing inclusive classrooms. Similarly, Hidayah and Morganna (2019), argue that preparedness involves more than just theoretical knowledge—it requires a clear understanding of how to implement inclusive strategies in real classroom settings.

The findings from an interview conducted in September 2024 further highlight this issue, where participants expressed concerns about the lack of preparedness among

many teachers when working with students with Special needs. They emphasized that while inclusive education policies exist, their effectiveness is compromised when teachers are unprepared to provide the necessary support. This discussion points to the need for ongoing professional development and access to resources that enable teachers to adapt their teaching methods and create inclusive learning environments. By enhancing teacher preparedness, schools can better realize the potential benefits of inclusive education and ensure that students with disabilities receive the support they need to succeed academically.

4.2.2 Resource Availability

The availability of resources, including financial, material, and technical support, plays a pivotal role in the implementation of inclusive education initiatives in Rorya District. The significance of resources is deeply rooted in Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory, which posits that learning is mediated through tools and resources within the environment. In inclusive education, these tools include braille machines, hearing aids, adapted textbooks, and other specialized materials essential for enabling learners with disabilities to participate equally and effectively in classroom activities.

Participants emphasized that resource availability is central to the success of inclusive education. Headteacher H2 expressed this sentiment, stating:

Inclusive education is not achievable without the right resources. Braille machines, hearing aids, and materials for students with autism or intellectual disabilities are essential for their active participation in education. Yet, these resources are often lacking, making it challenging to deliver equitable education for all students (Interview, September 2024).

Such statements highlight that inclusive education relies heavily on tailored resources to meet the diverse needs of students. This aligns with Napitupulo (2023), who argue that resource limitations are one of the most significant barriers to inclusive education in low-income settings, where financial constraints often hinder the acquisition of critical tools and materials.

Teacher T4 provided a practical perspective on the issue, commenting:

Specialized teaching aids and books adapted for students with disabilities are rarely available. Teachers are left to use generalized materials that fail to cater to the unique needs of these learners, which ultimately compromises their academic progress and classroom engagement. (Interview, September 2024).

This observation resonates with the findings of Laiser et al. (2024), who noted that Tanzania's general textbooks and materials often neglect the specific needs of students with disabilities. They argue that this oversight perpetuates educational inequities and limits the potential of inclusive education to transform learning outcomes for all. Similarly, Donohue and Bornman (2014) highlighted that the inadequacy of learning materials tailored for students with special needs remains a critical barrier to achieving inclusive education in sub-Saharan Africa, emphasizing that this gap stems from insufficient funding and limited policy implementation.

The reliance on external donors further complicates the resource issue. DEO D1 elaborated:

Our schools depend on external funding for many of the resources required for inclusive education. While this helps to address some immediate needs, it creates uncertainty and inconsistency. Schools may wait months or even years before receiving essential materials, which disrupts teaching and learning (Interview, September 2024).

This reliance underscores the systemic challenges faced in resource allocation for inclusive education. According to Fridell (2022), effective inclusive education demands sustained investment in resources, and dependence on external donors often results in erratic supply chains that undermine the continuity of learning. Kamran and Siddiqui (2024) similarly points out that donor-driven resource support is not a sustainable model for inclusive education, as it fails to integrate these resources into the broader national educational framework.

From the parental perspective, the financial burden of addressing resource gaps often falls on families. Parent P1 shared their frustrations,

"Parents like us often have to step in to buy learning aids for our children because schools lack the necessary resources. This additional expense is challenging, but without these tools, our children cannot keep up with their peers." (Interview, September 2024).

This challenge aligns with findings from da Silva (2023), who argued that the financial strain of providing resources often shifts to families in underfunded education systems. Such systemic inequities exacerbate the socio-economic divide, making inclusive education less accessible to disadvantaged communities. Students also voiced concerns on the lack of resources and its impact on their education. Student S4 remarked,

"In class, I struggle because there are no visual aids or interpreters to help me understand the lessons. I feel left behind, and it's hard to keep up with my classmates. I wish we had tools to make learning easier for us." (Interview, September 2024).

This aligns with findings from Napitupulo (2023), which emphasize that the provision of specialized tools such as sign language interpreters, tactile resources, and visual aids is essential in fostering engagement and participation in inclusive

education settings. The absence of such resources perpetuates exclusion, as students with disabilities are unable to access the curriculum on equal terms with their peers. Additionally, challenges in resource allocation often extend beyond material deficits to include the lack of technical expertise and training required to utilize available tools effectively. Kamran and Siddiqui (2024) argue that even when resources are present, their impact is limited if teachers are not adequately trained to integrate them into inclusive teaching practices. This highlights the need for a holistic approach that addresses both, the provision of resources and the capacity-building of educators.

From a sociocultural perspective, the absence of these resources undermines the scaffolding required for students with disabilities to engage with the learning process. Vygotsky's theory underscores that tools and resources are not merely aids but are central to shaping cognitive development and participation. When critical tools like braille machines, hearing aids, and adapted materials are missing, the learning environment becomes exclusionary, limiting opportunities for students with disabilities to thrive academically and socially.

To address these challenges, there is a need for sustained investment and policy-level reforms. Increasing government funding for inclusive education, fostering public-private partnerships, and integrating resource provision into national educational strategies are critical steps. Moreover, initiatives to localize the production of specialized learning materials could reduce dependency on external donors and improve resource accessibility. As Garcia-Vallès et al. (2024) suggest, inclusive education can only be truly effective when resources are integrated into the system in

a sustainable and equitable manner.

Generally, the availability of resources is a foundational factor influencing the success of inclusive education initiatives. Addressing this issue requires a multifaceted approach that prioritizes the procurement and equitable distribution of specialized materials, enhances teacher training, and ensures consistent funding mechanisms. These efforts will help bridge the gap between policy intentions and practical implementation, fostering an inclusive educational environment where all students, regardless of their abilities, can thrive.

4.2.3 Infrastructure

In the case of public primary schools in Rorya District, infrastructure is a critical factor influencing the success of inclusive education initiatives. The implementation of inclusive education requires not only pedagogical adjustments but also a well-planned physical environment that accommodates students with various disabilities. In line with Vygotsky's (1978) Social Cultural Theory, the physical environment and resources available play a fundamental role in enabling students with disabilities to interact with the learning materials and engage with their peers. Without accessible infrastructure, inclusive education cannot be fully realized, as students with disabilities are often limited in their ability to participate in activities, whether academic or extracurricular.

Within Rorya District context, disability-friendly infrastructure is a significant factor influencing inclusive education. Many schools are unequipped with the necessary facilities, such as ramps for wheelchair access, accessible classrooms, and

specialized learning materials, to adequately support students with disabilities. The absence of such infrastructure hinders the participation of students with disabilities in the educational process, directly affecting their academic performance. For example, Student S3 described the difficulties they face:

Some of us find it hard to move around the school because there are no ramps for our wheelchairs. We are often restricted to certain areas of the school, which limits our ability to participate in activities that require mobility, such as attending classes in different classrooms or joining our peers during recreational breaks. This lack of ramps not only hinders our physical movement but also affects our emotional well-being, as we feel isolated and less included in school life. When we need assistance to move from one point to another, it can be difficult for teachers and other students to provide support due to the lack of accessible routes. The school environment, therefore, becomes a barrier to our full participation in the learning experience. (Interview, September 2024).

This account reflects the impact of infrastructural limitations on the academic experience of students with mobility impairments in Rorya District schools. The absence of ramps and accessible routes not only impedes physical movement but also isolates these students socially, preventing their full participation in the school environment. When physical barriers restrict access to classrooms, learning resources, and peer interactions, it directly hinders the students' academic and social development, which in turn affects their overall academic performance.

The inadequacy of disability-friendly infrastructure in Rorya District is often due to economic constraints and outdated perceptions of what inclusive education entails. District Education Officer D1 discussed the reluctance to invest in accessible infrastructure:

Many schools still hold outdated perceptions, viewing accessible facilities as an unnecessary expense rather than a fundamental requirement. This mindset leads to neglect in constructing ramps, accessible toilets, and

classrooms, perpetuating exclusion for students with disabilities and hindering inclusive education efforts (Interview, September 2024).

This mindset reflects a wider issue across many developing regions where the needs of students with disabilities are marginalized. In Rorya District, this attitude towards disability-friendly infrastructure limits the capacity of schools to provide an environment conducive to the full participation of students with disabilities.

According to UNICEF (2021), inclusive infrastructure is a foundational component of inclusive education, as it ensures that all students, regardless of their abilities, can access the same opportunities. The situation in Rorya District, where many schools fail to provide accessible facilities, directly contradicts the principles of inclusive education. The lack of accessible infrastructure not only prevents students with disabilities from engaging in academic activities but also reinforces societal exclusion, further marginalizing them within the educational system. The inadequacy of infrastructure in Rorya District schools remains a significant barrier to the implementation of inclusive education. To support the academic performance of students with disabilities, a more concerted effort is needed to prioritize and invest in infrastructure that supports inclusivity. This includes building ramps, accessible classrooms, and specialized facilities, as well as ensuring that teachers have the necessary resources to engage all students meaningfully.

4.2.4 Societal Attitudes and Stigma

Societal attitudes toward disabilities are another key factor influencing the success of inclusive education in Rorya District. Negative societal attitudes towards disability often result in stigmatization, which in turn affects the enrollment, attendance, and

academic participation of students with disabilities in public primary schools. Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory (1978) emphasizes that societal norms and cultural values shape individual behaviors and educational outcomes. In the case of Rorya District, negative perceptions on disability create significant barriers in the inclusion of children with disabilities in the education system, limiting their ability to access quality education and engage fully in the school environment.

One of the most common societal beliefs in Rorya District is that children with disabilities are incapable of academic achievement, particularly within an inclusive education framework. This belief leads to low enrollment rates for students with disabilities in public primary schools, as parents and communities perceive these children as unable to benefit from formal education. Parent P2 expressed this concern:

Some parents still hold the belief that children with disabilities are incapable of learning or achieving academically, particularly in an inclusive education setting. This perception often leads them to undervalue education for these children, resulting in low enrollment and limited academic opportunities (Interview, September 2024).

This quote reveals the deeply rooted societal stigma surrounding disability that exists in many parts of Rorya District. These entrenched views not only discourage parents from enrolling their children with disabilities in school but also perpetuate the belief that these children do not deserve the same educational opportunities as their peers. This stigma leads to a lack of investment in inclusive education, which limits the academic opportunities available to students with disabilities and further perpetuates their marginalization. Teacher T1 echoed a similar sentiment, stating:

Many still believe that students with disabilities are a burden, making it difficult for them to be fully accepted in schools. This perception affects

their treatment, often leading to exclusion from activities and inadequate support for their academic growth (Interview, September 2024).

This perception of students with disabilities as a “burden” results in discriminatory practices within schools. Students with disabilities are often excluded from extracurricular activities, academic challenges, and social interactions, all of which are vital for their academic and personal development. The lack of social inclusion negatively impacts not only their academic performance but also their emotional well-being, as they feel isolated and undervalued.

The societal stigma observed in Rorya District is consistent with the findings of Mfaume and Bilinga (2017), who argue that changing public attitudes towards disability is essential for the success of inclusive education in sub-Saharan Africa. Without shifting these attitudes, students with disabilities will continue to face barriers that limit their educational opportunities. UNICEF (2021) also emphasizes the importance of community engagement in addressing these societal attitudes, through public awareness campaigns, advocacy, and training programs for parents, teachers, and community leaders.

To address the stigma surrounding disability and foster an inclusive environment, it is crucial to engage in awareness campaigns and provide education to both, parents and teachers. Educating the community on the potential of children with disabilities and the benefits of inclusive education can help dispel negative stereotypes and encourage greater acceptance of these children in the school system. Societal attitudes and stigma are significant barriers to inclusive education in Rorya District. Changing these attitudes through community engagement, education, and awareness

campaigns is essential for ensuring the full inclusion of students with disabilities. By fostering a more inclusive mindset, both in schools and communities, it will be possible to create an environment where all children, regardless of their abilities, can thrive academically and socially.

4.2.5 Administrative Support

Effective administrative support is essential for the successful implementation of inclusive education. Drawing from Ainscow et al. (2019) guidelines on inclusive education, strong leadership and consistent policy enforcement are necessary to address the challenges faced by schools in providing education to students with special needs. Without appropriate leadership, inclusive education policies may remain underdeveloped or poorly implemented, leading to gaps in support for students with disabilities. Headteacher H1 commented,

Without adequate guidance and consistent support from the district education office, implementing inclusive education becomes a significant challenge. Schools struggle to address diverse needs, resulting in gaps in resources, training, and strategies necessary for fostering effective and inclusive learning environments (Interview, September, 2024).

This statement underscores the importance of administrative support in ensuring that schools are equipped to meet the needs of all students, particularly those with disabilities. Effective school leadership, along with strong district-level support, is crucial for the successful integration of inclusive practices into the everyday functioning of schools. Furthermore, District Education Officer D3 highlighted the need for consistent monitoring and evaluation to ensure the success of inclusive education initiatives:

The government must take full responsibility for monitoring and supporting schools to guarantee they meet the diverse needs of all learners. This includes providing resources, training, and regular assessments to ensure

inclusive education policies are effectively implemented nationwide (Interview, September, 2024).

This comment emphasizes the necessity for sustained oversight and intervention from educational authorities to ensure that inclusive education policies are not just adopted but are also performed effectively at the school level. Without such support, the implementation of inclusive education policies remains inconsistent, and students with disabilities are likely to continue facing significant barriers to full participation in the educational system.

Infrastructure also emerged as a significant determinant of inclusive education. Many schools in Rorya District were reported to lack disability-friendly facilities, such as ramps, accessible toilets, and classrooms designed for students with special needs. Bronfenbrenner's theory emphasizes the microsystem, such as the school environment, as a key influencer of student outcomes. Student Participant S3 shared:

Some of us struggle to move through the school environment because there are no ramps for our wheelchairs. This lack of accessibility limits our mobility, restricts participation in school activities, and often leaves us feeling excluded and frustrated in the learning process (Interview, September 26, 2024).

DEO D1 added, “.....*Many schools do not prioritize building accessible facilities because they see it as too expensive or unnecessary*” (Interview, September, 2024).

This finding aligns with Ainscow et al. (2019), which highlights the importance of inclusive infrastructure in ensuring that students with disabilities can fully participate in the learning process.

4.3 Inclusive Education Initiatives in Public Primary Schools

This section addresses the second research question: *What are the inclusive education initiatives currently implemented in public primary schools in Rorya*

District? In response, several key initiatives have emerged, including the adoption of inclusive education policies, teacher training programs, and stakeholder sensitization campaigns. These initiatives are essential for ensuring that students with disabilities can access quality education alongside their peers in an inclusive setting.

4.3.1 Adoption of Inclusive Education Policies

According to Matete (2021), Inclusive education policies are foundational for creating equitable educational opportunities for students with disabilities. National-level policies in Tanzania, such as the *Education and Training Policy* (ETP) of 2014 (Revised 2023), the *National Strategy for Inclusive Education* (2021/2022–2025/2026), and the *National Curriculum Framework for Basic and Teacher Education* (NCFBTE) (2019), have laid the groundwork for promoting inclusive education across the country, including in Rorya District. These policies reflect the government's commitment to ensuring that students with disabilities receive quality education. For example, the ETP (2014) aims to "expand educational opportunities for various groups at all levels, including children with special needs" (p. 35), while the NCFBTE (2019) calls for "curriculum flexibility and teaching approaches that cater to children's learning needs" (p. 41).

However, the effective implementation of these policies at the local level has been inconsistent, as highlighted by Headteacher H3:

Although the government has provided guidelines for inclusive education, there remains a significant gap in their accomplishment at the school level. This disconnect often leads to inconsistent implementation, making it difficult for schools to fully support students with special needs (Interview, September, 2024).

This challenge is echoed by scholars like Graham et al. (2023), who argue that while policies may be robust on paper, their practical implementation often falls short due to gaps in resources, inadequate monitoring, and insufficient support at the school level. Studies by Shukia (2020) further support this, showing that despite policy advances, successful implementation requires a strong commitment from all stakeholders and comprehensive resources to ensure the policies translate into real educational changes.

4.3.2 Teacher Training and Professional Development

Teacher training is crucial for the successful integration of inclusive education practices. Tanzania has made significant strides in teacher preparation through the inclusion of mandatory courses on inclusive education in the Diploma in Special Needs Education Curriculum (2019). These courses provide teachers with foundational knowledge on inclusive education and strategies for meeting the diverse needs of students with disabilities. Teacher T2 acknowledged the benefits of these programs:

"...The specialized courses we've attended have helped us understand the basics of inclusive education. For instance, the training on visual impairment management has improved how we handle students with such challenges in our classrooms" (Interview, September, 2024).

The emphasis on specialized training in visual impairment management, mobility, orientation, and assistive device maintenance reflects Tanzania's commitment to preparing teachers for the realities of inclusive classrooms. However, as emphasized by District Education Officer D1:

"...The mandatory courses and specialized training have been a step in the right direction. However, more frequent workshops and in-service training are needed to keep teachers updated on inclusive education strategies and

practical skills" (Interview, September, 2024).

Ongoing professional development is necessary to ensure that teachers remain up to date with the latest inclusive education strategies and best practices. This is supported by the work of Mokoro (2020), which emphasizes that continuous teacher development is essential for inclusive education to be effectively implemented in schools. The importance of in-service training is also highlighted by Milinga et al. (2023) , who argues that regular professional development opportunities ensure that teachers develop a deeper understanding on how to adapt their teaching strategies to accommodate students with diverse learning needs.

The significance of these training efforts is reflected in national statistics: in 2022/2023, 1,985 teachers and 206 school quality assurance officers were trained on how to support students with special needs (Budget Speech, 2022/23). While these efforts demonstrate a positive trend, it remains clear that more frequent, localized, and specialized training programs are required to address the varied and evolving needs of students with disabilities.

4.3.3 Stakeholder Sensitization Campaigns

Community sensitization is another key initiative in promoting inclusive education. Stakeholder involvement, including the support of civil society organizations and international non-governmental organizations, has been instrumental in raising awareness and mobilizing resources for inclusive education. Organizations such as Sense International, CBM Global Disability, Haki Elimu, and Under the Same Sun have contributed significantly to advocacy, resource provision, and capacity-building

efforts in Rorya District. DEO D2 noted the importance of these external partnerships:

Collaborations with organizations like Sense International and CBM Global Disability have helped us access the resources and training needed to create more inclusive classrooms. These partnerships are essential for overcoming the barriers we face, such as a lack of specialized materials and expertise (Interview, September, 2024).

Such collaborations have enabled schools to access specialized materials and resources, such as braille textbooks and assistive technology, which are crucial for meeting the diverse needs of students with disabilities. Beyond resources, these partnerships have helped shift community perceptions on disabilities and inclusive education. As noted by Parkhouse et al. (2019), changing societal attitudes toward disability is essential for the success of inclusive education. In Rorya District, sensitization campaigns have contributed to a gradual shift in attitudes, however, more work remains to be done to ensure that inclusive education is fully embraced by both, the community and school staff.

Stakeholder sensitization also involves involving parents in the education of children with special needs. Studies by Lorenz et al. (2021) emphasize the role of family and community engagement in fostering inclusive educational environments. In Rorya District, community sensitization efforts have helped parents understand the importance of sending their children with disabilities to school, while also encouraging schools to adopt inclusive practices that accommodate the diverse needs of all learners.

Inclusive education initiatives in Rorya District reflect intensive effort to integrate students with disabilities into mainstream education through policy adoption, teacher training, and community sensitization campaigns. The government of Tanzania, through policies such as the ETP and the NCFBTE, has shown commitment to

improving the educational experience for students with disabilities. However, gaps remain in the effective implementation of these policies, particularly at the school level, which requires stronger support, resources, and consistent monitoring. Teacher training programs have been instrumental in preparing educators to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities, with continuous professional development being necessary to ensure teachers stay up to date with inclusive education strategies. The role of stakeholders in sensitizing communities and providing necessary resources has also been crucial in shifting attitudes toward inclusion.

As emphasized in the literature, successful implementation of inclusive education requires a multi-faceted approach involving strong policy support, adequate teacher preparation, and active community participation (Okyere et al., 2019). These initiatives are vital for ensuring that students with disabilities in Rorya District have access to quality education, and as such, they represent the cornerstone of inclusive education in the region. By strengthening these initiatives and addressing existing gaps, public primary schools in Rorya District can further advance inclusive education and ensure that all students, regardless of their disabilities, have the opportunity to succeed academically.

4.4 Challenges of Inclusive Education on Academic Performance in Rorya District

This section addresses the third research question: *What challenges are encountered in the implementation of inclusive education initiatives on academic performance of students in public primary schools within Rorya District?* The challenges were categorized into six major areas based on respondents' perspectives and

supplemented with theoretical frameworks and relevant literature. These challenges include inadequate funding, lack of teacher preparedness, societal stigma, ineffective policy implementation and support, inadequate infrastructure, and limited parental involvement.

4.4.1 Inadequate Funding

A regular theme that emerged across all respondents was the issue of inadequate funding, which significantly hampers the effective implementation of inclusive education. Administrators emphasized that insufficient budgets constrain schools' ability to acquire assistive devices, improve infrastructure, and provide adequate teacher training. As Teacher Participant T3 explained,

We lack essential tools such as braille materials, hearing aids, adaptive learning devices, and other specialized equipment. This shortage makes it challenging to provide adequate support for students with disabilities, limiting their ability to learn effectively and achieve their full academic potential in an inclusive education setting (Interview, September, 2024).

Similarly, District Education Officer (DEO) D1 noted,

The funds allocated for inclusive education are insufficient, forcing schools to operate with minimal resources. This limitation affects the provision of essential tools and services, hindering efforts to create a supportive learning environment for students with diverse educational needs” (Interview, September, 2024).

This sentiment was echoed by parents, with P4 stating,

“...We are sometimes asked to contribute money for school improvements, but not all parents can afford this, especially for children with special needs” (Interview, September, 2024).

This further underscore the financial burden placed on families who may already be facing economic difficulties. Students also highlighted the deficiency of essential

learning materials, particularly those tailored for students with visual impairments.

Student Participant S2 pointed out,

There are no books available for students with visual impairments in my school, which makes it very difficult for them to keep up with lessons. This lack of accessible learning materials hinders their academic progress and limits their participation in class activities. (Interview, September, 2024).

Basing on clear statement from S2, the broader lack of resources for inclusive education is reflected. Drawing from the Social Cultural Theory, the interaction between societal structures and cultural practices greatly shapes the school environment and students' learning outcomes. This theory emphasizes the importance of resources and policies in determining the success of inclusive education. In this case, financial limitations become a critical barrier, preventing the provision of necessary tools and infrastructure, and hindering efforts to create an inclusive and equitable learning environment. The findings align with Graham et al. (2023), revealing that financial constraints are a significant challenge to inclusive education in developing countries. These constraints, according to the report, contribute to systemic inequities in education, underscoring the need for adequate funding and resources to ensure that all students, regardless of their needs, have access to quality education.

The implication of these findings is clear: to achieve meaningful and sustained progress in inclusive education, there must be a systemic shift in how funds are allocated, ensuring that financial support is sufficient and strategically directed towards areas that will have the greatest impact, such as assistive technology, infrastructure, and teacher professional development. Without addressing these

financial gaps, inclusive education will remain an idea that is difficult to fully realize. The limited resources also restrict the capacity of teachers to effectively support students with diverse needs, thus impacting the overall academic performance of students with disabilities.

4.4.2 Inadequate of Teacher Preparedness

The issue of inadequate teacher preparation to support students with special needs emerged as a critical challenge across the responses. Administrators expressed significant concern over teachers' limited ability to address the unique needs of students with disabilities, which directly affects the quality of inclusive education provided. Headteacher H1 highlighted this gap, stating,

“...Teachers often lack adequate training to support students with special needs effectively, which impacts both their confidence in teaching and the students’ academic performance. Without proper skills, teachers struggle to provide the inclusive education these learners require” (Interview, September, 2024).

This reflects a widespread sentiment that without targeted professional development, teachers cannot fully meet the needs of all learners. Similarly, Teacher Participant T1 acknowledged the difficulty in supporting students with special needs, stating,

“...We make efforts to assist our students, but without suitable training, it becomes challenging to address the unique needs of each learner effectively. This lack of preparation limits our ability to provide meaningful support in an inclusive classroom environment” (Interview, September, 2024).

Teachers in this study expressed frustration with their inability to cater to the diverse needs of their students due to the absence of specialized training, suggesting that even well-meaning teachers are hindered by their lack of expertise. The impact of inadequate teacher training was also noted by students. For example, Student S3

shared their experience,

Sometimes teachers struggle to explain lessons in ways I can understand due to my hearing challenges. This makes it difficult for me to follow along in class, leaving me feeling excluded and unable to keep up with my peers (Interview, September, 2024).

This statement underlines the emotional and academic toll that a lack of teacher preparedness can have on students, highlighting how students with special needs can feel isolated and left behind in an inclusive classroom without the proper support. The concerns of parents and District Education Officers (DEOs) reinforced the severity of this issue. DEO D2 explained,

When teachers lack the skills to manage inclusive classrooms effectively, it becomes challenging to address the diverse needs of all learners, leading to gaps in understanding and making it harder to achieve meaningful and equitable learning outcomes for every student (Interview, September, 2024).

This reinforces the idea that inadequate teacher training not only affects student learning but also erodes the broader trust in the education system's capacity to deliver inclusive education effectively. From the perspective of the Social Constructivist Theory, teacher preparedness is crucial in shaping the learning environment. This theory emphasizes the active role of teachers in creating inclusive classrooms by understanding and responding to the diverse needs of students. In line with this, studies such as da Silva (2023) highlight the importance of effective teacher training in achieving successful inclusive education; asserting that teachers must be equipped with the necessary skills to cater to all learners in a way that fosters meaningful engagement and learning.

This lack of teacher preparedness has significant implications for the success of inclusive education. It points to the necessity of integrating specialized training into

teacher education programs to ensure that educators are equipped with the knowledge and skills required to support students with special needs. Additionally, continuous professional development and in-service training should be prioritized to ensure that teachers remain competent in managing inclusive classrooms effectively. Without such investments in teacher training, inclusive education is likely to remain a theoretical idea rather than a practical reality for many students with disabilities. Therefore, addressing the gaps in teacher preparedness is essential in achieving equitable educational outcomes for all learners, especially those with special needs.

4.4.3 Societal Stigma and Cultural Attitudes

Respondents reported that societal stigma and negative perceptions on disability pose significant barriers to inclusive education. Administrators noted that some parents hesitate to enroll children with disabilities due to fear of judgment. Administrator A1 explained,

Parents often keep children with disabilities at home because they think the child cannot learn or will face discrimination at school. These misconceptions limit the child's opportunities for education and social interaction, perpetuating cycles of isolation and stigma that undermine inclusive education efforts. (Interview, September, 2024).

Teachers, such as Teacher T2, mentioned that some colleagues also hold biases, saying, *“There are teachers who think children with disabilities are not capable, and this attitude affects how they teach”* (Interview, September, 2024).

Parents shared similar experiences, with Parent P3 lamenting,

Sometimes people in the community tell me it is a waste of money to send my child with learning disabilities to school, their comments make it harder for me to stay motivated, but I know education is vital for my child's future. (Interview, September, 2024).

Students themselves acknowledged the stigma, with Student S1 saying,

Some classmates make fun of me because I cannot walk properly. Their words hurt and make me feel different and unwelcome in school. This makes it harder for me to focus on my studies and fully participate in class activities. (Interview, September, 2024).

DEOs highlighted the need for community awareness programs to combat these perceptions. The finding that societal attitudes plays an essential role in shaping the success of inclusive education underscores the critical need for community sensitization. DEO D3 emphasized the necessity of campaigns to educate the community, stating:

“We need campaigns to educate the community that children with disabilities can succeed if given the right support. Changing societal attitudes is essential to nurturing an inclusive environment where all children are valued and encouraged to achieve their academic potential” (Interview, September, 2024).

This line up with the Social Cultural Theory, which posits that learning and development are inherently social processes shaped by cultural norms, values, and practices.

In this context, societal attitudes, particularly stigma and misconceptions surrounding disability become significant barriers to the effective implementation of inclusive education. Recio et al. (2020) confirm that stigma not only affects the self-esteem of children with disabilities, but also undermines parental and community support, which are critical in fostering an inclusive learning environment. Similarly, Milinga, et al., (2023) emphasizes that combating stigma requires a multifaceted approach, including community education and active advocacy, to transform societal beliefs and promote acceptance.

Parents often keep children with disabilities at home because they think the child cannot learn or will face discrimination at school. These perceptions stem from deeply rooted societal and cultural values that view disability as a limitation, reflecting the principles of Social Cultural Theory. Negative stereotypes perpetuated within communities influence parental decisions and school environments, reinforcing exclusionary practices. However, when societal attitudes shift towards inclusion and support, as evidenced by community campaigns or advocacy efforts, they create an enabling environment that promotes collaboration, resource sharing, and emotional support. This alignment fosters inclusive education, ensuring all children can thrive academically and socially.

These findings have significant implications, calling for deliberate efforts to challenge societal stigma through comprehensive awareness campaigns and advocacy programs. Government bodies, non-governmental organizations, and schools must collaborate to implement initiatives aimed at changing public perceptions. Strategies could include media campaigns, community dialogues, and showcasing successful individuals with disabilities as role models. Additionally, integrating anti-stigma education into school curricula can nurture positive attitudes among young learners, creating a ripple effect across families and communities. Without addressing stigma at the societal level, the benefits of inclusive education policies and practices may remain unrealized, perpetuating cycles of marginalization and inequality for children with disabilities.

4.4.4 Ineffective Policy Implementation and Support

A recurring theme identified by participants was the gap in policy implementation,

which continues to be a significant barrier to the success of inclusive education. Administrators highlighted the lack of follow-up mechanisms, with Administrator A2 stating,

The policies look good on paper, but there is little action to implement them at the school level. Despite the existence of well-intentioned policies, schools struggle with translating them into practice due to insufficient support, resources, and oversight (Interview, September, 2024).

These findings have significant implications between the development of policies and their practical implementation. Similar challenges have been documented in other African contexts, where systemic barriers often impede the successful execution of reforms. For instance, Ndung'u (2017) emphasizes that while many policies are well-crafted and aligned with global educational goals, their effectiveness is frequently undermined by insufficient resources, lack of stakeholder involvement, and poor monitoring mechanisms. These systemic gaps not only hinder the implementation of educational reforms but also exacerbate existing inequalities, making it difficult to achieve the intended outcomes. This reflects a broader pattern across developing regions, where the translation of policy into practice remains a persistent challenge requiring comprehensive, context-specific solutions. Teachers also expressed frustration regarding the inadequate communication and training surrounding inclusive education policies. Teacher T4 remarked,

“We are not fully informed about what the policies require us to do, and there is no regular training or follow-up. This leaves us unsure of how to implement inclusive education effectively in our classrooms” (Interview, September, 2024).

The lack of continuous training and clear guidelines places teachers in a difficult position, reducing their capacity to support diverse learners and implement inclusive

practices effectively. Research by Matete (2021) reinforces this notion, stating that consistent teacher training is crucial for successful inclusive education. Parents also raised concerns on their lack of understanding of the policies.

We do not understand these policies because no one explains them to us. It's hard to support our children's education when we don't have the proper knowledge of what's expected. For example, policies related to inclusive education or the use of assistive devices are often mentioned in meetings convened early this year 2024, but there is little effort to ensure parents fully understand them. This lack of communication makes it challenging for us to provide the necessary support at home or advocate effectively for our children at school. If schools and education authorities organized workshops or provided materials in accessible formats, it would help bridge this gap and enable us to be more involved in our children's learning journey. (Interview, September, 2024).

This lack of clarity limits the involvement of parents, an essential factor for successful inclusive education. According to the Social Cultural Theory, the role of the community, including parents, is integral to the learning process. When parents are uninformed about the policies and their role, it impacts the broader social learning environment, which is essential for fostering inclusivity.

District Education Officers (DEOs) also emphasized the importance of clear guidelines and resources for policy implementation. DEO D1 stated,

Schools need clear guidelines and resources to implement policies effectively. Without proper direction and adequate materials, it is challenging to put inclusive education policies into practice, resulting in inconsistent implementation and limiting their impact on students with special needs (Interview, September, 2024).

This statement highlights the importance of institutional support at the district level, which ensures that schools have both, the resources and the clear direction needed to apply inclusive education policies successfully.

The Social Cultural Theory emphasizes that the learning environment, including the resources and policies, is shaped by the interactions within the community and broader societal structures. In this context, the theory posits that inclusive education can only prosper when there is a collective effort from all members of the educational system, including administrators, teachers, parents, and the district. The lack of proper resources, training, and communication significantly impairs the ability of schools to create an inclusive environment for students with special needs.

The findings of this study emphasize the necessity for a systemic approach to policy implementation in inclusive education. It is critical for policymakers to not only create inclusive education policies but also provide clear guidelines, continuous teacher training, and adequate resources for their implementation. Moreover, parents need to be informed and involved in the process to ensure that the home-school connection is strong. In line with Social Cultural Theory, fostering a shared understanding of policies and resources across the community will support more inclusive educational outcomes. As Bada et al. (2024) indicates, the success of inclusive education hinges on consistent and collaborative efforts across all levels of the educational system. This study calls for sustained attention to financial and institutional support to bridge the gap between policy creation and its successful implementation in schools.

4.4.5 Inadequate Infrastructure

A recurring challenge raised by participants in this study was the issue of inadequate infrastructure, which significantly impedes the effective implementation of inclusive education. Administrators, teachers, students, and District Education Officers

(DEOs) alike identified infrastructural limitations as a key barrier. Administrator A1 emphasized the lack of basic facilities in schools, stating, *"Many schools face deficiency in basic facilities like ramps or accessible toilets."*

This highlights a critical barrier to inclusive education, as inadequate infrastructure limits access and participation for students with special needs, hindering efforts to create equitable learning environments (Interview, September, 2024).

This observation aligns with findings by UNICEF (2021), which underscores that accessible infrastructure is crucial in ensuring that students with disabilities can fully participate in the learning process. Without these essential facilities, inclusive education becomes a theoretical idea rather than a practical reality. Teachers also acknowledged the challenges posed by insufficient infrastructure. Teacher T4 stated,

"Classrooms are overcrowded, and there are no quiet spaces for students who need them. This overcrowding creates challenges for inclusive education, as it limits individual attention and fails to provide supportive environments for students with special needs, ultimately affecting their academic performance and overall well-being" (Interview, September 26, 2024).

Overcrowded classrooms not only limit individualized attention but also intensify the challenges faced by students with special needs, especially those requiring quieter, more structured environments. The absence of specialized spaces for students with sensory processing issues or behavioral challenges further complicates the ability of teachers to meet diverse learning needs in an inclusive setting.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Pupils by Class Level and Special Needs Status at School MX

Class Level	Total Number of Pupils	Normal Students	Students with Special Needs
Class 4	83	78	5
Class 5	106	102	4
Class 6	100	95	5
Class 7	88	82	6

Source: Field Data, 2024.

Explanation: This table demonstrates that Primary school MX Students from all class levels significantly exceed the recommended student-teacher ratio, creating an overcrowded learning environment. The inclusion of students with special needs further highlights the demand for tailored learning spaces, making the lack of quiet areas and individual attention more pressing.

Research by Kioupi et al. (2023) highlights that appropriate learning environments, including space for individual needs, are critical for the success of inclusive education. Students, too, voiced their frustrations with the current state of school infrastructure. Student S2 shared,

It is hard for me to move around the school because there are no ramps for my wheelchair; this means I often need help from teachers or classmates, which can be frustrating and makes me feel like a burden. I wish facilities were accessible. (Interview, September, 2024).

This highlights a physical barrier that limits mobility for students with physical disabilities, further make worse their sense of isolation and exclusion. The lack of ramps not only restricts students' physical movement but also diminishes their sense of autonomy and self-esteem, crucial factors for academic success and overall well-being.

DEO1 also emphasized the urgency of addressing infrastructure challenges. D1 remarked,

Infrastructure remains a major barrier. Without accessible facilities, many students are excluded from the learning process. Simple adjustments, such as ramps, wider doorways, and accessible restrooms, can make a significant difference in ensuring that students with physical disabilities have equal access to education. Furthermore, classrooms need to be equipped with the necessary resources like assistive technologies and proper seating arrangements, to accommodate students with sensory impairments or mobility issues. Without these fundamental changes, the goal of inclusive education cannot be fully realized.

(Interview, September, 2024).

This statement emphasizes the fundamental role that infrastructure plays in fostering an inclusive environment. It is not merely about physical access; it is about creating an environment where all students, regardless of their abilities, can thrive academically and socially. According to the Social Cultural Theory, the school environment shapes how individuals interact with their peers and their learning experiences. Inadequate infrastructure limits these interactions, isolating students with disabilities from their peers and making it difficult for them to fully engage in learning activities.

The Social Cultural Theory emphasizes that learning is a social process, influenced by the environment and interactions with others. A dearth of accessible infrastructure creates an environment that marginalizes students with Special needs, preventing them from fully participating in classroom activities and social engagements. The theory suggests that inclusive education cannot be achieved if the environment does not support all learners' needs, reinforcing the need for a more inclusive and accessible educational infrastructure (Akbar et al., 2023).

Existing literature supports the findings of this study, highlighting the significant role infrastructure plays in inclusive education. According to Milinga et al. (2023), the physical environment of schools, including accessibility features such as ramps, adapted toilets, and quiet spaces, directly impacts the academic performance and social integration of students with disabilities. The absence of these facilities leads to physical, social, and emotional exclusion, which ultimately hinders students' educational outcomes. Similarly, a study by Kamran and Siddiqui (2024) and

Edgerton and McKechnie (2023) found that a lack of infrastructure and resources is a key factor in the exclusion of students with disabilities, particularly in developing countries. Furthermore, the Social Cultural Theory posits that physical barriers in the learning environment create social exclusion, which negatively affects the educational experience of students with disabilities.

In general, this study underlines the urgent need for significant investment in school infrastructure to support inclusive education. It is imperative for policymakers to prioritize the construction of disability-friendly facilities, such as ramps, accessible toilets, and quiet spaces for students with special needs. The lack of adequate infrastructure directly impacts students' ability to engage in the learning process and undermines the goals of inclusive education. The implications for practice are clear: without accessible facilities, students with disabilities will continue to face barriers to learning, limiting their academic performance and social integration. The Social Cultural Theory further suggests that inclusive education cannot thrive in an environment that does not facilitate full participation from all students, highlighting the critical importance of creating an accessible, inclusive, and supportive school environment for all learners.

In light of these findings, there is a pressing need for greater investment in infrastructure to support inclusive education. Policymakers and educational planners must consider the practical needs of students with disabilities when designing and implementing education policies. This includes allocating sufficient resources for the construction of inclusive facilities and ensuring that all schools are adequately equipped to meet the diverse needs of their student population.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Overview

This chapter presents a summary of key findings from the study, conclusions drawn, and recommendations made based on the findings. The chapter is organized under the following sections: summary of findings, conclusion, recommendations, and suggestions for future studies.

5.2 Summary of Findings

This study investigated the effectiveness of inclusive education initiatives on academic performance in public primary schools within Rorya District, Tanzania. It explored the factors influencing inclusive education, examined current initiatives, and identified challenges affecting its implementation. The findings revealed that teacher preparedness, resource availability, administrative support, and societal attitudes are critical factors shaping the success of inclusive education. Teachers often lack adequate training and access to specialized teaching methods, which hinders their ability to effectively support students with special needs. Additionally, societal misconceptions about disabilities and limited parental involvement further constrain the implementation of inclusive education practices.

The study also identified current initiatives aimed at enhancing inclusive education, including: specialized teacher training programs, community awareness campaigns, and collaborations with stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations. While these initiatives demonstrate promise, their scale and effectiveness remain limited. Efforts such as training programs and infrastructural adaptations, including ramps

and accessible classrooms, are present but insufficient to meet the diverse needs of all students with disabilities.

Furthermore, the research highlighted several challenges that undermine the implementation of inclusive education. These include: infrastructural inadequacies, such as the lack of accessible classrooms and assistive learning devices, and negative societal attitudes that perpetuate stigma and discrimination against students with disabilities. Insufficient financial support for schools to implement inclusive policies effectively, inconsistent policy enforcement, and a lack of continuous professional development for teachers were also significant barriers. Overall, while inclusive education policies and initiatives exist in Rorya District, systemic, cultural, and financial constraints limit their impact on improving academic outcomes for students with special needs.

5.3 Conclusion

The study explored the factors influencing inclusive education initiatives, examined the initiatives currently implemented, and investigated the challenges associated with inclusive education on academic performance in Rorya District. The findings provide insights into the opportunities and barriers within the district's efforts to support pupils with special needs.

Factors influencing inclusive education initiatives significantly impact the academic performance of pupils with special needs. Key determinants include teacher preparedness, societal attitudes, resource availability, and infrastructural adequacy. While teachers and stakeholders demonstrate willingness to support inclusive

education, their efforts are often constrained by insufficient training and limited exposure to effective strategies for managing diverse learners. Moreover, societal norms and stigmas further exacerbate the challenges, limiting both, community and parental involvement in creating a supportive learning environment.

The inclusive education initiatives currently implemented in Rorya District show promising strides, with efforts such as teacher training workshops, collaboration with disability-focused organizations, and policy frameworks aimed at fostering inclusivity. However, these initiatives remain inconsistently applied across schools. The provision of specialized materials, assistive devices, and teacher development programs requires more targeted and sustained efforts to bridge the gap between policy intentions and practical outcomes.

Challenges associated with inclusive education significantly hinder academic performance among pupils with special needs. Schools in Rorya District face infrastructural inadequacies, such as the absence of accessible classrooms and ramps, alongside a shortage of specialized resources. Additionally, limited follow-up mechanisms and oversight in policy implementation restrict the efficacy of inclusive education initiatives. These barriers highlight the need for a more robust, multi-faceted approach to addressing the unique needs of learners with disabilities.

Overall, the study underscores the importance of addressing structural, cultural, and systemic barriers to foster inclusive education. By strengthening teacher training, enhancing resource allocation, and challenging societal stigmas, Rorya District can create a more equitable and inclusive educational environment that supports the

academic success of all learners.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness of inclusive education initiatives in Rorya District. The Ministry of Education should strengthen the implementation of inclusive education policies by ensuring adequate resource allocation and consistent monitoring at both, the district and school levels. This effort should focus on providing targeted funding to support the development of inclusive infrastructure, such as ramps, accessible classrooms, and specialized learning materials that cater to the needs of students with disabilities.

Continuous professional development for teachers is crucial to equip them with the skills and strategies necessary to manage diverse learners effectively. Workshops, in-service training programs, and collaboration with organizations specializing in inclusive education can enhance teachers' capacity to provide appropriate support for students with special needs.

Community sensitization campaigns should also be implemented to address societal stigma and misconceptions on disabilities. These campaigns should involve parents, community leaders, and other stakeholders to create an inclusive culture that values and supports children with special needs. Schools can further strengthen their efforts by organizing regular workshops for parents and providing accessible materials to educate them on inclusive education policies and their role in supporting their children's learning journey.

Collaboration among schools, district education officers, and non-governmental organizations must be reinforced to address gaps in expertise and resources. Partnerships with organizations such as Sense International and CBM Global Disability can offer additional training and materials, enhancing schools' capacity to support inclusive education practices.

A vital system for monitoring and evaluating the progress of inclusive education initiatives should also be established. This includes setting measurable goals, conducting periodic reviews, and addressing challenges promptly to ensure continuous improvement. Additionally, the government and relevant stakeholders must prioritize upgrading school infrastructure to ensure it is fully accessible to students with disabilities, enabling equitable participation in all aspects of the educational process.

By fostering collaboration among government, educators, parents, and the wider community, these recommendations aim to ensure inclusive education initiatives are effectively implemented, providing equitable learning opportunities for all students in Rorya District.

5.5 Suggestions for Future Studies

This section identifies gaps in the current study and proposes directions for future research:

Perspectives of Students with Disabilities: Future research should systematically explore the lived experiences of students with disabilities to identify specific challenges they face and evaluate their perceptions on inclusive education initiatives.

Comparative Studies: Conducting studies across different districts or regions could reveal best practices and unique challenges in implementing inclusive education policies.

Teacher Training Programs: Evaluating the effectiveness of pre-service and in-service teacher training programs can identify gaps and inform curriculum improvements.

Longitudinal Studies: Long-term research could assess the impact of revised policies and interventions on the academic performance of students with special needs.

By addressing these gaps, future studies can contribute to a deeper understanding and refinement of inclusive education practices.

REFERENCES

- Akbar, K. F., Damanik, F. H. S., Juliana, J., Akib, A., & Wibowo, F. I. S. (2023). Inclusive Education Practices: Fostering an Accessible Learning Environment for Diverse Learners. *Global International Journal of Innovative Research*, 1(3), 227-232.
- Alnahdi, G. H., Lindner, K.-T. & Schwab, S. (2022). Teachers' implementation of inclusive teaching practices as a potential predictor for students' perception of academic, social and emotional inclusion. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 917676.
- Ashraf, S., Majeed, Z., & Jahan, M. (2020). Promoting Inclusion of Students with Disabilities through Equitable Classroom Practices. *Review of Education, Administration & Law*, 3(3), 471-483.
- Bada, G. M., Adedayo, O. F., & Olufemi, O. I. (2024). Fostering educational equity through leadership and policy innovations for sustainable development in higher education.
- Burbules, N. C., Fan, G., & Repp, P. (2020). Five trends of education and technology in a sustainable future. *Geography and sustainability*, 1(2), 93-97.
- Carraro, L., Robinson, A., Hakeem, B., Manlapaz, A., & Agcaoili, R. (2023). Disability-Related Costs of Children with Disabilities in the Philippines. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(13), 6304.
- Chowdhury, A., & Bunt, A. (2023). Co-Designing with Early Adolescents: Understanding Perceptions of and Design Considerations for Tech-Based

- Mediation Strategies that Promote Technology Disengagement. Proceedings of the 2023 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems,
- da Silva, T. d. J. D. (2023). Inclusive Education And Teacher Training In Early Childhood Education. *Revista Gênero e Interdisciplinaridade*, 4(06), 597-618.
- Denieffe, S. (2020). Commentary: Purposive sampling: complex or simple? Research case examples. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 25(8), 662-663.
- Edgerton, E., & McKechnie, J. (2023). The relationship between student's perceptions of their school environment and academic achievement. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 959259.
- Fridell, G. (2022). The political economy of inclusion and exclusion: state, labour and the costs of supply chain integration in the Eastern Caribbean. *Review of International Political Economy*, 29(3), 749-767.
- Garcia-Vallès, X., Badia Martín, M., Gavalda, J. M. S., & Pérez Romero, A. (2024). Students' Perceptions of Teacher Training for Inclusive and Sustainable Education: From University Classrooms to School Practices. *Sustainability*, 16(10), 4037.
- Genovesi, E., Jakobsson, C., Nugent, L., Hanlon, C., & Hoekstra, R. A. (2022). Stakeholder experiences, attitudes and perspectives on inclusive education for children with developmental disabilities in sub-Saharan Africa: A systematic review of qualitative studies. *Autism*, 26(7), 1606-1625.
- Graham, L. J., Medhurst, M., Malaquias, C., Tancredi, H., De Bruin, C., Gillett-Swan, J., Poed, S., Spandagou, I., Carrington, S., & Cologon, K. (2023). Beyond Salamanca: A citation analysis of the CRPD/GC4 relative to the

- Salamanca Statement in inclusive and special education research. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 27(2), 123-145.
- Hanckel, B., Petticrew, M., Thomas, J., & Green, J. (2021). The use of Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) to address causality in complex systems: a systematic review of research on public health interventions. *BMC public health*, 21(1), 877.
- Heyder, A., Suedkamp, A., & Steinmayr, R. (2020). How are teachers' attitudes toward inclusion related to the social-emotional school experiences of students with and without special educational needs? *Learning and Individual Differences*, 77, 101776.
- Hidayah, J., & Morganna, R. (2019). Fulfilling the needs of diverse students: teaching strategies for EFL inclusive classrooms. *Suar Betang*, 14(2), 183-195.
- Hudon, C., Chouinard, M.-C., Bisson, M., Danish, A., Karam, M., Girard, A., Bosse, P.-L., & Lambert, M. (2021). Case study with a participatory approach: rethinking pragmatics of stakeholder engagement for implementation research. *The Annals of Family Medicine*, 19(6), 540-546.
- Johnson, L. A., Githinji, S. K., & Namai, J. (2023). The imperative for real-world experiences in Kenyan teacher preparation for disability inclusive teaching.
- Kambuga, Y. M. (2023). Disaster Management in Tanzanian Secondary Schools: An Assessment of Disaster Risk Preparedness and Mitigation Strategies. *Journal of Education For Sustainable Innovation*, 1(2), 113-123.
- Kamran, M., & Siddiqui, S. (2024). Roots of Resilience: Uncovering the Secrets behind 25+ Years of Inclusive Education Sustainability. *Sustainability*,

16(11), 4364.

- Kioupi, V., Nawire, A. W., Musungu, S., Nzuve, F., & Giannopoulos, G. (2023). Policy and Practice on Inclusive Higher Education in the UK and Kenya: A Theoretical Framework and Recommendations. *Sustainability*, 15(18), 13540.
- Kurth, J. A., Allcock, H., Walker, V., Olson, A., & Taub, D. (2021). Faculty perceptions of expertise for inclusive education for students with significant disabilities. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 44(2), 117-133.
- Laiser, M. L. (2023). The Status of Inclusive Education for Learners with Autism Spectrum Disorders in Elementary Schools in Tanzania: A Review. *Theme: Contemporary Issues in Education: Linking Research and Practice 13th–14th January 2022*, 263.
- Laiser, M. L., Msoroka, M. S., & Shavega, T. (2024). Differentiated assessments for learners with neurodevelopmental disabilities in inclusive elementary schools in Tanzania. *Journal of Issues and Practice in Education*, 16(1), 116-140.
- Lewis, A., & Norwich, B. (2004, 2004-11-01). Special teaching for special children? Pedagogies for inclusion. *Educational and Child Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2007.24.3.54>
- Lorenz, E., Krulatz, A., & Torgersen, E. N. (2021). Embracing linguistic and cultural diversity in multilingual EAL classrooms: The impact of professional development on teacher beliefs and practice. *Teaching and teacher Education*, 105, 103428.
- Mackatiani, C. I., Kasuki, N. A., Mackatiani, N. I., Likoko, S. N., Kakamega, K., & Bungoma, K. (2023). Quality Education in Kenya: Perspectives for the

Transition of Students from Secondary Schools to Universities.

- Majoko, T., & Dudu, A. (2022). Practices and Challenges in Inclusive Education in an African Context. In *Handbook of Research on Creating Spaces for African Epistemologies in the Inclusive Education Discourse* (pp. 290-302). IGI Global.
- Matete, R. E. (2021). Teaching profession and educational accountability in Tanzania. *Heliyon*, 7(7).
- Mbamba, C. R., Asare, J. L., & Gyimah, C. (2022). A preliminary scoping review of trauma recovery pathways among refugees in the United States. *Trauma Care*, 2(4), 579-588.
- Milinga, J. R., Amani, J., & Lyakurwa, S. E. (2023). Teachers' perceptions of differentiated instruction for academically high-achieving secondary school students in Tanzania. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 34(1), 68-102.
- Mohammed, M., Mwambi, H., Mboya, I. B., Elbashir, M. K., & Omolo, B. (2021). A stacking ensemble deep learning approach to cancer type classification based on TCGA data. *Scientific reports*, 11(1), 15626.
- Mokoro, D. (2020). Perception of teachers on their preparedness for implementation of the competence-based curriculum among secondary schools in Arumeru district, Tanzania. *East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences (EAJESS)*, 1(2), 109-117.
- Molina Roldán, S., Marauri, J., Aubert, A., & Flecha, R. (2021). How inclusive interactive learning environments benefit students without special needs. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 661427.
- Mukhopadhyay, D., & Das, D. (2021). Role Of Governance On Primary School

- Education: Evidence From Sub-Saharan African (SSA) Countries. *Journal of Research in Economics*, 5(2), 172-187.
- Musenyente, E., Han, M. L., & Knigge, M. (2022). Implementation of UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in public and private schools in three districts of Uganda. *African Journal of Disability (Online)*, 11, 1-13.
- Napitupulo, G. (2023). Inclusive Learning Strategies for Special Education. *Journal Educational Verkenning*, 4(4), 1-6.
- Ndale, A. A. (2025). Influence of Regular Teacher Development Programmes on Implementing Inclusive Education in Public Primary Schools, Morogoro Municipal, Tanzania. *British Journal of Education*, 13(5), 48-63.
- Ngussa, B. M. (2017). Accessibility to Inclusive Education in Arusha Region Public Secondary Schools, Tanzania. *Saudi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(7), 534-547.
- Nilsson, P. (2003). *Education for All: teacher demand and supply in Africa*. Education International Brussels.
- Ohba, A., & Malenya, F. L. (2022). Addressing inclusive education for learners with disabilities in the integrated education system: the dilemma of public primary schools in Kenya. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 52(1), 19-36.
- Okyere, C., Aldersey, H. M., Lysaght, R., & Sulaiman, S. K. (2019). Implementation of inclusive education for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities in African countries: A scoping review. *Disability and rehabilitation*, 41(21), 2578-2595.

- Opoku, M. P., Rayner, C. S., Pedersen, S. J., & Cuskelly, M. (2021). Mapping the evidence-based research on Ghana's inclusive education to policy and practices: a scoping review. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 25(10), 1157-1173.
- Owens, J. (2015). Exploring the critiques of the social model of disability: the transformative possibility of Arendt's notion of power. *Sociology of health & illness*, 37(3), 385-403.
- Parkhouse, H., Lu, C. Y., & Massaro, V. R. (2019). Multicultural education professional development: A review of the literature. *Review of educational research*, 89(3), 416-458.
- Qu, X. (2022). Structural barriers to inclusive education for children with special educational needs and disabilities in China. *Journal of Educational Change*, 23(2), 253-276.
- Recio, P., Molero, F., García-Ael, C., & Pérez-Garín, D. (2020). Perceived discrimination and self-esteem among family caregivers of children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and children with intellectual disabilities (ID) in Spain: The mediational role of affiliate stigma and social support. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 105, 103737.
- Sánchez, P. A., de Haro-Rodríguez, R., & Martínez, R. M. (2019). Barriers to student learning and participation in an inclusive school as perceived by future education professionals. *Journal of New Approaches in Educational Research (NAER Journal)*, 8(1), 18-24.
- Shank Lauwo, M. (2022). Language ideologies in multilingual Tanzania: Parental discourses, school realities, and contested visions of schooling. *Journal of*

Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 43(7), 679-693.

- Shukia, R. (2020). Fee-free basic education policy implementation in Tanzania: a 'phenomenon' worth rethinking. *Huria: Journal of the Open University of Tanzania*, 27(1).
- Thacher, D. (2024). Policing a neurodiverse world: Lessons from the social model of disability. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 18, paae012.
- Tieng'o, E. W. B. (2019). Community perception on public primary schools: Implications for sustainable fee free basic education in Rorya district, Tanzania. *East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences (EAJESS)*, 1(1), 32-47.
- Tieng'o, E. W. B. (2020). Perception of School Management Committees on Community Participation in Education among Primary Schools in Tanzania. *East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences (EAJESS)*, 1(2), 128-140.
- Timothy, S., & Agbenyega, J. S. (2022). Insider perspectives on catalysing the development and use of individualised education plans. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 26(2), 160-174.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (2014). Genesis of the higher mental functions. In *Learning to think* (pp. 32-41). Routledge.
- West, J. E., McLaughlin, V. L., Shepherd, K. G., & Cokley, R. (2023). The Americans with disabilities act and the individuals with disabilities education act: Intersection, divergence, and the path forward. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 34(3), 224-234.
- Yu, Y., Appiah, D., Zulu, B., & Adu-Poku, K. A. (2024). Integrating Rural

Development, Education, and Management: Challenges and Strategies.

Sustainability, 16(15), 6474.

APPENDICES

APENDIX I: Semi-Structured Interview Guide for School Administrators

Introduction

My name is Ayoub Samson Murimi, a master's student at the Open University of Tanzania in the field of Education in Administration, Planning, and Policy Studies. I am conducting a study on the effectiveness of inclusive education initiatives on academic performance of pupils with special needs in Rorya District, Tanzania. Your insights are invaluable to this research, and I would appreciate your participation in this interview. Your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for academic purpose in this study.

Questions

1. Describe the inclusive education initiatives currently in place in your school.
2. Explain factors do you think most influence the success or failure of inclusive education in your school.
3. How do you perceive the availability of resources for supporting inclusive education here?
4. How the skills of teachers affect learning process on inclusive education
5. How would you describe the infrastructure of the school in supporting inclusive education?
6. Explain the challenges facing implementation on inclusive education initiatives?
7. How do you measure the academic performance of pupils with special needs?
8. Describe with examples how inclusive education initiatives have impacted

the academic performance of these pupils?

9. What role do community attitudes towards inclusive education play in your school?
10. How do government policies and support impact inclusive education in your school?

Conclusion

Thank you for your time and valuable insights. Your contribution is crucial to this study, and your perspectives will help in understanding and improving inclusive education initiatives for pupils with special needs.

APENDEXIS II: Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Teachers

Introduction

My name is Ayoub Samson Murimi, a master's student at the Open University of Tanzania in the field of Education in Administration, Planning, and Policy Studies. I am conducting a study on the effectiveness of inclusive education initiatives on academic performance of pupils with special needs in Rorya District, Tanzania. Your insights are invaluable to this research, and I would appreciate your participation in this interview. Your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for academic purpose in this study.

Questions

1. Can you describe your experience with inclusive education initiatives in your classroom?
2. What factors do you think most influence the success or failure of inclusive education in your classroom?
3. How do you perceive the availability of resources for supporting inclusive education in your teaching?
4. How would you describe your attitudes and skills towards inclusive education?
5. How do you adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of students with special needs?
6. What support services are available for students with special needs in your classroom?
7. How do you measure the academic performance of pupils with special needs?

8. Can you provide examples of how inclusive education initiatives have impacted the academic performance of these pupils?
9. What challenges do you face in implementing inclusive education practices?
10. How do community attitudes towards inclusive education affect your teaching?

Conclusion

Thank you for your participation and sharing your experiences. Your input is essential in understanding the dynamics of inclusive education and improving practices to support pupils with special needs.

APENDIXIS III: Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Parents

Introduction

My name is Ayoub Samson Murimi, a master's student at the Open University of Tanzania in the field of Education in Administration, Planning, and Policy Studies. I am conducting a study on the effectiveness of inclusive education initiatives on academic performance of pupils with special needs in Rorya District, Tanzania. Your insights are invaluable to this research, and I would appreciate your participation in this interview. Your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for academic purpose in this study.

Questions

1. Can you describe your experience with the inclusive education initiatives at your child's school?
2. How do you perceive the support provided to your child in the school?
3. What resources or support services have been most helpful for your child?
4. How would you describe the attitudes of teachers and staff towards your child?
5. How has the school's infrastructure impacted your child's education?
6. What challenges has your child faced in the school environment?
7. How do you measure your child's academic progress?
8. Can you provide examples of how inclusive education initiatives have impacted your child's academic performance?
9. How do you feel community attitudes towards inclusive education affect your child?

10. What role do you think government policies and support play in your child's education?

Conclusion

Thank you for your time and willingness to share your experiences. Your insights are vital for this study and will contribute significantly to enhancing inclusive education practices.

APENDIX IV: Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Students

Introduction

My name is Ayoub Samsoni Murimi, a master's student at the Open University of Tanzania in the field of Education in Administration, Planning, and Policy Studies. I am conducting a study on the effectiveness of inclusive education initiatives on academic performance of pupils with special needs in Rorya District, Tanzania. Your insights are invaluable to this research, and I would appreciate your participation in this interview. Your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for academic.

Questions

1. Can you describe your experience with the inclusive education initiatives at your school?
2. What kind of support do you receive from your teachers and the school?
3. How do you feel about the resources and services provided to help you with your studies?
4. How would you describe the attitudes of your teachers and classmates towards you?
5. How has the school's infrastructure impacted your learning experience?
6. What challenges do you face in your school?
7. How do you measure your academic progress?
8. Can you provide examples of how inclusive education initiatives have impacted your academic performance?
9. How do you feel community attitudes towards inclusive education affect

your school life?

10. What changes would you like to see in your school to help you learn better?

Conclusion

Thank you for sharing your experiences and thoughts. Your feedback is important and will help improve inclusive education practices to better support students like you.

APENDIX V: Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Educational Officers

Introduction

My name is Ayoub Samson Murimi, a master's student at the Open University of Tanzania in the field of Education in Administration, Planning, and Policy Studies. I am conducting a study on the effectiveness of inclusive education initiatives on academic performance of pupils with special needs in Rorya District, Tanzania. Your insights are invaluable to this research, and I would appreciate your participation in this interview. Your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for academic purpose in this study.

Questions

1. Can you describe the inclusive education initiatives currently being promoted in Rorya District?
2. What factors do you think most influence the success or failure of inclusive education in this district?
3. How do you perceive the availability of resources for supporting inclusive education in the district?
4. What is your assessment of the attitudes and skills of teachers towards inclusive education?
5. How would you describe the infrastructure of schools in supporting inclusive education?
6. What challenges do schools face in implementing inclusive education policies?
7. How do you measure the academic performance of pupils with special needs

across the district?

8. Can you provide examples of how inclusive education initiatives have impacted the academic performance of these pupils?
9. What role do community attitudes towards inclusive education play in the district?
10. How effective are government policies and support in enhancing inclusive education in this district?

Conclusion

Thank you for your time and insights. Your contributions are crucial to this study and will help in developing better inclusive education policies and practices.

APENDIXIS VI: Observation Checklist for School Environment

School Infrastructure

- Classrooms are accessible to students with physical disabilities. []
- Classrooms are equipped with necessary aids (e.g., ramps, handrails). []
- Availability of resource rooms or specialized spaces for students with special needs. []
- Presence of adaptive furniture (e.g., adjustable chairs and desks).

Teacher and Staff Skills

- Teachers demonstrate inclusive teaching practices. []
- Teachers use differentiated instruction to cater to diverse learning needs. []
- Presence of specialized training for teachers in inclusive education. []
- Availability of support staff (e.g., specialist education teachers, aids). []

Support Services

- Access to speech therapy, occupational therapy, or other specialized services.
[]
- Availability of counseling services for students. []
- Collaboration between teachers and special education professionals. []
- Regular monitoring and evaluation of students' progress. []

Curriculum Adaptations

- Adaptations in the curriculum to meet the needs of students with disabilities.
[]
- Use of assistive technology in teaching and learning. []
- Presence of individualized education plans (IEPs) for students with special needs. []

- Availability of alternative assessment methods for students with special needs. []

Community and Parental Involvement

- Involvement of parents in the planning and implementation of inclusive education initiatives. []
- Community awareness programs about inclusive education. []
- Support from local organizations or NGOs for inclusive education. []
- Feedback mechanisms for parents and community members. []

APPENDIX VII: RESEARCH CLEARANCE LETTER

HRO(c)
Murimi
ya Halmashauri
27/08/2024

THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
PRESIDENT'S OFFICE
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION & LOCAL GOVERNMENT
MARA REGION
Tel. No. 028-2622005, 2622004,
2622305
Fax No. 028-2622324/2622764
E-mail: ras.mara@tamisemi.go.tz

REGIONAL COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE,
13 BOMA ROAD,
P.O. BOX 299,
31101 MUSOMA.
MARA

02 SEP 2024
S.L.P 250 - TARIME

In reply please quote:
Ref. No. FA 190/227/011/94
27 August, 2024
District Administrative Secretary,
~~RORYA~~ RORYA

RE: RESEARCH PERMISSION FOR AYOUB SAMSON MURIMI

Reference is made to the subject above.

- The named above is a Student of The Open University of Tanzania (OUT) who currently conducting simple research that involves data collection on Education issues.
- With this letter, you are informed that, permission has been granted to the named Student to conduct his research in Rorya District for a period from 21st August, 2024 to 30th October, 2024.
- The title of his Research is "INCLUSIVE EDUCATION INITIATIVES ON EDUCATION PERFORMANCE: A CASE OF PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS".
- Please accord him necessary support.
- Thank you for your continued cooperation.

Gerald M. Kusaya
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY

Copy to: District Executive Director,
RORYA

Vice Chancellor,
Open University of Tanzania (OUT)
P.o.Box 23409,
DAR ES SALAAM

Ayoub S. Murimi 0754 924 905