Unmet academic needs: A dilemma of students with visual impairment in inclusive education in Masvingo District of Zimbabwe

Dr Mahanya Phillimon, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Email:phillmahanya@gmail.com
and Prof Owence Chabaya, Centre for Academic Excellence, University of Limpopo, South Africa, Email: owence.chabaya@ul.ac.za.

Abstract

Inclusive education in Zimbabwe has attracted many students with disabilities. Most of them opted themselves in mainstream education. Consequently, most specialists are not in tandem with the mechanics of handling students with visual impairment in primary inclusive schools. The study was prompted by the poor Grade Seven Zimbabwe Schools Examinations achievement of students with visual impairment in inclusive primary schools in Zimbabwe. Basing on Wolfensberger’s (1979) theory of normalisation, inclusive education should ensure a rise in the quality of academic index of those with visual impairment. The purpose of the study was to find out factors that affect academic achievements of students with visual impairment in inclusive primary schools. The research was qualitative and a case design was applied. A sample of 28 participants comprising administrators, teachers and students with visual impairment was purposively drawn from inclusive education primary institutions. Semi-structured interviews, an open ended questionnaire and document analysis were used to generate data. The study revealed that students with visual impairment in inclusive education did not academically achieve in norm-referenced public examinations. The study recommended that training colleges should equip primary school teachers with requisite mechanics of handling diverse academic needs and interests of students with visual impairment.

Key words: normalisation, inclusive education, inclusive primary schools academic index, norm reference

Introduction

Inclusive education, as a concept that upholds equality and human rights in society, is recognised by many governments in the world. This led to many researches being carried out in a quest to find the most effective and efficient means to address educational needs and interests of students with visual impairment. Today, inclusive education has become a worldwide platform for academic emancipation of students with disabilities. The prominence by the Jomtien Framework (1990), the Salamanca Conference (1994), United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (1994), United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children (1989) and the United Nations Standard Rules (1993) on equalisation of opportunities made the centre stage for inclusive education. Unmet academic needs eventuate from failure to value the existing academic potential and contributions made by persons with visual impairment to their overall well-being, diversity of education, promotion of the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms of full participation. The philosophy of inclusive education is rooted in the
principle that humans have equal value (International Bureau of Education (IBE), 2007). The concept of inclusive education has gained momentum in world theoretical debates and policies that are accelerating its implementation. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) and International Conventions on Human Rights, United Nations (1983) provided a panacea for concerted efforts in educational movements which are primarily focusing on people with disabilities. The documents recognise and re-emphasise that education is a basic right for all the people.

**Background to the study**

Education for students with disabilities began in developed countries in the last few decades (Mavundukure, 2005). The concept was implemented in Western countries in the 1980s and has become the issue on the global agenda (UNICEF, 2006). Interesting evidence gathered by Mpofu (2007), Murinda (2005) and UNICEF (2006) firmly lodges and demonstrates that inclusive education is perfect for students with disabilities but lacked an evaluation of its impact on academic development of students with visual impairment. Synthesis of these researches show that there is a gap between recommended practices and reality on the implementation of inclusive education. This study explored academic development of students with visual impairment in inclusive education, basing on the awareness made by the then Ministry of Education, Art, Sport and Culture in Zimbabwe through the Nziramasanga Commission of 1999 which has taken major strides towards effective implementation of inclusive education. The argument is over whether inclusive education is or not the best method for academic achievement of students with visual impairment. Mpofu (2007) posits that the current scenario in most Southern African countries and other developing countries is that some students with visual impairment are learning at special institutions and those who are educationally included fail to complete basic primary and secondary education.

Researches by Murinda (2005) and UNICEF (2006) elucidate that Zimbabwe’s educators have devoted to educationally include students with disabilities in mainstream education but they are not guided by relevant policies. According to UNICEF (2008), the Salamanca Statement of 1994 mandates that Laws and the legislation of individual states need to stipulate the principle of equality of opportunities to all students in inclusive educational settings. Mpofu (2007) acknowledges that specific laws can promote positive attitudes towards implementation of inclusive education. This means that inclusive education without relevant prescriptive and supporting laws may make students with visual impairment vulnerable to a blend of academic failures.

Chireshe (2013) has a strong propensity that students with visual impairment in Zimbabwe are labelled, rejected and are not fully included in most educational activities that are integrally related to their disabilities. Due to negative labelling, Richardson (2009) posits that students with visual impairment shun inclusive education activities in Zimbabwe. Newell and Debenham (2005) conclude that many students with visual impairment turn to distance education to avoid the problems of access that are posed by conventional institutions. The American Foundation for the Blind (2012) opines that inclusive education is widely practised in developing countries with few resources to support it. The current scenario in Zimbabwe is that, students with disabilities in inclusive education are not provided with necessary support services (The National Blind Council Society (NBCS), 2008). The fact is most educators in most schools in Zimbabwe are not well versed with
the mechanics to handle students with visual impairment. Pottas (2005) establishes that teachers lack adequate knowledge, skills and training for effective implementation of inclusive education.

Inclusive primary education in Zimbabwe creates a highly selective system with a strong competitive environment that results in a multitude of exclusionary tendencies to students with disabilities (Clark, 2006). The general public socially construct barriers to successful inclusion of students with visual impairment (Alcott, 2002). Pottas (2005) found and declared that mainstream teachers feel unprepared and unequipped to teach inclusive classes, while, Rule & Ruth (2012) sums up that most educators are still confused, disintegrated, and turbulent to the needs and interests of students with visual impairment in inclusive education.

In Zimbabwe, students with visual impairment are made to learn the same curriculum, with little pragmatic activities (Ngazi & Matonhodze, 2010). On the same footing, Mushoriwa (2010) establishes that the concept of educationally including students with visual impairment is idealistic and an abstract principle. Thus the education is not pragmatic in nature and lacks specifics on ecological validation. This lack of specificity poses academic challenges to students with visual impairment.

In Kenya, the rationale for the Sessional Paper No 1 of 2005 on Policy Framework for Inclusive Education, Training and Research (PFIETR), is to achieve EFA in order to give Kenyans with disabilities the right to inclusive education and academic training, no matter the individual’s political or socio-economic status. The Kenyan Policy is guided by the understanding that quality inclusive education contributes significantly to academic growth of individuals with visual impairment and economic growth and the expansion of employment opportunities for them. The Kenyan Economic Recovery Plan Policy Framework provides the rational for major reforms in the current inclusive education system in order to enable Kenyans with visual impairment to have access to lifelong education (UNESCO, 2006). The lesson learnt is that inclusive education is capable of enhancing academic development of students with visual impairment. The episode of free primary education in many countries is an initiative towards realising the EFA goals thereby enhancing academic achievements of all the students regardless of a disability. However, the challenge of lack of political will compounded with disparaging negative attitudes by societies has a devastating impact on academic development of individuals with visual impairment, and these need to be addressed, hence the need to assess the impact of inclusive primary education on academic development of students with visual impairment in Zimbabwe, where there is a different economic recovery under the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET) theme.

According to UNESCO (2008), in an astonishing short period of time, inclusive education in Zimbabwe has firmly planted itself in education and public discourse. Chireshe (2013), in his study, acknowledges that, in Zimbabwe, the public have adopted an academic vocabulary that positively label students with visual impairment but Allen (2008), in his inclusive education study, claims that there is no single and coherent inclusive education discourse that could be said to have dominated the evolution of inclusive practices in academic development of students with visual impairment in most schools the world over. These different findings perhaps explain the confusion and inconsistency that characterises the unevenness in implementation of inclusive primary education practices to students with visual impairment on their academic development in Zimbabwe.

The Salamanca statement and Framework for action Article (2) (1994) asserts that
regular schools with inclusive education orientation are the most effective means of combating academic discriminatory attitudes in most inclusive education institutions, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving Education for All. Moreover, NBCS (2008) observes that the provision of an effective inclusive education to the majority of students with disabilities and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost of the entire education system in Zimbabwe needs to be transformed. Therefore this study took an approach that is in tandem with 21stcentury dictates on how inclusive primary education can be tailor-made to improve its implementation so that it can accommodate and improve academic development of students with visual impairment in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe has not yet drafted specific policies that pin points on inclusive education for specific categories of disabilities (Chireshe, 2013). UNESCO (2013) acknowledges that there is no reliable data on inclusive education globally. This study took an assessment on how the academic state of students with visual impairment can be improved.

Zimbabwe is a signatory to the Dakar Framework of Action 2000 and United Nations International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) 2006 where it also agrees that, “to attract and retain children from marginalised and excluded groups, the education systems should academically respond flexibly to the educational needs of students with disabilities.” The inclusive primary education systems must be actively seeking out children who are not enrolled and responding flexibly to their academic circumstances. In Zimbabwe, students with visual impairment are systematically disadvantaged although they are educationally included (Mavundukure, 2005). Gwitima (2008) concurs that students with visual impairment are not fully provided with human and material resources that can help them to learn Braille, alternative scripts, argumentative and alternative forms of communication, orientation and mobility and they sparingly have access to peer academic support and Braille is not universally used as an agreed system of writing. The identified challenges may barricade academic achievement of students with visual impairment who are in inclusive primary education, hence the need to find out the academic state of students with visual impairment in such scenario.

The UNCRPD (2006) put more emphasis that governments that are providing inclusive education are mandated to provide required educational resources to all the students at all levels of the education system. Contrary, in Zimbabwe students with visual impairments are not fully provided with current technology for them to effectively participate in inclusive education settings (NBCS, 2008). Winter and Raw (2010) notes that proponents of conflicts of rights observe that there is always tension between the values of inclusion and the values of individuality. While Norwich (2002) argues that, in dealing with exceptionalities or significance differences, there is need to find a way of balancing multi-values, such as the stigma versus access to provision, or participation in a common curriculum versus learning programmes relevant to individual needs.

In Zimbabwe, there is an increasing emphasis on academic excellence, school competitiveness, and academic attainment in inclusive education settings (Chimedza, 2007). The, competitive environments can have a devastating effect on academic development of students with visual impairment. According to UNESCO (2008), The Education Act of 1970 paved way to special care units, hospitals and homes that educate those with different types of disabilities. Under this background, The Disability Act of (2001) points out that, it is the right of all students to
be educationally included through an inclusive curriculum. According to Chireshe (2013), Zimbabwe has a devotion to make one, with resources linked concept of professionals, policy makers and politicians. Most of the mentioned professionals lack faith in the variability of new movements (Mushoriwa, 2010). UN (2006) calls for developing countries to do researches focused, not on whether inclusive education works but rather on ways of making it work, hence the concept is a dynamic and evolving process, hence this research.

Statement of the problem

Zimbabwe, as a country which subscribes to the policies of equality among its citizens, has engaged in implementing inclusive education in its primary education sector. However, a number of studies have shown that, effective implementation of inclusive education has been marred by lack of resources and teachers’ lack of relevant skills to handle students with various disabilities (Chimedza, 2007; Mushoriwa, 2010; Murinda, 2005; Mafa, 2012). In this view, this study is set to investigate the impact of inclusive education on academic development of students with visual impairment as most of them fail to complete primary education.

Research questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Which factors stifle academic achievement of students with visual impairment in an inclusive primary school setting?
2. To what extent are inclusive primary schools equipped to cater for learning of students with visual impairment?
3. To what extent are teachers motivated to teach inclusive classes with students with visual impairment?
4. What mechanisms could be put in place to equip teachers with skills in handling students with visual impairment in an inclusive classroom setting?

Theoretical framework

The research was guided by social-cognitive theory of learning by Albert Bandura. The theory focuses on personality development as it is shaped by reciprocal determinism and self-efficacy. This theory places great emphasis on the social-cognitive events that take place in the individual’s environment. Witt and Booyse (1995) in Barker (2010) aver that, each human being regardless of a disability is endowed with versatile potential. The potential is endowed by nature with a philosophic mind that can be trained through rigorous social interaction (Plato in Barker, 2010). The environment is regarded as a potentially powerful tool in the development of multitude academic behaviours and personality traits. The theory incorporates friendly environments, which are hinged on Bronfennbrenner (1979), Piaget (1957) and Vygotsky (1978) ‘s theories of knowledge formation, which assume that, social interaction encourages academic development (Woolfolk, 2010). The social learning theory is basically the genesis of constructivist theories of education, dovetailed on sharing and interaction as the basics of better academic development. This constructionist theory is deeply rooted in Piaget’s constructivism principle (Pianta & Kauffman, 2008). The theory explains how knowledge is generated and accumulates gradually during involvement in real-life social experiences.
In this regard, friendly and socialising environments support new ways of academic development. Social experiences occur constructionally, if the students with visual impairment are educationally encouraged to explore their own thinking process through learning, resulting in their intellectual development being esteemed. Inclusive education cannot be understood simply as a normalisation principle of rules but should be endowed in and geared towards providing beneficial academic environment which individuals with visual impairment internalise. The theory of social learning acknowledges the fact that the observer is not a neutral presence but a social actor (Mittler, 2000). This study hopes to greatly improve implementation of inclusive primary education to students with visual impairment for their academic achievement.

Methodology

The research was a case study undertaken within the interpretive approach where the perceptions of the participants are central. Researchers within the interpretive paradigm tend to use the purposive approach to sampling, beginning with groups, settings and individuals (Mertens, 2008). Since the population for this study comprised of teachers, students and school administrators, purposive sampling was employed to come up with the actual number of participants. According to Linchman (2006), a sample is a limited subset of the entire population. In a similar note, Creswell (2007) asserts that, the lesser the number of participants the easier it becomes to manage.

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique which provides a typical group of individuals with a particular life experience and the researcher selects information-rich cases for depth study, (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Maree, 2007).

Therefore, for this study, the sample comprised 12 students with visual impairment in the three inclusive primary schools, all 15 teachers who were teaching classes with students with visual impairment and 6 heads and deputies of the institutions, since they were also directly involved in academic development of students with visual impairment. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from heads of schools and students with visual impairment, while a questionnaire with both open and closed questions was used to collect data from the teachers.

Presentation of results

The codes that were used for the participants

The participants’ responses were coded to facilitate easy categorisation and presentation of data. In the responses, administrators’ responses were coded as (A), teachers’ as (T) while students with visual impairments’ as (S). These codes were used in vignettes and narrative texts as demonstrated in the succeeding sections.

Lack of enough teaching and learning resources

The participants were of the view that lack of resources (both human and material) impact negatively on the quality of education provided to students with visual impairment in inclusive education. The above results were supported by the participants who said the following:

A: I do not have enough specialists to cater for different students with visual impairment. The few specialists I have at this institution did not specialise in visual impairment except Mrs X who feels burdened and stressed to solely deal with them.
A: Even the District Education Officers and Provincial Directors are not highly supportive of this inclusive education because they do not even have knowledge of inclusive education.

A: Teachers are staff developed and some have knowledge of handling inclusive classes with students with visual impairment but the class size, inadequate resources and sometimes lack of teacher preparedness disturb academic achievement of students with visual impairment.

T: The problem is not the teacher and his teaching styles but the resources and the way teachers assess students with visual impairment. Students with visual impairment cannot be compared with the sighted students given variations and differences in their learning styles where there are little resources.

Lack of resource implies that students with visual impairments’ eagerness to academically benefit from inclusive education settings cannot be stimulated. The preceding confirmations perhaps explain why some students with visual impairment in inclusive education are integrally left out in academic activities that are integrally related to their disabilities. The participants said:

S: I do not have relevant equipment to use during learning.

S: The teacher can come and identify his/her teaching aids that will be used in the lesson and I don’t have the sight to see. I don’t benefit from such acts. What I need is to see with my mind through hearing and touching. I am not given this opportunity and will be regarded as lazy. To me hands matters as I use them to see.

T: There is too much burden left to me as a teacher. Looking for resources in the name of being resourceful is a tiresome activity. Yet, the truth is that I do not see the rationale for taking such astride.

These clamouring show that teachers do not use modern learning aids during the teaching and learning process. This shows that, lack of proper and effective assistive technology has a negative impact on academic achievement of students with visual impairment in inclusive primary classes.

Lack of teacher motivation

The responses also showed that specialist teachers were disgruntled by lack of incentives for teaching students with visual impairment. They believed that teaching
students with visual impairment calls for extra efforts on their part. The following sentiments shed light:

\textbf{T: I need to be motivated through incentives as a specialist teacher.}

\textbf{T: If I get an extra reward as a specialist, I can do wonders to the needs and interests of students with visual impairment.}

The sentiments show that specialist teachers need to be recognised. It is abundantly clear that specialist teachers are not well remunerated. Teachers in inclusive education have mixed feelings at the thought of motivation.

\textbf{High teacher-pupil ratio}

Administrators and teachers shoulder the blame of poor academic performance of students with visual impairment on the current teacher-pupil ratio that is not compatible with the students’ academic needs.

\textbf{A: It is difficult for teachers to meet individual demands of all the students because of large classes given the syllabus demands.}

\textbf{A: Teachers find it difficult to handle large inclusive classes with students with visual impairment}

These acknowledgements show that teachers find it difficult to give individualised educational instruction to students with visual impairment in inclusive primary education. The ratio exacerbates negative attitudes. The sentiments show that inclusive class teachers need to have knowledge on how to effectively they can handle inclusive classes.

\textbf{Effects of curriculum on academic achievement of students with visual impairment in inclusive education}

The participants felt that the primary school curriculum does not cater for academic needs of students with visual impairment who are in an inclusive school setting. They believe that whoever determines what is to be taught in inclusive primary education of students with disabilities should make needs analysis and find out the exact missing links in inclusive primary education. The participants were burning on the issue of an inclusive curriculum as they voiced that:

\textbf{T: The present curriculum does not address the needs of students with disabilities, let alone those with visual impairment who are wildly included.}

\textbf{T: There is need by curriculum developers to make needs assessment before instructing us to have inclusive classes so that content can be relevant and closes the academic need gap that exist between students with disabilities and those who are so called normal.}

The preceding sentiments show the need for curriculum review if inclusive education of students with visual impairment is to be a reality. The participants said that, although the curriculum quenches students’ variations and differences that may occur naturally, it does not sufficiently provide strategies for inclusive specialist teachers to cope with academic needs of students with visual impairment in inclusive primary classes. They had this to say:

\textbf{T: The Curriculum Development Unit has done nothing in terms of dispatching information on how the curriculum can be handled in inclusive classes.}

\textbf{A: Inclusive education teachers are confused and are just dry islands as the curriculum is silent on inclusive education of students with visual impairment.}
A: Due to unavailability of modified curriculum content, teachers teach whatever they think will make majority of student pass public examinations without specificity on the content of students with visual impairment.

The sentiments show that the current curriculum used in inclusive primary education does not academically benefit students with visual impairment. The SADC Technical Committee on Education and Training for People with Disabilities and Special Needs (2004) posits that the curriculum must ensure internationally recognised academic standards are being achieved by all the students. Besides the mismatch of the curriculum and the academic needs of students with visual impairment, this study established that curriculum document which is deemed to be currently operational does not exist in primary schools, if it is available, only a few have seen it for use. The following shed light:

T: I have never seen a copy of a curriculum for the period I have been here.

A: A curriculum is an important document. Its unavailability is really worrisome.

T: We operate like empty vessels and what more do you expect from students with disabilities within such a scenario.

The image portrayed is that specialist teachers in inclusive primary education operate without the guidance of the curriculum. It becomes a tall order for student with visual impairment to academically benefit in such mere unionism labelled inclusive education. The participants noted that inclusive education of students with visual impairment requires a holistic approach if students with visual impairment are to academically benefit.

Discussion

The research participants provided a wide range of data on academic development of students with visual impairment in inclusive education at primary. It appears that the implementation of inclusive education has not significantly helped students with visual impairment to academically achieve. The general aspects of concern appear to be the resources, teacher student ratio and lack of teacher motivation. An additional complicating factor is that, teachers felt strained of teaching an inclusive class where there is no curriculum guidance. On a similar note, Mafa (2012) also found out that, although education jurisdictions around Zimbabwe have adopted the vocabulary of inclusive education, it is flown by lack of resources. This may imply that, although inclusive education is already being implemented in primary schools, lack of adequate resources affects effective learning of students with visual impairment.

This research found out that there is severe lack of teaching and learning resources (human and material) at inclusive primary education which affect academic development of students with visual impairment. It was established that lack of resources emanates from poor supervisory practices and lack of effective management (by administrators). Most of the participants note that managers of inclusive education lack the zeal to facilitate necessary resources, staff development meetings, workshops and provide textbooks in Braille for academic development of students with visual impairment.

The study established that, there is lack of teachers’ motivation (incentives) which affects their teaching of students with visual impairment in inclusive classes. It is clear that
there is a close connection between teachers’ or even anyone’s performance and the rewards rewarded. This stems from a feeling of self-actualisation and self-esteem. Incentives can be in form of tangibles such as recognition of a specialist’s professional effort (Davies & Florian, 2004). Incentives are capable of stimulating performance and happiness, professional pride and a sense of worth (Pottas, 2005). Lack of specialist teachers incentives hinder the way teachers render their teaching services to inclusive primary classes with students with visual impairment. In spite of being specialists, teachers generally, have positive, attitudes towards the idea of educational inclusion of students with visual impairment, though they display a measure of opposition and other negative attitudes. Lack of motivation may lead to a negative mindset that may correspond to negative attitudes and resistance on provision of individualised educational instruction to students with visual impairment in inclusive primary education. Some of the specialist teachers think that their efforts are not realised and as such may have a feeling of extreme frustrations, as there are no satisfying rewards to their specialised knowledge and endeavours. There is no doubt that this scenario slows effective implementation of inclusive primary education to students with visual impairment. Negative attitudes are complex, multifarious and constantly changing (UNESCO, 2013). Lindsay (2007) propounds that negative attitudes lead to stigmatisation and discrimination. This means that students with visual impairment may not academically benefit from such arrangements.

The results unravel that, the high teacher student ratio affects planning and teaching pedagogy, management and participation of students with visual impairment who are educationally included. Teachers employ traditional pedagogies which are not in-sink with inclusive education requirements. This research found out that there is a disturbing lack of information computer technology (ICT) by most inclusive education specialist teachers which affects their choice of pedagogies when teaching an inclusive class with students with visual impairment.

The issue of the curriculum was also echoed in the findings of this study. Both the teachers and the administrators felt that, the curriculum in primary schools does not address inclusive education needs and interest of students with disabilities. This can affect academic achievement of students with visual impairment. The results concur with Mushoriwa (2007) who found out that the Zimbabwe curriculum is an abstract principle as it imposes latent uniformity that favours high intellectual abilities. In a similar study, Chireshe (2013) noted that, in some curriculum jurisdiction, there is statistically negative relationship between the curriculum and the educational needs of students with disability.

Administrators and teachers in inclusive primary education have negative attitudes towards educational inclusion of students with visual impairment and this affects the way students with visual impairment learn, interact and socialise. It was also found out that, there is lack of cross-curricular learning in most inclusive primary institutions due to myths and misconceptions about academic capabilities of students with visual impairment. Interestingly, there are no orientation and mobility trainers and, hence no training of students with visual impairment in orientation and mobility at inclusive primary education in Zimbabwe and this heavily affects academic development of students with visual impairment in inclusive education.

Conclusions

This research concluded that, there are no enough teaching and learning resources (human; specialists with knowledge on Braille and visual impairment and material; Braille
textbooks, computers and relevant stationery) in inclusive primary institutions that include students with visual impairment in Zimbabwe. Lack of resources is exacerbated by the current reviewed inclusive school curriculum which, although reviewed recently, cannot be followed in the education of students with visual impairment in inclusive primary education. This further creates untold confusion as specialist teachers in inclusive primary education lack commitment in individually rendering genuine help to students with visual impairment in inclusive education due to lack motivation (incentives) for them being specialists.

This research also concluded that the current large and unbearable teacher student ratio affects the way specialist teachers teach both students with visual impairment and the sighted students in inclusive primary education. This originates from lack of teacher motivation. This research also concluded that there are very few or no specialist administrators who have trained and specialised in visual impairment and the few specialist teachers are not trained in visual impairment. This study established and concluded that, time allocated to students with visual impairment in inclusive primary education is not adequate for them to complete given academic assignments, especially in public examinations where there are meagre resources. This is compounded with teachers’ doubt towards effective handling of students with diverse educational needs.

**Recommendations**

This study recommends that the school curriculum should be modified to meet specific needs and purpose of educating students with visual impairment in inclusive education. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should allow each inclusive primary institution to have a resource unit manned by specialist teachers who had fully trained in visual impairment to provide and monitor Braille materials and other resources for use by students with visual impairment in inclusive classes. It is important for The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to have Directors of inclusive primary education and to establish a District Inclusive Education Centre (DIEC) in each political district, not only for those with disabilities, but also to cater for learning and training needs of the inclusive school staff, learners and the community. The Curriculum Development Unit and Universities should involve specialist teachers in the research, development, implementation and diffusion of information to improve ownership of inclusive primary education programmes and not to centralise it in abstraction. It is also recommended that the curriculum content at primary inclusive education should be made relevant in order to meet the academic needs of students with visual impairment, hence the need to revisit Education Director’s minute Circular No. 20 of 2000 which outlines class sizes and teacher-student ratio so that it becomes in tandem with inclusive education 21st century dictates. It is highly recommended that, the government should give motivational incentives to specialist educators.

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