

Parental Responsibility: Provision of Teaching Learning Resources and Participation of Children Living With Disability in Early Childhood

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Abstract

This article evaluated the responsibility of parents in provision of Teaching Learning Resource (T/LRs) and participation of Children Living with Disability (CLWD) in Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Kajiado North, Kenya. The purpose of the study was to establish how T/LRs provided by parents influenced the participation of CLWD in ECE. A qualitative research was carried out with a case study design. Observations, interviews and focused group discussions were held to attain the objective of the study. A pilot study was carried out. Content validity was adopted to govern whether the test item offered the content that the test was intended to measure. Split-half method was used to determine the reliability. The study argued that CLWD in ECE are not provided with T/LRs that meets the uniqueness of individual child, and consequently jeopardized participation. In cases where T/LRs were compatible to the needs participation was accelerated. The findings revealed that although the government had played a great role in education, more was yet to be accomplished. Environmental factor, culture, poverty and lack of awareness limited parental participation as actors in ECE. It was recommended that there is need for the government to include ECE in free education to achieve Education for All (EFA) goals.

Key Words: Parental Responsibility, Teaching Learning Resources, Participation, Children Living with Disability and Early Childhood Education.

1.0. Introduction

This article evaluated parental responsibility in provision of teaching learning resources and participation of children living with disability in Early Childhood Education. Early year in school assist to lessen favoritism that divides our humanity. Value for human rights, positive reception of diversities and fairness are also acquired at early age. Children with disability need to be accepted at early stage and be accorded the support needed to participate in education.

The United Nation recognizes the rights to education for all children without prejudice. At the world conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand 1990) expansion of Early Childhood Development (ECD) activities that include disabled children was agreed upon. Kenya is also a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC) and has also embraced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that set targets to reach basic education for all children by 2015 (Torres, 1999). However opportunities for CLWD are a challenge to education sector. Inadequate teaching learning resources that counter to the needs of CLWD compromises the participation.

CLWD requires unique teaching learning resources and additional support for successful participation. Disability in children varies from hearing, vision, mental, speech and physical. Based on diversities in disability the support needs of CLWD differ depending on the severity of disability. For instance a child with hearing disability requires hearing aids and devices that amplify sound to boost mastery of concept in instruction. On the other hand, visual disability requires tactile facilities such as Braille, embossed map, and touch signs among others to speed up participation. Physical disabled children need physical facilities which fit their physical conditions. However scarcity of teaching learning resources remains an impediment to the participation of CLWD.

2.0. Statement Problem

CLWD call for extra parental support and care to participate efficiently in school (Will, 1986). Parents who provide T/LRs speed up learner achievement. In instances where the T/LRs are not provided, participation of CLWD may be compromised. Kenya has put efforts to address issues confronting CLWD through stipulation of laws, for instance Children Act (2001), People with Disability Act (PWDA), (2003) which stipulates parental responsibility towards participation of CLWD. Despite such efforts CLWD are discriminated against and not equally acknowledged like other children, which prohibit them from successful participation and in the end lowers learner achievement. It is for this reason that the study sought to explore the influence of parental responsibility in provision of T/LRs in ECE in Kajiado North.

3.0. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine how parental responsibility in provision of teaching learning resources influenced the participation of children living with disability in ECE.

4.0. Research Objective

To determine how parental responsibility in provision of teaching learning resources influence the participation of children living with disability in ECE.

5.0. Research Methodology

The study explored parental responsibility in provision of T/LRs and its influence on the participation of CLWD. Qualitative data analysis was employed whereby data was presented in narrative form. Data was collected by use of interviews, observation and focused group discussions. Purposive sampling was used to select the ECE centers, CLWD, teachers and parents who participated in the study. A pilot study was carried out to offer the prospect to refine the research instruments. Content validity was adopted to determine whether the test item presented the content that the test was designed to measure. Split-half method was used to determine the reliability of the instruments.

6.0. Literature Review

6.1. Situation of Children Living with Disability

The Convention on Rights of People with Disability (CRPD) states that “persons with disabilities consist of those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with a variety of barriers may deter their complete and effectual participation in society on an equal basis with others” (7). Some children are born with disability or impairment, while others may experience disability as a result of illness, injury or poor nutrition.

According to the United States (U.S) census bureau (2011) out of 53.9 million school children aged 5 to 17 years, 2.8 million were reported as having a disability. The study established that there was a possibility of prevalence being as high as 25percent because of poverty, inaccessible health care, educational services, the HIV epidemic and poor transportation. There is need for extra support from parents and other stakeholders to boost participation of CLWD in ECE. In addition, a study done by the Republic of Tanzania (ROT, 2003) indicated that the reasons for disability in the country included poor medical facilities and diseases such as measles and meningitis. Despite any cause of disability parental support is considered necessary in all levels of education to increase learner success.

According to EFA global monitoring reports, reaching the marginalized, CLWD remain one of the groups being widely excluded from quality education in the early years. CLWD have lesser educational attainment than other children which leads to lower economic status (Word Bank, 2004).

In Kenya the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) (2004) provided an estimated prevalence rate of 10 percent and approximately seven hundred and fifty thousand (750,000) CLWD at the elementary level. Ninety thousand (90,000) had been identified and assessed but only twenty six thousand (26,000) were enrolled in schools. This calls for parents and other stakeholders to take responsibility in facilitating the participation of CLWD in ECE for efficient learner achievement.

Kenya National Survey of People with Disability (KNSPWD) (2007) indicates that the common forms of disabilities include hearing, speech, visual, mental and physical. Regardless of the diversities additional parental support is desired to lift up participation and learner achievement in school and outside school set up. In addition, CRC applies to every child in the world irrespective of the status.

6.2. Parental Responsibility: Teaching Learning Resources and participation of Children Living with Disability

According to UNESCO, Education Digest (2005) participation rate of CLWD in pre-school Education in developed countries (German, Japan) is above 80 percent, while in Africa and Middle East it ranges below 20 percent. A study done by Friedrich Huebler (2009) showed that the enrollment of CLWD in ECE worldwide has decreased in some countries such as the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Low enrollment rate values were also observed in Central, South and East Asia. Enrollment tends to vary due to the huge differences in level of parental income worldwide. This affects the participation of CLWD in class, school and at home.

According to Kochung (2003) CLWD require specific educational resources at individual and school levels depending on the nature and extent of disability. The high cost of unique equipment for CLWD remains a hindrance to participation of CLWD in ECE. Kochung, (2003) further indicated that there was inadequate provision of suitable T/LRs for CLWD. The resources commonly accessible in the market are for children with no disability National Special Need Education Policy Framework, (NSNEPF) (2009). This has made it

complicated for parents with CLWD to access T/LRs that are well-matched to the desires of CLWD. In addition, the Government of Kenya (GoK) has allocated funds to every learner in primary schools and units the same with those with special needs and disabilities receiving a top up capitation to provide for the specialized T/LRs and other assistive devices. This capitation has not been extended to ECE, resulting to poor participation of CLWD. The capitation provided by parents is inadequate for purchase of T/LRs for CLWD in ECE. This confines the participation of CLWD, in class, school and outside school set up (NSNEPF, 2009).

According to the NSNEPF (2009) T/LRs and school facilities are key factors in facilitating a child's participation in ECE. Creating and maintaining stimulating learning environment, adequate T/LRs are essential resources to execute. Parents play a bigger role in providing text books, exercise books, pencils, playing materials, teaching aids and specialized equipments to boost the participation of CLWD (Kochung and Oriedo, 2003). In instances where parents fail to provide the teaching and learning resources requisite for CLWD, participation remains weak (Bondioli, 2000). Such a scenario lowers CLWD potential to master necessary skills in the learning process.

Bondioli (2000) further asserts that accessibility of sufficient and use of T/LRs raises the level of participation for CLWD. To uphold this, parental support through provision of learning aids such as braille, magnifying glasses, and tactile maps for visual disability was needed at all levels for higher learner achievement. According to Ausubel (1973) young children are capable of understanding abstract ideas if they are provided with sufficient materials and tangible experiences with the observable fact that they are to understand. The study noted that the GoK provided Free Primary Education (FPE) and failed to extend the free education to ECE. This has increased the burden to parents who are the key actors in ECE. Thus, inadequate provision of T/LRs by parents has become an interruption to the participation of CLWD.

7.0. Results

Obstacles that CLWD encountered assorted from one child to another. Children with disability face environmental, cultural and individual challenges. In addition, the study established that the teaching learning resources that were available in ECE were not compatible to the unique needs of CLWD. Poverty, high cost of living and lack of awareness contributed to the minimal participation of CLWD in ECE. Unemployment and the size of the families limited parents in providing teaching learning resources that were integrated to the needs of CLWD. The study established that a lot of blames were directed to the government for not allocating finances to the ECE sector. This further hindered the participation of CLWD in ECE.

'As a parent, I sometimes wonder whether there is need to provide teaching and learning resources. The government as we all know provides free primary education but we are seeing little being done to ECE and therefore an indication that ECE is not important like other levels of education. This has caused more harm to our CLWD who require extra aid than any other child.'

CLWD have the right to be part of the mainstream. In Kenya some children with disability are placed in special schools and units, this has widened the gap between children with disability and children with no disability. The study noted that in situations which CLWD are separated from mainstream they may be at an increased jeopardy of unfairness.

The study established that the Government has a responsibility to provide resources to make learning institutions accessible to CLWD, without which the participation of CLWD in ECE is compromised. In addition, the Constitution of Kenya (2010), Chapter Four, Article 54, (1e) states that a person with any disability is entitled to access materials and devices to overcome constraints arising from the person's disability. This will raise participation of CLWD and strengthen learner achievement in and outside school.

The .further recognized that CLWD were denied access to school due to lack of T/LRs. Lack of T/LRs led to CLWD dropping out of school and in the end affected participation and lowered learner accomplishment. This is in agreement with Bondioli, (2000) who established that inadequate provision of T/LRs for CLWD weakened participation and lowered learner achievement in and outside school. It is for this reason that the GoK commits to develop strategies to improve participation of CLWD and work with partners to make sure barriers to free education for CLWD are eradicated. The GoK should also be committed to develop and implement appropriate ECE programs for CLWD (NSNE Policy Framework, 2009), without which participation will be poor.

8.0. Conclusion

The study indicated that parents are the sole provider of ECE teaching learning resources. Inadequacy provision of teaching learning resources affects the participation of CLWD in ECE. The study recommended the need for the Government to allocate funds for T/LRs that are compatible to the needs of CLWD in ECE.

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