International Journal of Instruction *January 2025 ● Vol.18, No.1*
e-ISSN: 1308-1470 ● www.e-iji.net *p-ISSN: 1694-609X*
pp. 23-38

Article submission code: 20240317235200
Received: 17/03/2024 Revision: 23/06/2024
Accepted: 01/07/2024 OnlineFirst: 01/10/2024

Experiences of Learners with Visual Impairment in the Mainstream Secondary School Classrooms in Malawi: A Case Study of Mzimba District

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Malawi has historically prioritized specialized education for visual and hearing impairments, neglecting minor learning difficulties. Aligning with international declarations, Malawi became a signatory in 1990 and 1994, committing to inclusive education. In 2007 and 2012, the government revised primary and secondary curricula to include learners with special needs in mainstream classrooms. Despite revisions, outcomes for visually impaired learners in mainstream secondary schools are unknown. This study in Malawi's Mzimba district explores challenges faced by visually impaired students in implementing the revised curriculum. Guided by the Ecosystem framework, schools are viewed as dynamic ecosystems. Qualitative research method which employed a case study design was used. The participants were ten visually impaired students, two special needs teachers, and two mainstream teachers. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, document review and classroom observation. The results of the study reveal challenges. Issues include insufficient materials, inadequate teacher support, an unfriendly environment, and a lack of teacher training. Thematic content analysis identifies these challenges, leading to recommendations for mitigation and broader implications.

Keywords: visual impairment, inclusive education, ecosystem approach, revised curriculum and education for all

INTRODUCTION

While there are many different types of special education requirements, the following are the most frequently seen needs in Malawian classrooms: learning challenges, gifted abilities, physical impairments, visual impairments, and hearing impairments (Ministry

Citation: Banda, E. K., Chirwa, G. W., Nyoni, P., & Myrie, D. N. (2025). Experiences of learners with visual impairment in the mainstream secondary school classrooms in Malawi: A case study of Mzimba district. *International Journal of Instruction*, *18*(1), 23-38. https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2025.1812a

of Education, 2021). According to Ministry of Education (2021), physical impairment refers to those children who have difficulty using certain parts of their bodies because they are handicapped in one way or another. Visual impairment refers to those children who have problems seeing or children who cannot see at all. Children with hearing impairments or those who are completely deaf are referred to as such. Children who struggle with learning are those who take longer to understand topics. These are young ones that need some time to process information. They're known as slow learners most of the time. Children who are gifted or talented pick things up quickly. They pick up on concepts easily. Like any children with special needs, these highly intelligent children have unique difficulties that need specific treatment.

The nation's government has worked to enhance the delivery of special education programmes, but the state of education today still falls well short of meeting every child's needs. Class-level texts, class-level courses, and class-level expectations that presume very minimal deviation from the pupils' age norm are all present in Malawian classrooms. One of the biggest challenges a child with special needs has when incorporated into a typical classroom is adjusting to educational programming. Thus, for these children to fulfill their potential, they need some kind of educational support (Kirk et al., 2000 and Ministry of Education, 2021). However, these kids receive scant attention when curriculum development, lesson delivery, instructional planning, and evaluation are all being done.

As things are, the Malawian educational system only permits special needs students to be integrated with regular students and to compete on an equal footing under the same learning environments. The process of integrating special needs children into the regular education system involves aligning their needs with the system, which is not modified to meet their needs. However, inclusion entails changing educational institutions and designing curricula and facilities to cater to the requirements and preferences of every student, without exception (Lynch, 2011 and Winnick, 2021). Such rigid standards have grave and long-lasting effects on the nation, including high rates of school dropout and low literacy. Consequently, without attending to the requirements of children with special needs, the nation cannot fulfill the global goal of ensuring that everyone has access to education. Teachers must make sure that every child's requirements are taken into account at every stage of the educational process, from curriculum development to instructional planning, delivery, and assessment, to successfully educate everyone and guarantee that no child is left behind. These needs include those that the youngster in question directly uses as well as those that "supporting" staff members like instructors use. Among these requirements are the following:

Community and Social Acceptance

Children with special needs are only really included in their classroom, like any other child, when their peers and teachers value them. For the classroom to become a community where everyone is accepted socially, teachers must foster a pleasant atmosphere. In terms of attitude, expectations, and collaboration abilities, teachers play a crucial role in fostering this positive learning environment in the classroom (Favazza et al., 2000 and Hodkinson and Vickerman, 2020). Mastropieri and Scruggs (2001) and

Block and Obrusnikova (2020) also noted that students often use their teacher's behaviour as a model for their own behaviour. Teachers must therefore exhibit model attitudes and behaviours towards the students in their class. Enhancing the learner-teacher relationship is equally important as the teacher-student interaction. Instructors ought to consciously work to enable as much interaction as possible between students of different skill levels. These initiatives involve getting kids involved in group activities and switching up leadership positions so that all kids, including girls and kids with disabilities, get an opportunity. In addition to fostering better relationships and leadership abilities, this activity aids in the development of a child's sense of belonging.

Teaching strategies

The methods that educators employ to impart knowledge are crucial to the successful inclusion of students. Both the teacher and the student must participate in teaching and learning to be effective (Mtunda and Safuli, 1997 and Ministry of Education, 2021). According to Tom et al. (2004) and Lindsay (2021), children with impairments might directly benefit from the same kinds of tactics that work for children in general. However as the instructor plans the sessions, he or she must think about how inclusive the strategies are given the range of skill levels in the class. It is imperative that teacher preparation programmes prioritise equipping their students with the fundamental talents needed to work with children who have a range of disabilities. This ability needs to be included more clearly in the teaching practice evaluation instrument to guarantee proper learning. Aktan (2021) supports that, to ensure quality in inclusive strategies teacher's professional competence be improved so that teachers can offer good teaching strategies.

Teaching and learning materials

Books and other things that the instructor may bring in are examples of teaching and learning resources. Before introducing them into the classroom, the instructor needs to understand how much these resources advance or impede learning. A quality teaching and learning resource should make difficult concepts easier for kids to understand (Safuli and Mtunda, 1997). Additionally, the instructor needs to make sure that no particular child is discriminated against in the materials.

Infrastructure

The infrastructure of the school must provide students with special needs with a comfortable and accessible environment. The infrastructure that facilitates the mobility of children with physical disabilities, the quality of the classroom chalkboard for visually impaired students, and adequate lighting are some of the factors to take into account when providing a user-friendly environment for children with special needs.

Structure

Children should have access to teachers who are current on their skills and who are well-prepared (Mclinden et al., 2023). To handle special needs concerns at the school, school structures must incorporate special education staff. This person could be someone who looks after the welfare of children with disabilities and makes

connections with special educators or organisations; they don't necessarily need to be an expert in special needs education.

Referrals

Even though teachers may possess the fundamental abilities needed to instruct students with special needs, there will be instances in which their knowledge and experience will be insufficient. Consequently, to support students with unique disabilities, educational institutions require qualified and approachable specialty teachers. Accordingly, children with special needs must have adequate access to referral institutions.

Problem statement

When visually impaired students are included in regular classrooms, their successful integration is primarily dependent on the training that the teachers have received, the level of support that the teachers receive, the accessibility of resources, and the teachers' level of confidence in instructing students with special learning needs (Wagner & Nettelbladt, 2005). Teachers must be aware of the difficulties faced by visually impaired students in regular classroom settings and the potential impact their instruction may have on their learning to meet the needs of visually impaired students (Landsberg, 2008 and Jenny, 2020). As a result, there is a significant probability that more knowledgeable and experienced teachers with training in inclusive education will be able to integrate students with visual impairments into regular classrooms. In light of these circumstances, the purpose of this study is to examine the difficulties faced by visually impaired pupils in regular classroom settings. Nevertheless, anecdotal research has been done thus far on the experiences of visually impaired students in Malawi's mainstream secondary schools.

This study was designed to investigate the difficulties faced by students with visual impairment in mainstream secondary school classrooms in Malawi. The study was motivated by the knowledge gap regarding the experiences of students with visual impairment in Malawian mainstream secondary schools.

Significance of the study

The study will assist in identifying some of the primary difficulties Malawian students with vision impairments encounter in regular classroom settings. The study's conclusions will broaden the body of knowledge held by the Ministry of Education and other important stakeholders involved in secondary school education in Malawi, such as teachers, about the difficulties faced by students with visual impairments in mainstream secondary school settings. These conclusions may also be applied to address these difficulties and enhance the academic performance of students with visual impairments in mainstream classrooms. The study's findings will also advance theoretical understanding of the difficulties in integrating visually impaired students into Malawi's regular classrooms. Additional research on topics about the implementation of inclusive education in Malawi and other countries can be based on this knowledge.

The Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of this study were to:

1. Investigate the experiences of learners with visual impairment in the mainstream secondary school classroom in Malawi
2. Assess challenges facing learners with visual impairment in mainstream secondary school classrooms.

Theoretical Framework

The Ecosystem framework served as the study's guidance (Donald, et al., 2002). The Ecosystem idea illustrates how individuals and social groups within an ecosystem interact and depend on one another. This method also accepts Vygotsky's theory that no one exists in a vacuum (Morelle, 2016). Humans are embedded in a multitude of systems that both influence and are impacted by them, according to Vygotsky. The Ecosystemic method "show(s) how individual people and groups at different levels of society are linked in dynamic, interdependent and interaction relationships," (Donald et al., 2002, p. 35). The interconnection of species in the natural world is referred to as the ecosystem approach, which combines ecological theory and system theory (Morelle, 2016). The systemic theory supports the idea that human values, understanding, and actions are influenced by the social context in which they occur. On the one hand, it describes relationships between individuals and the interactive groups of people in their social context (Donald et al., 2002). According to Donald et al. (2002), the systemic approach offers a greater knowledge of how a school interacts with its various components, including its administration, staff, curriculum, and students. As a result, the school is viewed as an ecosystem in this study, with instructors, students, the school administration, and the curriculum interacting to shape, develop, and constrain one another. Since the goal of this study was to investigate how various school-based factors, including teachers, students, administration, the physical environment of the school, and the curriculum, affect the learning of students with visual impairments, the ecosystem framework was thought to be the most appropriate framework for this investigation.

Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of students with visual impairments in Malawian secondary classes. As a result, the study examined the literature on the difficulties faced by students with visual impairments in mainstream schools as well as inclusive education for these students.

Inclusive education

A learning environment that supports each student's complete personal, academic, and professional development regardless of their colour, class, gender, handicap, sexual orientation, religion, culture, learning style, or language is known as inclusive education (Smith & Barr, 2023). Education for All (EFA) is a global project that was introduced

in 1990 at the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand, and emphasises the concept of inclusive education. In collaboration with governments, development organisations, civil societies, non-governmental organisations, and the media, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) is currently in charge of it (UNESCO, 2020). One hundred and fifty organisations from 155 nations among them Malawi agreed at this meeting to achieve two goals: the widespread implementation of elementary education and the significant reduction of illiteracy by the end of the decade (UNESCO, 2020). The Jomtien World Conference recognised education as a core human right and called on the participating nations to step up their efforts to guarantee that every student's basic learning needs are satisfied (UNESCO, 2020). The primary strategy implemented by the Malawian government, as a signatory to the Education for All (EFA), is the inclusion of students with disabilities and various special needs, including those with visual impairment, in mainstream classrooms. This approach aims to provide education to learners with disabilities and barriers to learning (Mpu & Adu, 2021).

Visual impairment

The term "visual impairment" refers to a broad range of visual issues, including deficiencies in eye movement, visual field, and acuity. Even in the absence of a visual disability, visual impairment has a negative impact on students' academic achievement (Engelbrecht, 1999). So that they may make better and more informed judgments about the teaching and learning of the students with visual impairment, teachers must be aware of the wide range of visual impairments and be able to recognise those students who have a visual disability. With this information, teachers will be able to better put their visually impaired students in the classroom for example, closer or farther from the chalkboard. There are other names for the idea of visual impairment, such as vision impairment or vision loss. According to Dyson (2001), it is a reduced degree of vision that results in issues that cannot be resolved with conventional methods, like wearing glasses. People who do not wear glasses or contact lenses and have low vision are also considered to have visual impairment. These individuals may experience challenges doing activities of daily living like driving, reading, walking, and socialising.

Causes of visual impairment

Five different kinds of eye conditions might impair vision: glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, muscle degeneration, trachoma, and cataracts. As per Thomas's (2006) findings, these comprise 70% of all instances of blindness. The main cause of exophthalmia, or extreme dryness of the conjunctiva, and the more severe illness known as keratomalacia is a deficiency of vitamin A in the diet, which is nearly always linked to starvation. A severe vitamin A deficit can cause corneal damage and perforation of the eyeball, which are deadly consequences. In developing nations, it is the main cause of childhood blindness (Thomas, 2006).

Challenges facing learners with visual impairment

Different learning needs may emerge in a student in a mainstream school (one that houses both students with a variety of special needs and those without) simply because

the educational system has unintentionally ignored them or because of other factors that, if left unaddressed, could lead to learning barriers (Morelle, 2016). A rigid curriculum, improper language, improper communication, an inhospitable and dangerous built environment, inadequate support services, inadequate policies and laws, the lack of acknowledgment and participation from parents, and inadequate and inappropriately trained education managers and educators are a few of these factors. We'll go over a few of these aspects in brief below.

An inflexible curriculum

The curriculum itself is the biggest obstacle to learning for visually impaired pupils. According to Morelle (2016), a flexible curriculum and inclusive assessment practices that cater to all students' needs are essential for fostering diversity in the classroom. Students with visual impairments may face diverse obstacles with curricular features such as topic, language or medium of instruction, instructional tempo and time constraints, learning materials, and assessment methods. The principles that support and shape the core of instructors' pedagogy and subject matter are contained in the curriculum (Soudien, 2006). As a result, curricula for students with visual impairments must take into account the numerous learning obstacles that come with having a visual impairment (Hartlen, 2004). Hatlen goes on to say that although students with visual impairments may be able to learn with the current curriculum for mainstream students, they still require extra support and services to be fully integrated into the mainstream classroom. For students with visual impairments to benefit from an inclusive curriculum, extra thought must be given to them during the curriculum-writing process.

Inappropriate and inadequate support materials

Learning assistance items that are not appropriate or sufficient have a detrimental impact on visually impaired students. Students cannot succeed in regular classes or take part in or contribute to the teaching and learning process without teaching and learning support resources (Morelle, 2016). If teaching and learning support materials are available, students with visual impairments can grasp and master the subject matter more quickly. Thus, to meet the needs of students with visual impairment, assistive technologies such as voice-activated calculators, computers with synthetic and customisable fonts, and Braille are required. Giving visually impaired students access to assistive technologies could help the inclusive education movement (Marsack, 2013).

Assessment of learners with visual impairment

To optimise the functional vision of students with visual impairment, a teacher must adjust some aspects of the surrounding environment (Morelle, 2016). These include: colour; duration of tasks or activities for teaching and learning; and seating arrangements for students who are blind or visually impaired. First, when it comes to colour, students who have visual impairments should be evaluated to find out which colours they can see well. Furthermore, regarding the amount of time students with low vision or those with visual impairments require to read and finish assignments, the teacher might need to assign various assessment methods and offer students extra time. Thirdly, the way students are seated in the classroom matters a lot. For instance, too

little or too much light can impair their vision (Morelle, 2016). Lastly, the print's font size can help certain low-vision learners benefit from expanded print, while others may find huge print difficult to read because it is outside of their visual areas. Consequently, sitting in the front row of the classroom may help a learner with low distance acuity perform better (Schiemer, 2017a).

Lack of teachers' training in Inclusive Education

The implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools greatly depends on the inclusive education training that teachers get. Teachers will have a favourable attitude and respond positively to children with visual impairments in their various schools when they receive inclusive education training and support in colleges (Woodcock, et al., 2012). Additionally, according to Van Laarhoven, et al., (2007), course designers and university lecturers must prepare incoming instructors to teach in inclusive classrooms. Missinzo (2009) contends, however, that in many educational systems around the world, including Malawi's, there are insufficiently educated teachers for inclusive education in universities. Although the Malawian government created a policy on special needs education in 2001, Missinzo (2009) claims that no official guidelines have been made regarding how to train staff members and experts to develop and execute inclusive education methods. Missinzo (2009) claims that there isn't now a national university in Malawi that offers bachelor's degree programmes in special education.

METHOD

This study used a case study methodology and a qualitative technique to research. A case study design can facilitate in-depth analysis and explain specific events (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A singular viewpoint on a single person or group can be obtained through case studies (Denscombe, 2021). One mainstream secondary school in Malawi's northern Mzimba area served as the study's site. The study involved ten learners with visual impairment, two Special Needs Specialist teachers, and two mainstream teachers totaling fourteen participants. The characteristics of the participants are presented in Tables 1, 2 and 3 below:

Table 1
Description of the special needs teachers

Special Needs Teacher	Gender	Age	Qualification	Position
1	Male	49	Degree in Inclusive Education	Special Needs Teacher
2	Male	51	Degree in Inclusive Education	Special Needs Teacher

Table 2
Description of mainstream teachers

Teacher	Gender	Age	Qualification	Position
1	Female	35	Degree in Education	English teacher
2	Male	41	Degree in Education	Mathematics Teacher

Table 3
Description of learners

Number of students	Gender	Age range	Class
5	Male	14-21	Forms 1 to 4
5	Female	14-21	Forms 1 to 4

The participants were purposefully and conveniently sampled. The learners involved in the study were purposively sampled because they were visually impaired and they were the target of this study. The Specialist teachers were involved in the study because they are the ones equipped with skills to support students with visual impairment and their involvement in the study helped in collecting the required data, especially on challenges facing learners with visual impairment. The mainstream teachers were involved in the study because they are responsible for implementing the curriculum at the classroom level where the learners with visual impairment participate. Therefore, the involvement of mainstream teachers also helped in collecting data on the challenges learners with visual impairment face at the classroom level. The district of study was conveniently selected in the sense that it was the district where the researchers were based at the time of the study and it was easy to collect data from the district. The school was purposively sampled because it has learners with visual impairment who were the target of this study.

Two different techniques were employed to gather data for this investigation. These consisted of in-person, semi-structured interviews and instructional observations from classrooms (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Additionally, the two approaches worked well together to give the study methodological triangulation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Cross-checking the reliability of the study's data was made easier by the use of methodological triangulation. Thematic content analysis was used to examine the study's findings. This technique of data analysis is defined by Creswell & Creswell (2018) as a means of categorising data based on themes, concepts, or comparable characteristics.

Limitations of the study

Since the study focused solely on the difficulties faced by visually impaired pupils, it is not possible to extrapolate the findings to all disabled students. Only students who were available at the time and had low eyesight, total blindness, or albinism were interviewed by the researcher. Second, out of all the schools in the Mzimba district, just one mainstream secondary school was used for the study. Ultimately, teachers were not given more time in class to conduct in-depth observations of their inclusive teaching strategies for students with visual impairments. To determine the teaching and evaluation procedures they are using, it would be ideal for all teachers working with students who have visual impairments to be monitored for a while.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following major themes emerged from the data analysis: a lack of teaching and learning resources; inadequate teacher support during the teaching process; an environment that is not conducive to learning for visually impaired students; assessments that are inappropriate for these students; a lack of extracurricular activities that are adapted for visually impaired students; and a lack of special education training for mainstream or general education teachers. Below is a detailed presentation and discussion of these important findings:

Lack of teaching and learning materials for visually impaired learners

All learners with visual impairment involved in the study reported that they do not have textbooks in braille both at their Resource Centre and the Library. The learners with Visual Impairment just copy notes from the textbooks for the mainstream learners by using Perkins which they use for writing. For example, one visually impaired learner complained that;

"Imagine, copying so many notes for a lot of subjects, for Social studies, Life skills, Geography from Arise, Strides, and other books because Arise alone is not enough I need to have information from other books. I become very tied".

The learner further complained that it is also difficult to copy notes from the textbooks because they need their mainstream friends who are also busy to help them in reading the books. The scarcity of braille papers makes the process of copying notes from textbooks difficult for most learners with visual impairment. According to the learners with visual impairment, accessing prescribed and recommended textbooks from the library is also a problem because sometimes the librarians tell them to write the list of books they want and when they present the list, they are told that the textbooks are not available in the library. Almost all the learners with visual impairment involved in the study complained that the process of copying notes from the textbooks is time consuming and it takes away their study time.

The specialist teachers also confirmed that learners with visual impairments are concerned that the learners make their notes in braille from textbooks meant for mainstream learners. The study found that some materials like braille machines for transcribing were not functioning.

The specialist teachers involved in the study also explained that low vision learners find it difficult to read books in the library because the prints in the textbooks are very small for them and they are provided with magnifying glasses for them to read properly.

Lack of adequate support from teachers in the process of instruction

Most learners with visual impairment complained that although they are supported by both specialist and mainstream teachers, some teachers however fail to support their learning adequately. For example, the learners with visual impairment complained that when they ask the teachers to clarify some points that they have not understood, they

are told to go and research for information from textbooks while they do not have textbooks in braille. For example, one learner explained that,

"The teachers always tell us to go and research when we ask them to explain some points, yet we do not have textbooks in braille. Where do they think we are going to get the textbooks? Do they want us to dig from the earth or to get them from heaven?". Similarly, another learner complained that, "taking a special needs student and putting him at a good school without resources does not help him do well"

The invisibility of chalkboard writing concerned the visually impaired students as well. Students with visual impairments reported that some teachers wrote in extremely small print, making it difficult for those with low vision to read. As a result, students had to rely on classmates to read aloud to them so they could understand what was written on the chalkboard.

Unconducive environment for visually impaired learners

When asked if the school's environment was suitable for students with visual impairments, the majority of students responded negatively, infrastructure as not being suitable for learners with visual impairment. For example, the learners with visual impairment cited the uneven terrain as well as the difficulty of navigating without running into or colliding with physical objects. Instead, they primarily rely on memorised routes. For example, one of the visually impaired learners involved in the study complained that, "*I am dissatisfied with the lack of ramps at our school campus. It makes it extremely difficult for us to get around the campus".*

Lack of adapted extracurricular activities

When asked whether they participate in extracurricular activities, such as sports, all the learners with visual impairments involved in the study complained that although they have an interest in sports, they are not able to participate in the sports activities because their school does not have resources for them like sound balls that help them to detect the movement of the ball. When asked about what type of sports they can be able to participate in if given any opportunity, the learners indicated that they can play football or netball if they can be provided with sound balls. The study revealed that the teachers' lack of adequate knowledge about adapted extracurricular activities for learners with visual impairment was the main reason for the learners with visual impairment not to be able to participate in extracurricular activities. For example, when asked whether she was able to help learners with visual impairment to participate in extracurricular activities, the mainstream teacher responded that, "*Honestly no as I have never received any training in these things".*

Lack of training in Special needs for mainstream teachers

The majority of mainstream or general education teachers who were interviewed said that they had not received any training in inclusive education or on how to work with students who had special education needs, including visual impairments when asked if they were prepared for inclusive teaching in mainstream classrooms. The specialist teachers also attested to the fact that, while they had previously trained mainstream or

general education teachers in-service on how to deal with students with visual impairments and other special education needs for those instructors who were available at the time of training, newly hired teachers and those who were not present at the time were not trained. For example, one of the general education teachers lamented that, "*I have not received any training in inclusive education, including how to handle learners with visual impairment and I am not even sure what inclusive education really is*". Similarly, the other mainstream education teacher agreed with the colleague and commented that, "*We have not received any orientation training on inclusive education so that we can better help learners with visual impairment*."

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

According to this study, students with visual impairments encounter numerous difficulties when learning in regular classroom settings. These difficulties include, firstly, lack of teaching and learning materials for visually impaired learners. The study has revealed that learners with visual impairment do not have textbooks in braille both at their Resource Centre and the Library. The learners with Visual Impairment just copy notes from the textbooks for the mainstream learners by using Perkins which they use for writing. Secondly, lack of adequate support from teachers in the process of instruction. The study has revealed that learners with visual impairment do not get adequate support for their learning. The study revealed that when learners with visual impairment ask the teachers to clarify some points that they have not understood, they are told to go and research for information from textbooks while they do not have textbooks in braille. Thirdly, unconducive environment for visually impaired learners. The study has revealed that school's environment and infrastructure was not suitable for students with visual impairments. The learners with visual impairment cited the uneven terrain as well as the difficulty of navigating without running into or colliding with physical objects. Instead, the learners primarily rely on memorised routes. Fourthly, lack of adapted extracurricular activities. The study revealed that although learners with visual impairment have interest in sports, but they are not able to participate in the sports activities because their school does not have resources for them like sound balls that help them to detect the movement of the ball. The study revealed that the teachers' lack of adequate knowledge about adapted extracurricular activities for learners with visual impairment was the main reason for the learners with visual impairment not to be able to participate in extracurricular activities.

The primary source of these issues is the lack of inclusive education training among teachers in mainstream or general education programmes. This supports the claim made by Woodcock, Hemmings, and Kay (2012) that mainstream or general education teachers in most educational institutions are not prepared to work with students who have special education requirements, including those who have visual impairments. According to the study's teachers, they are passionate about working with students who have visual impairments, but they lack the necessary training to support them. Having enough well-qualified teachers equipped with substantial knowledge and experience will effectively help improve teaching methods for inclusive education (Pov & Kawai, 2024). The study's participants expressed frustration that their teachers are not providing

them with adequate support for their learning difficulties, presumably due to the teachers' inexperience working with students who have visual impairments.

The investigation also discovered that the lack of ramps and stairwell classrooms made the atmosphere unsuitable for students with special needs, particularly those who are visually impaired. The Ministry of Education's lack of readiness to adopt inclusive education is the cause of the hostile atmosphere. It appears that the implementation was hastily carried out before the surroundings and infrastructure were examined and updated to support students with vision impairments.

The study also discovered that students with special education needs, particularly those with vision impairment, struggle to learn when there are no tools available for them to use in the classroom. According to JICA (2012), learners in the study bemoaned the lack of resources for teaching and learning, which could be linked to the production of these materials being dependent on foreign aid. Efendi et al. (2022) add that resource availability is significant as it helps in dealing with problems learners with visual impairment experience.

The study concludes by making the case that moving students with special education needs, including those who have visual impairments, into mainstream classrooms won't solve all of the problems associated with improving access for students with special needs. Therefore, this study suggests that all teachers in all of the nation's schools receive inclusive education training so that they can readily assist students with special education requirements, including those who have visual impairments. Second, the study suggests that the school environment in which students with visual impairment are put should be taken into account when assigning them to secondary schools. Students with visual impairments should ideally attend schools with accessible environments. Lastly, it is imperative to provide teaching and learning resources for students with visual impairments since they are essential to their education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to thank all the teachers and learners of the school in which this study was conducted, who accepted to participate in this study. The participants to the study responded positively through interviews and focus group discussions to collect data for this study. Their time and effort which made this study possible is greatly appreciated.

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