

Towards enhancing education policy practices of students with disabilities in institutions of higher learning in Kenya

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Abstract

Education policies are aimed at improving quality of education. The institutions of higher learning are expected to offer unparalleled education to individual's students with and without one form of disabilities. However, educating students with disabilities in the institutions of higher learning in Kenya is not without some challenges. Thus, this paper examine the historical experiences of students with disabilities in higher education. Secondly, the paper discusses the theoretical concept of disability with particular references to existential, epistemological and its integration within social theory and proceeds to discuss various sub-types of disabilities. Thirdly, the paper identifies and explores various education polices practices being implemented in the institutions of higher learning and questions if there is any distinction observed from traditions. Fourthly, the paper identifies various strategies adopted by institutions of higher learning to enhance achievements of students with disabilities. Some of the education policy practices challenges are highlighted and it's argued that the challenges constitute African policy narratives that can be dispensed with if due diligence are put in place. Implications of education policy practices are discussed. The paper finally recommends that departments of special needs in the institutions of higher learning be fully equipped to cater for all cadre of students with disabilities.

Keywords: Disability; Education; Existential; Epistemological; Inclusiveness; Policy

1. Introduction

The heart of the higher education institutions is its endowment with the ability to grant academic credentials, diplomas, dissemination of knowledge and creativity and this is often done for the good of humanity. Higher education opens opportunities for career development, meaningful occupation and a chance for a dignified life for persons with disability. Higher education leads into new knowledge and experience among students who pursue advanced knowledge (Sifuna, 1990; Laron Report, 2005). Special needs education in the institutes of higher learning faces many barriers however the quest for its growth and development still exist. Such barriers include poverty, ethnicity, access to higher education and access to competitive programs in the institutes of higher learning (Elders, 2005).

According to the World Health organization Report (WHO, 2016), disability affects 10% of every population. An estimated 650million people worldwide, of whom 200million are children, experience some form of disability. Disability is both a source of poverty, about 80% of the worlds persons with disability (PWD) live in low income countries where they experience social and economic disadvantages and denial of rights. Their lives are made more difficult by the way society interpret and reacts to disabilities. In addition to this, environmental barriers and poor political exacerbate the impact of disability.

The overall disability rates in Kenya stands as at 4.6% of the population and of this the largest proportion was physical impairments (1.6%) followed by visual impairment (1.4%). According to AFUB(2007) and GOK(2003), the total

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number of people with disabilities in Kenya is estimated at 3,280,000 people, which reflect the global average of 10% (2011). The survey also found that PWDs who had attained only pre-primary education had the highest proportion (96%) of those who perceived disability without use of assistive device as a big problem. The proportion reduces with higher education attainment, declining to 77% among those who had attained university education (NCAPD, 2008). The importance of university education cannot be overemphasized as it leads to among other things providing students with disability with decent employment opportunities and enhanced social status in the community (Duta, Scguri-Geist, & Kundu, 2009; Getzel, Sladden, & Brief, 2001)

The purpose of this chapter was to look into the position of Kenyan Universities in the provision of special needs educations. Kenya is a signatory to the various international convention, UN Charters and Treaties including achievements of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The treaties are time bound and have set timelines to achieve various stipulated targets such as reduction of extreme poverty, diseases and to an extend promotion of gender equality, education and climate change. However this conventions and various charters cannot be achieved if the persons with disabilities are not included and are left behind. Persons with disabilities suffers various scourge including social stigma, abandonment, taboo and unwanted attention. This paper seeks to bring to fore strategies that higher education can adopt to facilitate implementation of various policy option for the benefit of the special need child.

The outline of this chapter is as follows: The first portion explores the historical development of special needs education in Kenya. The second portion explore some theoretical considerations. The third session looks at various categories of disabilities. The fourth session looks at policy and practice issues in institutions of higher learning. The fifth session looks at some challenges in provision of special needs education in Kenya and lastly the paper looks at strategies being strengthened to enhance provision of special needs education in universities.

2. Historical Development of special needs education in Kenya

2.1. The period of neglect

The genesis for the development of special needs education in the institution of higher learning can be traced back to the missionary of the 19th and 20th Centuries. After the partition of Africa, Christian Missionaries had embarked on making and training Converts (Bogonko and Otieno, 1988). According to Otiende, Wamahiu and Karugu (1992), the first mission Schools was opened at Rabai near Mombasa guided by Ludwing Kraft and John Rebmann in 1846. This triggered the demand for more schools in Kenya and the turning point came in 1903 with the formation of the Fraser Commission. The Fraser Commission led to the expansion of better education offered on racial line. The Fraser Commission was the first policy document which led to the development of higher education in Kenya as it propagated the provision of industrial and Vocational education among the Africans.

According to KISE (1980) Special attention to Special needs education in Kenya started during the Second World War to rehabilitate army officers who returned from Second World War in 1945 with the aim of treating injuries. Services were developed to rehabilitate those with physical, visual impairments and Brain Damage. This later included people with other handicaps. Education was being managed by churches like Church Missionary Societies, The Salvation Army and Lutheran Church, Voluntary and Non – Governmental organizations. These churches were involved right from the start with activities of praying, counselling and rehabilitation of war victims. This churches and other non – church organization proceeded to offer education for children with disabilities. Upon graduation from this institutions some were offered scholarships and grants to pursue higher education in foreign countries. Due to cost implication financial support became to heavy and hence it was thought wise to start higher education training in Kenya. Accordingly the government opened up teacher training colleges to prepare teachers to teach students with special needs in Kenya.

2.2. The Institutionalization

Most schools for the special needs pupils and students were started in the late 1940's and early 1960's by churches and non- governmental organizations. Among this were the Thika School for the Blind in 1945 sponsored by the salvation Army; Egoji School for the Blind (now st. Lucy) sponsored by the Catholic Church in 1958. During this period, individuals who saw the potential in children with disabilities started teaching children with special needs at family level. Institutionalization was a service provision whereby a residential facility was put in place to house children with varied special needs to protect them from neglect in churches and some rehabilitation centers. The original aim was to provide higher level care and corrective rehabilitation with the objective of returning them to society after improvement. The earliest education to persons with disabilities was purely rehabilitative and upheld medical care. These two factors were emphasized with the hope that the disabled persons will be made normal or taken out of the disability world.

2.3. Normalization Period and integration

Normalization period can be defined as the creation of a learning and social environment as normal as possible for the child with special needs. Normalization started in early 1960's with establishment of various colleges. The main objectives of normalization were: Firstly, to create and maintain environment that do not impose excessive restrictions on persons with disabilities. Secondly, to create an arrangement that brings persons with disability as close as possible to the society and cultural mainstream. Thirdly, to guarantee that human and legal rights of persons with disabilities are protected. As society started to see those with special needs as part of the society, they became more tolerant and understanding. They felt that persons with disability could be integrated in the society. Integration is the provision of educational services to children with special needs within the regular school system. It is the philosophy, which comes from the principle of normalization. It sometimes referred to as mainstreaming. It involves the movement of children with disabilities from special schools to regular schools and from special classes to regular classes. It may take many forms but in all cases children are still seen as disabled which discriminates them within the same schools.

2.4. The period of inclusive Education

The philosophy of inclusion began in 1981 when it was recognized that persons with disabilities who went to regular schools got better education than those who went to special schools. Inclusion means recognizing individuals differences thereby enabling those individuals obtain a good quality of life in their natural environment. It therefore means adjusting the home, the school and the society at large so that all individuals can have the feeling of belonging and develop in accordance with their potentials and difficulties within their environment. Inclusive education is a process of addressing the learners needs within the mainstream of education using all available resources thus creating opportunities for learning in preparing them for life. The emphasis is on equality, access and opportunity to education by reviewing schools and systems and changing them rather than trying to change the learners. This philosophy evolved by early century climaxing with the Salamanca statement during the world Conference on special needs Education held in Salamanca, Spain in 1994. In Kenya inclusive education is being practiced in pilot programmes and the ministry of education and regular teachers are being trained in inclusive education by the Kenya Institute of Special Education At Certificate and Diploma Levels through the Distance Learning Programmes.

3. Theoretical consideration

3.1. What disability is and what it is not

The word "disability" has become very popular nowadays, for various stakeholders and opinion leaders particularly talk about it more than ever but in many cases, it serves people's interest and degenerates into debates and conversation with much deep conviction in regard to how can we attribute conditions facing various individuals in the society who are not able to be self-reliant. The original meaning of "disability" is certainly to do with "handicap or limits" but those who debates it discover that it is very complex and requires adaptability that takes place within a person. The World Health Organization (2016) proposes the following definition of disabilities:

"Disabilities is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. Disability is thus not just a health problem. It is a complex phenomenon, reflecting the interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives."

Disability is not inability, it therefore means that people with activity limitations, impairment or participation restriction are not lagging behind in achieving their goals. 'Disability needs not to be an obstacle to success'. Stephen Hawking wrote in disability report 2011. According to Nasir Ali Khan (2018). Disability is the state of somebody mind. Either a person makes his disability his strength or weakness. Because strength and weakness plays an important role in one's life. A person makes his strength and weakness by himself but then his strength and weakness decides the future of that person. He states that:

"In this world some people are born fit and some with disability. It is not in our hands to know how to get birth without disability but it is surely in our hands to make our disability our strength rather than weakness. In this world, many disabled persons have got success and many abled persons are left behind"

Khan (2018) concludes that moreover, there are so many organizations all over the world which are working for disabled and needy people. And there are also people who individually helps them and provide them facilities so that their life become easy. There are special homes and schools for the disabled persons as well. Disabled persons who are

interested in getting education, they get education completely free. And then they get a chance to make their life better and do something for themselves because education is a key to success and the third eye of man.

3.1.1. Existential Theories regarding disabilities

Existential theorist recognizes the power of the individual to choose their acts. In existential school of thought, you can examine your situation more clearly, become more aware of your power in a situation, and begin to make choices that are meaningful to you. Existentialism in the correct recognizable form was inspired by the 19th. Century Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard, the German philosophers Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Karl Jasper(1883 – 1969) and Edmund Husserl, and writers like the Russian Fyodor Dostoevsky(1821 – 1881) and the Czech Franz Kafka(1883 – 1924). Kierkegaard saw rationality as a mechanism human use to counter their existential anxiety, their fear of being in the world. Kierkegaard also stressed that individuals must choose their own way without aid of universal, objections standards. Existentialism came of age in the mid – 20th. Century, largely through the works of Jean-paul Sarte; Albert Camus(1913 – 1960) and simone de Beauvoir(1908 -1986). Sarte is perhaps the well known. However the works of existentialist have been criticized by Rogers Scroton and Various Christians Scholars who complain that existentialist portray humanity in the worst possible light, overlooking the dignity and grace that come from being made in the image of God.

According to Peterson(1965), the contribution of existentialism to the study of disability departs from the external approach adopted by many scholars. In essence the existentialist urges the disabled to accept their disabilities, to take a realistic attitude towards them, to avoid resignation and dependency syndrome. It encourages the disabled to avoid denial, or overcompensation regarding their situation.

According to Bugental (1965), disability being a form of tragedy is part of the living and hence tragedy must be incorporated into or recognition of reality when discussing disability. Bugental writes as cited in Peterson (1965) that:

“existentialism view is that tragedy is very much part of or being in the world, that it is one expression of the significance of being and that the denial of tragedy means the debasement of our being. Tragedy says that what what we do matters, that our choices make a difference, that living is truly a life – and that death matter. The fully aware person can no more deny tragedy that he can deny gravitation “(1pg.151)

Bugental asserts that existentialist are generally pessimistic, advocating for abject acceptance of resignation to tragedy. Beyond accepting tragedy, existentialist bring to our attention that without tragedy, life would lack meaning and points to us that tragedy gives meaning to the rest of life.

According to Frankl (1955), Disability is a fate as well as limitation. It is a fate as well as tragedy because one has no control over it and hence it's tragedy. It is a limitation upon the freedom which existentialist emphasizes as one major characteristic of existence. So disability like many conditions which surrounds us limits freedom but it does not eliminates it. Acceptance of limitations which may not necessarily be inherent in the disability. They may be imposed by the individuals or by society. Existentialism emphasizes that, regardless of fate or destiny, suffering and limitations, each of us has some freedom and is this responsible for what he does with his life.

3.1.2. Epistemological Disability

Epistemology comes from the Greek word episteme which means Knowledge. The suffix ology means the study of. So epistemology means the study of knowledge. It is “the theory or science of the methods and grounds of knowledge, especially with reference to its limits and validity (Webster' new Collegiate Dictionary, 1949:277). Epistemologist questions the knowledge base of disciplines, asking how we know and what we know about a given topic or what the assumptions are that underpin legitimate knowledge within a given field(connor et al 2011; Gallagher, 1998;2004; wong yew leong, 2020). The epistemologist avers that the existence of disability emerge from deficits on or within the body of an individual and hence it's an individual problem. From this perspectives, disability exist in some some students and not others. The task of epistomologist is to understand the nature of this deficit and to promote practices that will ameliorate it through remediation or treatment. Establishing this knowledge base involves a slow accumulation of scientific knowledge about what is presumed to be discrete conditions, coupled with a base of accepted 'best practices" aimed at remediation. In this paradigm, disability is viewed as an unwanted and undesirable characteristics of certain school children(Freedman, 2016).

There are three variations of the deficit model: the medical model, the rehabilitation model related to employment, and the special education model. Each model specifies a deficit (health condition, employment condition, learning condition) which must be corrected in order to make the person with a disability "normal." Of course many of these conditions can

not be corrected (whatever that means) so that the person with a disability will never be allowed to be normal (whatever that means). But there is no deficit in the person with a disability (Pfeiffer, 2001). There is nothing which keeps her from being normal. "Normal" is a value based perspective. Amundson (2000) gives an excellent analysis of the concepts of normal and abnormal. These concepts, he writes, form the basis of the deficit model of disability. He shows that normal and abnormal are social judgments of what are and what are not acceptable biological variations and functioning. By classifying people with disabilities as abnormal, these value judgments are used to justify the disadvantages which confront people with disabilities.

According to Freedman (2016) epistemology views disability as a positivism empirical construct that posit that all claims about what is true (legitimate knowledge) can be scientifically be verified. Empiricism refers to the belief that all knowledge can be discovered through scientific process of sensory experience. Truth from positivism empiricism is therefore cast within an objectives or singular practices. The use of positivism empirical orientation in disability lends itself to the influence of behavioral psychology which explains the tendency of disability in the form of functional finite set of skills that can be altered through behavioral modification and hence search for truth will ultimately lead to search for methods of treatment or remediation. Most scholars have rejected positivism paradigm (Gallagher, 1988). Rather research takes a social constructivism approach to theorize knowledge about disability in schools i.e. disability is framed as a social construct due to its inevitability (Hackings, 1999).

3.1.3. Who is a student with disability

Students with disability, otherwise known as people with special needs are those people with one form of disability or the other, capable of limiting their involvement and participation in the regular educational programmes and subsequently affect their academic performance and functionality in the society. The modern classification of learners with disability in Kenya falls into thirteen main broad categories.

Hearing Impairment means an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects the child's educational performance. Those with severe cases are termed as deaf. Deafness means a hearing impairment that is so severe that the student is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, which adversely affects a student's educational performance.

Deaf-blindness means concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for students with deafness or students with blindness.

Physical Impairment means a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a student's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by congenital anomaly (e.g., clubfoot, absence of some member, etc.), impairments caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, etc.), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputation, and fractures or burns which cause contractures).

Visual Impairment - including blindness means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a student's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.

Autism means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age 3, that adversely affects a student's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences.

Multiple Disabilities means concomitant impairments (such as mental retardation-blindness, mental retardation-orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of which cause such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in a special education program solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deaf-blindness.

Speech and Language Impairment means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment or a voice impairment that adversely affects a student's educational performance.

Learning and Intellectual Disability. The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia and developmental aphasia. A student who exhibits a significant discrepancy between expected achievement and actual achievement determined on an individual basis shall be deemed to have a learning disability. Intellectual Disability means significantly sub average general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently

with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, which adversely affects a student's educational performance.

Emotional Disturbance means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a student's educational performance. The term includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to students who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance.

4. Higher education policy and practice and special needs in Kenya

4.1. Introduction

The issue of disability in Kenya is widely reflected in a variety of policy documents, plans and commitments. The government is a party to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2010), and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981) – all of which recognize the rights of disabled people to equal treatment. While Kenya's Constitution gives due recognition to the issue, other specific policies and plans embody provisions on rights and opportunities that should be made available to the disabled. For instance, the vision 2030 establishes the need to ensure the participation of disabled people in political, economic and social activities including the creation of wider educational opportunities.

Specific guidelines have also been issued to higher education institutions about how to address issues of disability. The Commission of higher education act (2008) stipulates that institutions should ensure their facilities and programmes are accessible and 'friendly' to physically challenged students. Building designs, campus physical landscape, computers and other infrastructures of institutions should take into account the interests of these students. In addition to relocating classes, developing alternative testing procedures, and providing different educational auxiliary aids, institutions are required to ensure that disabled students receive the necessary academic assistance, including tutorial sessions, extra examination time and deadline extensions. As indicated in sectoral plans (2015/16 – 2019/20), universities are expected to implement the national policy on facilities and infrastructure by adapting their campuses to provide full access to all students. Three universities are also set to receive additional support to establish facilities to provide higher education services to students with the most severe needs. This experience will guide later improvements across the higher education subsector in terms of facilities as well as teaching skills and adaptations required to support all students with special educational needs effectively. Despite these commitments, much remains to be done in terms of implementation.

4.2. Section I: Pre – Independence Era and attempt to Enhance Special Needs in Higher Education in Kenya

4.2.1. The definition of higher Education

John (2006) describes higher education as the level of education above secondary education. Higher education leads into new knowledge and experience among students who pursue advanced knowledge. Higher education as a whole is a process by which one generation transmits its culture and knowledge and skills to the succeeding generation. It is a process by which people are prepared at an advance level to live effectively and efficiently in their chosen environment (Sifuna 1990.p.3). According to Lulat (2005) and Zeleza (2006) higher education from African perspectives included systems and institutions that fulfilled societal missions that were essentially different from the European version of higher education. Alemu (2018) notes that higher education encompasses all post – secondary or tertiary learning institutions that may award some sort of credentials. The concept of higher education viewed from the colonial period included such places of teaching and training students in the service of the church, church administration and all forms of vocational training. Mostly this higher education institutions included vocational schools that enabled students to gain employment within the established local socio – economic set up (Clark, 1981). According to Clark (1981) the purpose of higher education is broad and ambiguous and that it is not easy to define higher education because it is differentiated in many way. Hence, it will be good to understand higher education in terms of its purpose or function. Altbach (2006) confirms that defining higher education is not an easy task in the modern times and in the period of differentiated learning, where new and diverse institutions are coming up and emerging without explaining their facts, purpose and values.

4.2.2. The policy and practice of Higher education and Special Needs

The genesis for the development of policy and practice for higher education in Kenya for special needs students can be traced back to the 1903 with the formation of the Fraser Commission (Bogonko and Otiende, (1988); Otiende, Wamahiu, and Karangu (1992). The Fraser Commission led to the expansion of better education offered on racial line. The Fraser

Commission was the first policy document which led to the development of higher education in Kenya as it propagated the provision of industrial and Vocational education among the Africans.

According to KISE (1980) Special attention to Special needs education in Kenya started during the Second World War to rehabilitate army officers who returned from Second World War in 1945 with the aim of treating injuries. Services were developed to rehabilitate those with physical, Visual impairments and Brain Damage. This later included people with other handicaps. In light of this, Bogonko and Otieno (1988) noted that early educational policies on education during the colonial era in East Africa were inspired by racial thoughts and debates concerning the educationability of Africans natives. The debate concentrated on the cranial capacity of Africans. The study concluded that Africans were not educable and hence the British policies on East Africa was that African be provided with industrial and vocational education tailored made for industrial and agricultural production. The results was that natives were prepared to provide labor for white settlers and work in the white farms. The missionaries were able to produce Catechist who would assist in Pastoral work in Kenya. The Early technical education centered on trades mainly in buildings and carpentry. The colonial Education policy for higher education for the natives was centered on opening technical and Vocational education centers in various market centers in the country such as Sigalagala, Machakos, and Eldoret Technical training College. The special needs graduates became artisans in various fields. To protect the interest of white settler, the education offered to natives was to ensure that the African does not offer opposition to white settler (Wamahiu and Karugu (1992); Bogonko and Otieno (1988) Barasa and Ngugi(1999)). The strategy of offering industrial and vocational education for the natives was emphasized by the Devonshire White Paper of 1923 that strengthen the hand of the government in management of education for the natives.

The Education Commission of 1919 and the Phelps Stokes Commission of 1924 offered additional educational policy that guided the provision of education in Kenya. This commissions recycled already held framework for the provision of higher education for the natives and the theories propagated by the famous Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes in America. They opined that education for Africans must be based on of the people and of the local natives. The two commission promoted locally based education, vocational education and industrial education for natives. The two commissions led to the opening of Jeans College which trained teacher as supervisor in various colleges in Kenya. The African Leaders were bitterly opposed to the recommendation of this two commissions as it did not offer the competitive education for the white color jobs. According to Furley and Watson (1978) the recommendations by Phelps Stokes Commission fueled the establishment of more colleges and schools.

Further policy initiatives were developed to harness the potential of previous commissions. The result was the development of two policy papers namely the White Paper of 1927 and Black Paper of 1930. The two paper stressed the importance of providing education for the natives based on the needs of the local natives' assembly. The Black Paper led to the establishment of the first natives' college at Githuguri. The Kenya African College (KATC) in 1939 offered higher education for the natives from east Africa (Otiende et al (1992) and Bogonko (1980)).

The demand for better education and the desire for quality education by natives fueled the growth of the provision of higher education in Kenya. The government formed the Beacher Education Commision of 1949 and The Binns commission of 1952 led to the establishment of Royal Technical College in 1956 while the Binns Commission enhance the internal efficiency of various vocational Colleges for the natives (Sifuna, 1992).

4.3. Section II: Post – Independence Era Policies and the Enhancement of Special Needs in Higher Education in Kenya

4.3.1. Introduction

In Kenya some policies that govern special needs in higher education have been adopted from presidential directives, cabinet papers, Education commissions and legal notices from the minister of education. Many Education Commissions after independence have given some directions touching on special needs.

4.3.2. Policies and practice for enhancement of special needs in Kenya

The Committee on Care and Rehabilitation of the Disabled (1964) – Ngala Mwendwa Committee

Emphasized that higher institutions should put emphasis on care and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and to put in place rehabilitation centers for the physical and visual handicaps. The sessional paper No.5 of 1968 formed the framework for the government policy on the persons with disability in the institutions of higher learning in Kenya. Institutions of higher learning were encouraged to develop tools and kits for the special needs students to help them start own business for self-reliance.

This was the first education Commission after independence popularly known as Ominde Commission (1964) noted that many students with mild handicap were learning in the institutions of higher learning. It recommended that all trainees teachers and tutors be given skills which would enable them teach such students in regular schools. It suggested that the training colleges should accept responsibility for acquainting all students on the techniques for teaching children with special needs in regular schools. Recommendation of this commission suggested inclusion education much in line with inclusive education today. If the content of this commission would have been translated into action, Higher education institutions in Kenya would have been away ahead in implementing inclusion.

The National Education Committee on Education Objectives and Policies popularly known as – Gachathi Report (1976) recommended that higher education institutions develop assessment and resource centres for students with special needs. The Kamunge Report(1988) emphasized the development of integrated system within institutions of higher learning encouraging institutions of higher learning to play a leading role in the production of ear mould for the deaf and other gadgets for the visually impaired and the physically challenged. The report identified various types of those with special needs conditions to include those with mental retardation, visual impairment, deaf and blind and other differentiated groups.

The Commission of Inquiry into education system of Kenya (1999) made some very positive recommendations in relation to education and training for persons with special needs in the institutions of higher learning. The Koech Report was pro- inclusive education. It led to piecemeal reforms in the institutions of higher learning. At the university level the report emphasized that the universities should put in place services of interpreters, note takers, braille readers and special equipment such as electronic talking computers, or voice to printed computers for the visually impaired as well as put in mechanism to make Universities disability friendly. Universities were also urged to individually design systems to be used for learners with severe impairments following a functional curriculum geared towards independent living. Universities were urged to provide for students with physically handicapped in terms of facilities and make adaptive aids for them. The systematic growth in policy and implementation led to the development of the following institutions:

Teachers of the hearing impaired: A one year certificate training course started locally at Central Teacher College, currently Kenya Institute of Education in 1964. The targeted P4,P3,P2, and P1 teachers. This later Moved to Kenyatta College (Now Kenyatta University) in 1969. In 1972 the course moved to Siriba Teacher College (now Maseno University) because the former was becoming a university College. In 1973 the first two – year course was started. The course then moved to kamwenja Teachers' College in 1977 before finally moving to Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) 1986. In 1987, the course was upgraded to diploma level. It targeted P1 teachers' with 'A' level.

Teachers of the Mentally Handicapped (intellectually challenged): A one year teacher training course was started at St.Nicholas, Now Jacaranda Special Schools in 1966. The training was relocated to Highridge Teacher Training College in 1969. The Course later moved to KISE in 1986 and was upgraded to Diploma Level in 1987.

Teacher of the Visually Impaired: Training started in 1980 at Highridge Teacher Training College. This course was at S1 level. The course later moved to KISE in 1986 and was upgraded to diploma level in 1987.

Teacher of the Physically Handicapped: This was started in 1987 at KISE. However on job training had been going on for teachers in the programmes of children with physical handicaps. In all the training programmes before 1987, the curriculum was confirmed to a particular area of disability. It was not until 1987 in KISE that a broad based curriculum was put in place. All Trainees covered interdisciplinary components that cut across all disabilities in their first year of training and specialize in the second year.

The Establishment of KISE (Kenya Institute of Special Education): The Institute was established through a legal notice No. 17 of 14TH.February, 1986 wth the main function of training teachers and other personnel involved in the education and rehabilitation of persons with disability (special needs). KISE mainly trains teachers for primary schools.

4.3.3. Special needs in the Higher Education

This was started at Kenyatta University in 1996. The course was at Bachelor of Education(with Special Needs).It targeted KISE diploma holders and P1 with 'A' level. In 2002, the Masters of Education(Special Needs Education) was mounted. So far many have graduated with B.ED degrees from Kenyatta University. In 1999, Maseno University launched another Bachelor of education Special Education Programmes. This also targeted KISE diploma Graduates, P1 Teachers and 8 – 4 – graduates.

Many universities in Kenya are now offering various courses leading to bachelor of education in Special Needs Education. There has been rapid expansion in the development and expansion of special needs education in Kenya. Currently Kenyatta University and Maseno University are offering post graduate programmes for those who seek to advance in courses on Special needs Educations.

4.4. Section III: Challenges to Provision of Higher Education for Special Needs Students

From time immemorial, cultural practices the world over have been unkind to persons of disabilities. Persons with disabilities were viewed as objects of bad omen and were killed, abandoned or offered as sacrifice to appease the gods. Most harsh treatment have been discarded. However, a more salient challenge has persisted i.e attitude and cultural school of thought.

People view the disability as tragedy or fate before seeing the person. They make judgement about the person in relation to the disability both visible and imagined and hence assign them duties, responsibilities and expectations pegged on these. It is our attitude that makes institutions of higher learning believe that learners with special needs cannot learn comfortably in a regular institutions and lecture halls. Institutions of higher learning have lived with this notion and have refused to change. There are many empirical evidence which support this belief (Oladejo & Oladejo, 2010; Osakwe, 2010) and yet at the back of our mind we still believe that those with disabilities should be confined to special institutions. When cultural prejudice and negative attitude prejudicial to learners with disabilities in the institutions of higher learning, a more responsive system and especially the surrounding communities and the government must come in.

From the beginning and upon completion of primary and secondary education, identification and placement of student with special needs in the institutions of higher learning is done without consulting parents (Mutua & Dimitrov, 2001a; Korir and Mukuria, 2006). The Joint Admission Board in Kenya, hardly consult parents during placement of students with special needs. Most students with special needs receive invitation letters to various program from various colleges which they did not apply. Special needs student are then integrated to formal learning with other students and are expected to adjust to their new realities. The consequences of this is that special needs student lack individualized attention and inadequacy of content development. The developed curriculum moreover does not suit the special need student. The teaching methodology is general and suit only the normal student (Elsemon, Ongesa & Hall, 1988). According to Mutua(1999) and Ndurumo (1993), the emphasis of the education program in the institution of higher learning is academic oriented. Mostly theoretical content is preferred. Creativity and innovation technics that lead an individual toward self-reliant, employment and participation is lacking.

Free movement in the institutions of higher learning and access to all institutional facilities and environment is assumed to be the right of all students (IDEA,1997).Putman, Geenem (2003) defines accessibility as inclusive, that respect of difference and celebration of diversity. That focuses on needs, environment, and capability of all student. In essence. Accessibility is the presence of facilities that enables the easy entry and use of public building and in this regard by person with disability (Muzamil, 2018).For special needs students, barriers include: Architectural designs and service; variety of equipment use; positioning of classrooms, halls of residence for all students; dining rooms and dormitories for all students; Special recreational areas; special exit passageways in emergency situations; Health and sanitary facilities (Tinssen & Elena, 2000;Muzamil, 2018). Depending on the location of the institution the special needs student has no control over the choice of the university or training institute. Due to overcrowding and congested halls and classroom, the special needs student faces a lot of barriers and threats to acquire education.

Tradition and religion biases have played a significant role in portraying disability as a curse from the gods either for the crime of a parent or a community misdeed and that disability is an evidence for the punishment for the diminished life (Mutua and Dimitrove,2001; Oriendo,2003; Muchiri & Robertson, 2000). Religion considers disabled persons as requiring or lacking in something or incomplete. Higher education should make people view persons with disabilities as complete creation of God and people in diversity. In that diversity, everything that God made must be viewed as good and perfect.

Support services is lacking in most universities. Universities were required to put in place services of interpreters, note takers, Braille readers and special equipment such as electronic talking computers, or voice to printed computers for the visually impaired as well as put in place mechanism to make university disability friendly. This has not been done and the ministry of education has continued to turn blind eye to this problems facing the disabled. The universities have continued to argue that provision of support services require multi-sectoral approach if full participation of the students who are disabled is to be realized. For example the ministry of health is supposed to bring in doctors, nurses and

physiotherapist among others. The ministry of Home Affairs have the social workers. To bring all this people to support the disable requires a mammoth hurdle.

The costing effect of supporting disabled student suffered a heavy blow due to austerity measures adopted by the World Bank and other accountable institutions. The institutions of higher learning were forced to reorganize their financial management style in the advent of cost sharing (Lauglo, 1996). Cost sharing did not come with goods things but instead did more harm than good for the special education in Kenya. Many children with disabilities were not able to access institutions of higher learning (Swadener, Kaburu & Njonga, 1995). The major cause of dropout from the institutions of higher learning is the cost implication for the disabled student. This include inability to pay the required levies, buy books and social and accommodation requirements. Some parents face economics hardships due to ailing economy. The problem of transport and rural versus urban settings. This has often forced most parents to shy from taking disabled students to university.

The built environment in most Kenyan universities continue to pose a serious challenge to the provision of education to the disabled students. Johnson (2014) states that students with disabilities often encounter physical barriers especially in the newly built campuses which are restricted by architectural designs and budgetary constraints and do not consider the needs of students with disabilities. Some barriers that can be found in the built environment include doors that are narrow for wheelchairs to go through, steps leading to building, impossible pathways that are to slippery and narrow, shelves and toilets grab bars, non -slip, surfaces and seats (Kiat, 2014; Argawal, 2014)

Limited assistance for faculty members and administrative staff, most of whom have little awareness and preparation in terms of accommodating needs of the disabled students. According to Listen (2010), students with disabilities in the mainstream higher education institutions experience many obstacles related to access to content, lack of sensitive trained staff and unavailability of technological orientations and adaptations. Barbara(2012) and Alma(2014) states that functional level of inclusive education requires certain modifications and adaptations for the existing educational resources and learning environment.

4.5. Section IV: Beyond Policy and Practice and Embracing New Strategies to Enhance Access of Higher Education among the Special Needs Students

Progress has been made in terms of policy consideration towards achieving the twin role of provision and participation of the disabled student in higher education. The quest for more equitable higher education cannot succeed without support of political goodwill and responding to challenges facing special needs students.

To begin with, the country requires more research on the subject to gain insights that will not only increase public understanding of the problems, but also inform policy directions and ways of overcoming the existing barriers at national and institutional levels. Special needs education has undergone metamorphosis in terms of teaching methodology, changing perspectives and various forms of emphasis in terms of philosophy, concepts and methodology. The shift in focus requires new research ideas, new advocacy methods and new methods communication.

The government in particular should play a leading role in strengthening legal framework to meet the challenges of various sessional papers which have been passed into law but not yet implemented in the institutions of higher learning. From Jomtien 1990 to Dakar 2000, Kenya has consistently signed every document committing the country to the provision of education for all. At the implementation level however, very little has been achieved in higher education sector. Kenyatta University and Maseno Universities are offering bachelor of education with special education programs. However, they lack support services such as note takers, braille readers and special equipment's such as voice to printed computers. According to Booth(2000) it is the responsibility of the government to protect people of disability and to enforce law pertaining to provision of special needs education for the student who diversity of challenges.

For special needs education to be successful in the institutions of higher learning, necessary support system must be put into place. One such area is the availability of adequate support staff. These include: peripatetic teachers, physiotherapists, nurses, psychiatrist, ear specialist, eye specialist and medical doctors. Massification of higher education in Kenya has led to shortage of this cadre staff in the universities and technical training colleges. This has contributed negatively towards the full inclusion of learners with special needs as support of this professionals are required from time to time.

The cost of equipment and other support services that would enhance the inclusion of learners with special needs in the institutions of higher learning is out of reach for many parents. This makes education provision of learners with

disability rather quite expensive and out of reach for most parents and sponsors. Measure should be taken to ensure that this institutions produce some of this equipment's and material to make learning friendly.

5. Conclusion

The best is yet to come from institutions of higher learning in regard to producing special need teachers who will increase public understanding on the problem of inclusivity. Institutions must move toward addressing resource gap and inculcate the framework using modern technology such as assistive technology in bridging all barriers to learning. Therefore, institutions must move beyond passive support and take concrete actions to overcome barriers that hinder diversity and inclusion. This includes addressing modernism and technological disposition, structural inequities, revising curricula to reflect diverse perspectives of disabilities, and ensuring representation among faculty and administrators in technological need of inclusivity. By actively cultivating inclusive spaces through policy reforms, pedagogical innovations, and community engagement, higher education can become a transformative force in shaping provision of special needs education within its ranks and other ranks. Ultimately, the success of inclusion efforts will be measured not only by institutional policies but ability to use modern technology and innovation emanating from this institution.

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