



Issues in Financing Special Educational Needs in the Inclusive Rural Primary Schools in Rungwe, Tanzania

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study was to investigate issues in financing special needs education in rural primary schools in Rungwe District council. The study was guided by a question, stated: To what extent finances available suffice the provision of quality education to pupils with special educational needs? This was qualitative research employing case study design. It involved 18 participants, purposely selected. Data was collected through interviews and documentary reviews. The collected data were analysed through content analysis. The study found that inclusive primary schools in the district enrolled relatively large number of pupils with special needs education, from 338 (in 2020) to 460 (in 2024). Such enrolment indicated that accessibility of primary education has increased. Findings further revealed that teaching and learning for pupils with special needs suffered much due to ill-resourced environment. The study concludes by arguing that despite the increase in enrolment, the limited funding makes pupils with special needs to struggle in getting their facilities in inclusive schools. The study, therefore, recommends having plans for alternative funding for them. These alternative funders can be all stakeholders, including government sectors, private sectors, parents, schools, people with disabilities, and the larger community.*

Keywords: *Finance, special needs education, primary schools, teaching and learning*

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1. Introduction

Globally, financing special educational needs has been part and parcel of the government's obligation in ensuring the rights to education for all children (United Nations, 2006; World Bank, 2020). These pupils often require additional support in school to enable them to make satisfactory progress (UNESCO, 2020). UCLES (2017) describes pupils with special educational needs as those with learning challenges, which makes it difficult for them to learn in comparison to children without special educational needs of the same age group. This means that special educational needs is a means of providing holistic education for pupils with special educational needs to enable them to realise their God-given potentials (Gyas, Okrah & Anku, 2020).

The development of education for pupils with special needs continues to dominate the global agenda. Emphasis is on universal access to quality basic education for all children. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006), which Tanzania has signed and ratified, urges member states to provide education to persons with disabilities, based on equal opportunity, without discrimination. The convention under article 24 states that:

...all parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels. It further states that persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal

basis with others in the communities in which they live (UN, 2006).

As far as the convention is concerned, the signatory countries have the obligation to design and implement all education-related facilities, goods and services taking full account of and respecting the requirements, cultures, views and languages of persons with disabilities (United Nations, 2006). The form and substance of education provided must be acceptable for all (United Nations, 2006). States parties must adopt affirmative action measures to ensure that education is of good quality for all (UNESCO, 2020). Besides, the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania emphasizes that every person has the right to access education, and every citizen has the freedom to pursue education in a field of one's choice up to the highest level according to one's merits and ability (URT, 1977). It also stresses that the government will continue to provide various education and training opportunities equally to all groups, including children with special needs, in the society at all levels Section 3.2.2 of Education and Training Policy of 2014 (MoEVT, 2014).

The education and training policy provides education to all children, regardless of their abilities or inabilities, from pre-primary to tertiary level (MoEVT, 2014). The policy has stipulated government commitment to ensure the accessibility of educational infrastructure to meet the educational needs of all groups, including special care for children with disabilities; promotion of access to education for disadvantaged groups, including those with intellectual and hearing impairments and multiple impairments; promoting the rights of children with disabilities to access education without discrimination (MoEVT, 2014; United Nations, 2006).

In Tanzania special educational needs categories include: pupils from nomadic or seminomadic families, out of school children, refugee pupils, working children, pupils with chronic illnesses, orphaned children, pupils with specific learning difficulties, gifted and talented pupils, pupils living in extreme poverty, children who live far from school, pupils with disabilities, girl and boy child, and children in conflict with the law (URT, 2017). The aim of special needs education generally is to deliver education for these pupils; most countries make additional resources available to schools (UNESCO, 2020). These usually take the form of extra teaching staff or assistants and para-professional services, such as speech and language therapists and physiotherapists, alongside physical adaptations to buildings and equipment (World Bank, 2020). In Tanzania, particularly more initiatives have been introduced including having a Strategy for Inclusive Education which aim to provide access and inclusive education at all levels for pupils with special educational needs (URT, 2018).

Special needs education in Tanzania has been stipulated in the Education Act of 1978 and in the Persons with Disabilities Act No. 9 of 2010 that the President's Office – Regional Administration and Local Government and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology provide required teaching and learning equipment to pupils with special educational needs (URT, 1978; URT, 2010). Special needs education in Tanzania is delivered in the three systems as stipulated in URT (2019): firstly, special schools where only pupils with special educational needs are enrolled.

The set-up of the schools depends on the severity and category of the pupils' educational needs. There are special schools for pupils with visual, hearing, cognitive as well as physical impairments (URT, 2019). Secondly, special units whereby regular schools have units for pupils with special educational needs; and thirdly, inclusive primary schools which result from the process that involves the transformation of schools and other centres of learning to cater for all pupils – including those with special educational needs from various ethnic groups and linguistic minorities, rural populations, those affected by HIV/AIDS, as well as those with learning difficulties (UNESCO, 2020).

Tanzania has made tremendous progress in enrolment rates over the recent years. Free tuition fees and increased awareness (HakiElimu, 2017a), have led to an increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs. For instance, around 78,000 pupils with disabilities were enrolled in primary schools (PO-RALG, 2024). This among others is a compliance to the international multilateral agreements, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 4 which is the education goal set to ensure that governments provide inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities (United Nations, 2015; Shemwelekwa & Kahangwa, 2021). Unfortunately, such increase in enrolment, however, has not been accompanied by a proportional increase in special education teachers, classrooms, and other essential educational requirements for the provision of quality education for special needs pupils (World Bank, 2020).

We need to note that despite the mentioned efforts in ensuring equality in provision of education to all pupils with special educational needs there are still difficulties, such as socio-cultural challenges including negative beliefs on occurrence of pupils with special needs particularly those with disabilities that associate a disability with a curse, evil spirits, or witchcraft as documented in Pascale (2011) and Stone-MacDonald (2014). Most important, for the government of Tanzania and non-governmental initiatives of increasing access to basic education for all pupils with special educational needs, it requires creation of greater awareness and involvement on the part of families as well as the

community at large (Opini & Onditi, 2016). Unless families and society as a whole change their prejudiced attitudes towards people with disabilities, it will be difficult to address other important aspects such as infrastructure, funding, and resources for children with disabilities (UNESCO, 2020; Opini & Onditi, 2016).

It is evident that community awareness regarding the rights to education for pupils with special educational needs has increased (Possi & Milinga, 2017; Mwamwaja, 2019), together with the introduction of fee-free basic education have led to enormous demand towards special needs education in Tanzania. Furthermore, objective 2 of the National Strategy of Inclusive Education of 2021/22-2025/26 (MoEST, 2021) aims to enhance equitable access to, and participation in quality education for pupils with special educational needs in inclusive settings. Unfortunately, primary schools' administration complains that the finances allocated in primary schools are inadequate to meet essential teaching-learning requirements (HakiElimu, 2017b; Shukia, 2020). Therefore, this study intended to examine to what extent available finance suffice the provision of primary education to pupils with special educational needs.

1.1 Research Question

The study was guided by one question, that is, to what extent finances available suffice the provision of quality education to pupils with special educational needs?

2. Literature Review

This study was guided by the Equity theory. The theory was introduced by John Stacey Adams in 1963 (Davlembayeva & Alamanos, 2025), which was originally, for application in the organisational context. Equity theory suggests that individuals seek fairness in their relationships and outcomes. In inclusive education context, equity is about ensuring that all students have access to the resources and opportunities they need to succeed, regardless of their background (Akintayo et al, 2024). It supports the focus on interventions such as targeted scholarships and inclusive teaching, which aim to address specific needs of marginalized students rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach. The theory also focuses on ensuring fair and just educational experiences for all students, particularly those with disabilities (Brussino, 2021). It emphasizes providing individualized support and resources tailored to each student's unique needs, ensuring they have equal access to opportunities and achieve their learning potential.

Equity theory has critical implication to pupils' special educational needs in two ways. Firstly, it emphasizes on providing all students with the resources and support they need to succeed, which is crucial for inclusive education. These resources include all teaching and

learning facilities essential for pupils to fulfil their educational needs and which support directly the provision of quality education. The theory acknowledges individual differences and tailoring educational approaches to meet diverse needs, rather than simply treating all students the same (formal equality). It also requires education systems to be flexible and responsive to a range of student needs, adopting strategies that are sensitive to the specific local contexts and have equity and inclusion as their guiding principles. Secondly, it has influence on the way funding is allocated to schools and pupils has fundamental implications for the equity and inclusion of an education system. It is therefore important to ensure that both main allocation mechanisms and targeted funding are designed with the explicit goals of fostering equity and inclusion in education.

The 2021/22-2025/26 National Strategy for Inclusive Education further strengthens the education system to provide more equitable learning opportunities for all children and youth, including vulnerable groups (MoEST, 2021). With this intent, the National Strategy for Inclusive Education pays particular attention to marginalized groups, such as children with disabilities, out-of-school children, including over-aged boys, teenage girls and students who completed standard seven and who transit to lower secondary education. The country has committed itself on ensuring that all inclusive learning settings must recognise and respond to the diverse needs of their learners. Despite of the commitment by the government towards pupils with special educational needs, Kisanga and Kisanga (2022) reported that the number of pupils receiving special education in primary schools is very low. The reasons for this situation were attributed to several factors including shortage and incompetence of teachers who are trained in special education. Others include shortage and limited infrastructure, teaching and learning materials, and incentives which are related to financing of primary education for pupils with special educational needs.

Inequalities in accessibility to basic education among children are a global concern. The Global Education Monitoring report of 2021 confirms the prevalence of such inequalities in education, which appear to have raised alarm for many years (UNESCO, 2021). Unfortunately, pupils with special educational needs have been denied the right to education for multiple reasons, including poverty, disability and gender (UNICEF, 2016; Mitra 2018; Mwamwaja, 2019). pupils with special educational needs are less likely to be enrolled in schooling than ordinary pupils and have a lower educational attainment (Cosmas & Possi, 2021). Provision of quality education for pupils with special education needs therefore, required to provide equal education opportunities, prevents social exclusion to enable students to improve their abilities, and become

active participants in the development and socialization of communities.

In the fight against inequalities in education, the United Nations formulated 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) seeking to end poverty in the world by 2030. SDG number 4 intends to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. To achieve the goal, it is envisaged that by the year 2030, boys and girls should have access to free and quality primary and secondary education for effective learning outcomes (United Nations, 2019). To fulfil that goal, the government of Tanzania through National Inclusive Education Strategy 2021/22-2025/26 stipulates that ensure access to education for disadvantaged groups such as those with disabilities. Data shows that enrolment of pupils with disabilities for instance has been increasing, from 54,294 in 2019 to 74,295 in 2023 (MoEST, 2019; PO-RALG, 2023).

Full participation in the learning processes has been always hampered by a lack of relevant learning facilities or rather limited financing of education. Children with disabilities in most cases overlooked in policy formulation, hindering their access to education and their ability to participate in socio-economic and political aspects. Globally, these pupils are amongst the most prone to be out of primary schools (United Nations, 2019). They encounter persistent obstacle to education services such as discriminations, stigma and the routine failure of decision makers to incorporate disability issues in school services

Studies have indicated that poor financing of special educational needs limited effective learning in primary education. Mtasigazy (2023) researched on the state and implementation of inclusive education policy in Tanzania, particularly for the case of primary education in Ilala Municipal Council. The study examined the compliance of public primary schools on inclusive education policy in Tanzania to the pupils with disabilities in primary schools by considering school infrastructure and teachers' capacity to implement it and the challenges in implementing primary education.

The study found that, primary schools were faced with lack of appropriate teaching and learning materials in all primary schools. It was indicated by pupils with visual impairment who met hardship in using Braille for not support learning effectively. The author recommended for the increase in financial resources, infrastructural improvement and additional physical materials in primary schools in Tanzania. Reduction of resources in the education sector was reported, with the special needs education falling into the same pit as others, hence compromising the quality of education.

Chikoko and Mthembu (2020) investigated on financing primary and secondary education in sub-Saharan Africa. The study reviewed literature on the financing of

primary and secondary education with a view to contributing some insights about the extent to which the region can achieve the United Nations' (UN) SDG 4. It was found that the SSA region lags behind other developing regions regarding investing in education and is, therefore, under threat of failing to meet the very ambitious aims of SDG 4, hence this focus. We examine the literature through a three-pronged conceptual framework, including public, external aid, and private education financing. Findings show that, *ceteris paribus*, SSA will not have adequate financial resources to meet SDG 4 requirements. Public education financing, which remains the major source, needs to increase significantly. This is complimented by the findings from (UNESCO, 2021), that schools in most African countries are faced with shortages of qualified SNE teachers, exacerbate the challenges faced by children with disabilities, and results in them being excluded from accessing quality inclusive education.

Shukia (2020) researched on fee-free education policy implementation in Tanzania. The study reveals that, the policy is misapprehended and causing confusion and dissonance among key implementers including heads of schools and parents, and it is threatening the quality delivery of education. The author also found that even after abolition of school fees, still poor and vulnerable children (including pupils with special educational needs) were facing barriers to obtaining an education due to the indirect education-related costs that many households face. Thus, school fees' abolition alone may not necessarily lead to improved accessibility. Truly, this study realized that different categories of pupils required financial support to cater the basic requirement for effective learning. Furthermore, it was found that some heads of schools added that the funds they received, were based on the number of children enrolled in their schools, failed to meet the school's needs, which varied depending on the school's location and socio-economic factors in the respective school communities. Thus, due to inadequate funding, some crucial school aspects for quality education had suffered.

3. Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative approach and employed a case study design, which enabled the researcher to obtain in-depth, contextualised information from respondents. The case study design was considered appropriate because the study focused on financial issues within a specific context and was therefore treated as a single case. The researcher concentrated on financial matters and selected Rungwe District to illustrate the issue, as the case itself possesses unique characteristics. In this regard, the study resembled narrative inquiry in its attention to participants' experiences while maintaining the systematic analytical procedures of a case study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018, 2023).

The study was conducted in Rungwe District Council, Mbeya Region, in the United Republic of Tanzania. The selection of the study area was guided by statistical evidence indicating that it is among the districts with a relatively high number of pupils with special educational needs (PO-RALG, 2024). The population of the study comprised heads of schools and special needs education teachers from four selected primary schools. A purposive sampling technique was used to select four heads of schools and fourteen special needs education teachers, as this technique is appropriate for identifying information-rich cases in qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015).

Data were collected through interviews and documentary review. Interviews were conducted with heads of schools and special needs education teachers who possessed detailed information regarding funds disbursed by the government and other sources. The respondents provided essential information related to financial allocations in their respective schools and their implications for the learning of pupils with special educational needs. Documentary review informed the study by providing statistical data on pupils with special educational needs in the district. The number of pupils considered in this study was intended to gauge the nature of support received in relation to actual teaching and learning requirements. The documents reviewed included official statistics published by the President's Office – Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG), which is responsible for overseeing primary education in the country.

Both interview and documentary data were analysed thematically. Interview data were first transcribed verbatim, after which themes were generated through systematic coding. The data were then reduced to major themes and sub-themes derived from both oral and written texts. Finally, interpretations were made and conclusions drawn from the analysed data. Given the

qualitative nature of the study, detailed and rich information was required to enhance understanding of financial issues in the education sector (Yin, 2023).

The documents analysed mainly consisted of statistical data describing enrolment trends over a five-year period across seven categories of pupils with special educational needs. The analysis of these statistics aimed at elaborating the magnitude of the problem and comparing it with other emerging themes of the study. The rationale for document analysis was grounded in its recognized value within case study research and the interpretive paradigm, as it enables triangulation and strengthens the credibility of qualitative findings (Bowen, 2009; Yin, 2023).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

To examine to the extent available finance that suffice provision of primary education to pupils with special educational needs in Rungwe district, two issues are pointed out in presentation of the findings, first statistics of pupils with special educational needs, and second whether finances available support learning of the pupils with special educational needs.

Statistics of pupils with special educational needs in Rungwe District Council

The study found that Rungwe district council with a significantly large number of pupils with special educational needs, as indicated in Basic Education Statistics that the district has a total of 460 pupils of different categories of special needs (PO-RALG, 2024). The study has documented the five years statistics to indicate trends of pupils' enrolments from the category of pupils with disabilities and autism spectrum disorder. Findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Number of Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Primary Schools in Rungwe District Council 2020-2024

Year	Visual Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Pupils with Albinism	Physical Impairment	Intellectual Impairment	Pupils with Autism	Total
2020	41 (12.13)	14 (4.14)	29 (8.58)	121 (35.8)	111 (32.84)	22 (6.51)	338
2021	73 (17.54)	14 (3.36)	26 (6.25)	139 (33.41)	145 (34.86)	19 (4.57)	416
2022	53 (10.39)	39 (7.65)	20 (3.92)	148 (29.02)	234 (45.88)	16 (3.14)	510
2023	65 (13.27)	57 (11.63)	33 (6.73)	96 (19.59)	193 (39.39)	46 (9.39)	490
2024	30 (6.52)	48 (10.43)	22 (4.78)	124 (26.96)	150 (32.61)	86 (18.7)	460

Source: PO-RALG, 2020; 2021; 2022; 2023; 2024.

- Note: (i) Pupils with visual impairment consists of both pupils with total vision loss (blind) and those with low vision.
(ii) Pupils with hearing impairment consists of both pupils with hard of hearing and the deaf; and
(iii) Numbers in bracket (--) are percentages of categories in a particular year.

Table 1 shows statistics of the pupils with disabilities and those with autism spectrum disorder. Findings indicate that one-third of all pupils with disabilities enrolled in the district were those with intellectual impairment and followed with the pupils with physical impairment who were also in large number comparing to the remaining categories. Pupils with intellectual impairment varies in terms of severity of cognitive abilities and adaptive skills. Although, statistics are silent on its categories, but there are variations on intellectual impairments from mild to profound always dictate amount of funding required to fulfil education needs of each individual pupil. It was reported in a focus group discussion, that some pupils recognised to have intellectual impairment as they participated in learning process. One Head Teacher pointed out that:

...as we admit pupils in grade One, we assume they are all equal and can pursue learning equally. But as we continue teaching them it appears that there are variations in their intellectual capabilities. Therefore, regular teachers in collaboration with SNE teachers assess pupils with learning difficulties though all early identification procedures for proper intervention basing on school capacity. In the way pupils become comfortable with teaching and learning under specified methods and treatments (Interviewee N, March 2025).

Apart from the leading category, the category of pupils with autism shows large increase from 2023 to 2024. Pupils' enrolment increased for 46.5% (from 46 to 86 pupils with autism). Pupils with this disorder were only 22 in five years back (Year 2020), but they have increased this much suggesting presence of improvement in the provision of education, public awareness and changes of cultural deterrents. It was witnessed by the participants that parents and local communities are becoming aware that children of different impairments can progress with learning regardless of their levels of impairments. One special education teacher commented that:

In the past it was very difficult to convince parents of children with disabilities or learning difficulties to let them attend schools. Most of them felt shameful for their children being noticed with those challenges and learning difficulties. With the increased awareness and stories of pupils who pursue primary education and some enrol to secondary and tertiary education many parents now are devoted in supporting pupils with special educational needs to venture in education pursuit (Interviewee P, March 2025).

The study also found that an increase of pupils with special educational needs the main challenge remains on its financial constraint to curter their educational

requirements. The participants, particularly special education teachers lamented on difficulties they face working in primary schools with acute shortage of teaching and learning resources. One teacher said that:

Most schools located in rural areas are significantly challenged with lack of essential resources. From my experience in this school, teaching and learning resources are extremely inadequate. Teaching and learning resources such as texts, drawings, pictures, tactile pictures and drawings, tape recorder, Snellen chart, e-chart, lea chart, Blain model, eye model and other assistive devices are insufficient and some of them are not available.

Thus, makes the learning environment less supportive to deliver quality education (Interviewee K, May 2025).

Basing on the statistics presented it is promising that accessibility of primary education increase. This is one of the signs of success that pupils attend in the primary schools but shortcomings related to improved teaching and learning environment need to be addressed. Thus, need collective efforts from all parties responsible with education for pupils with special educational needs (both internal and external) should redress to handle the mentioned challenges.

Finance available for the primary schools in the district

The study intended to obtain information on the extent finances located to the sampled primary schools support teaching and learning of the pupils with special educational needs. Heads of schools and SNE teachers were interviewed so as to obtain information on how the available funds fulfil for the requirements of teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs.

It was found that finance allocated to that primary school were in two forms, the capitation grant and fund voted for meals (lunch) of the pupils with special educational needs. It was revealed that school capitation grants had strict guidelines adherence. These guidelines were issued by the ministry responsible to primary education and there were room for modification. The participants explicitly reported that heads of schools were instructed to spend funds only on specified items. One participant elaborated that:

For years now, our school receive capitation grant as per number of the pupils enrolled in a year of study. It is estimated that the capitation grant amount 500 Tanzanian shillings, which also include the pupils with special educational needs. The funds we receive in form of capitation is

used under very strict guidelines and school management is always abide to them. ...actually, frankly speaking funds/grants from the government is insufficient comparing to the demand of teaching-learning resources. This school has enrolled more than 250 pupils with special educational needs, with more than categories of the educational needs. Thus, making it more difficult to accommodate their learning requirements (Interviewee S, March 2025).

Findings indicate that primary schools with pupils with special educational needs are supported with funds for meals to pupils. Provision of meals was meant to ensure constant attendance of the pupils with special educational needs. Participants were less satisfied by the initiative of the government that, the meals available were not substantial to educational needs of the pupils with special educational needs. The observation meant that pupils with special educational needs have several requirements for them to acquire intended competences. The following comment elaborates in detail:

I think provision of meals furnish only for superficial needs (meals), letting actual learning needs unfunded making it difficult to acquire quality education. It is true that meals have helped pupils with special educational needs to stay at school for them to attend lessons as per school timetable. Meals have only improved attendance in schools. But obviously the core support for the teaching and learning to occur has been left aside. The pupils require resources and improved learning environment which is suitable with accordance to their educational needs (Interviewee Z, April 2025).

It was further commented that, '*... these pupils enrol to primary education to learn. The problem is to what extent feeding pupils assist learning to pupils with special educational needs. Provision of meals which promote attendance and actual teaching-learning for those pupils.*' this was a concern of a participant in a focus group discussion. The discussion led to some strategies on the way to revert the current situation of the provision of primary education for the pupils with special educational needs. One participant had opinion towards mechanisms to improve the financing special needs education, that:

It is well known that provision of primary education is a shared responsibility between both

government and education stakeholders including parents who are responsible for caring the pupils' basic needs for their survival such as uniform and other contributions as prescribed the schools' managements. Other costs shared by the parents include medical expenses and educational related costs. The responsibilities should be widened to other parties such as donors (from within as well as outside the country), charity organisations and other supporters related with children welfare (Interviewee L, May 2025).

Findings show that funds budgeted by the government for special needs education were insufficient. This led to challenges for the primary schools acquire sufficient and suitable supply of teaching-learning resources such as, teaching materials, equipment, and infrastructure improvements. For instance, pupils with intellectual impairment who are the majority comparing to other categories of special needs. They are highly varied from mild to the profound ones, and each of them require specific support form psychologists, physicians and resources to support learning for them. Thus, budgeting for special needs education demand fully commitment from all parties.

4.2 Discussion

Findings from this study clearly indicated that there is a large number of pupils with special educational needs who require substantial financial support from the government as well as educational stakeholders. The enrolments of pupils with disabilities in Tanzania have increased over time, but challenges remain, and funding is insufficient despite government efforts and international grants. These findings concur with those of World Bank (2024) which reported that educational enrolment rates of pupils with special educational needs have increased, but challenges remained. World Bank commended that, a high percentage of students with disabilities were enrolled at different levels of the education pipeline: 6,892 students with disabilities were enrolled in pre-primary education, 74,401 were enrolled in primary education, and 16,120 were enrolled in secondary education.

The overall number of pupils with special educational needs is all levels of education increasing but the increased funding for the education sector and specific infrastructure such as, dormitories for pupils with special educational needs, the budget allocated specifically to special needs education is widely considered inadequate. The findings are in-line with UNESCO (2014) found that inclusive schools are weakly funded, very little resources are existing to carry out the necessary evaluation and involvement processes

(UNESCO, 2014), as it affects availability of infrastructure and teaching and learning resources needed by pupils with disabilities. Likewise, Kambuga and Mgonja (2023) and MoEST (2025) observed that primary schools frequently lack sufficient funding to provide necessary resources for inclusive education, such as specialized teaching materials and assistive devices. It was also added that that despite the government effort to provide services to pupils with disabilities, primary schools lack a long-term funding mechanism for special needs education activities, resulting in a shortage of critical teaching and learning equipment.

The Kesho Trust (2013) had similar findings which revealed that government did not disburse the grants for pupils with disabilities at school since minimal priority was given in that area. This resulted to inadequate number of teachers, absence of learning facilities, and poor infrastructure for students with disabilities at schools. In relation of funding of the education sector, HakiElimu (2014) argued that the Government alone cannot finance the education provisions. Therefore, education sector should have sustainable financing policy strategies to enable the country to be based on internal sources of finance for pupils with special educational needs. Such policy strategy should be backed up by the law so that stakeholders take their responsibilities in financing education at the various levels. Funding also needs to realise support for the education sector from donors and aids from institutions like World Bank, UNICEF, IMF, and donor countries.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

In the light of the findings from the study, it is concluded that: Firstly, the district has many pupils with special educational needs who require quality education but the learning environment is less supportive. Thus, there are tasks ahead of ensuring all pupils with special needs enrolled in schools meant to receive education that responds to the identified educational needs. Secondly, in connection to findings on the statistics of the pupils with special educational needs, their presence calls for deliberate efforts to ensure that finance and all essential teaching and learning resources are readily available for schools to provide quality primary education. In its fulfilment correlates with the Equity theory which require that all learners particularly those with special educational needs require resources and support they need for them to benefit in inclusive education systems. The education that enables them becoming self-sufficient and responsible for their own lives. In other words, schools and the government should not be satisfied by reports that pupils with special educational needs attend schools frequently, but they don't learn as per prescribed curriculum.

5.2 Recommendation

Basing on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The government and other donors should provide sufficient and specialized support and resources to ensure that these pupils with special educational needs access an equitable education while addressing their specific learning challenges effectively. The successful provision of primary education for pupils with special educational needs requires full involvement of all stakeholders, including government sectors, private sectors, parents, schools, people with disabilities, and the larger community. The financial resources are central to achieving high-quality education.
2. Deliberate efforts of retaining enrolled students should be established. Despite of the limited financial resources there should be plans for the expected increased numbers of pupils to be enrolled and retained in the education system. In most of developing countries many pupils with special educational needs fail to accomplish the school-cycle due to variety of challenges. Therefore, achievements on increased enrolment should be maintained to ensure that all pupils with special educational needs receive quality primary education and become independent in the future.

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