

**AN EXPLORATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
NATIONAL SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION POLICY GUIDELINES:
A CASE OF TWO SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BLANTYRE URBAN**

M.Ed. (POLICY PLANNING AND LEADERSHIP) THESIS

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**University of Malawi
Chancellor College**

AUGUST, 2017

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(Policy, Planning and Leadership)

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis is my own original which has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purpose. Where other people's work has been used acknowledgements have been made.

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DEDICATION

To my late parents: Mr. Alfred Malingiro Mkwezalamba and Mrs. Delinati Kang'oma Mkwezalamba who raved education and left without a pint neither a scent of it. I know you happily exist in the world unseen to see how I would cross the Red Sea and to collect myself together to more than what you last saw me, to make your dreams come to pass through me this way. ALMIGHTY GOD BE WITH YOU IN YOUR ETERNAL PEACE.

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ABSTRACT

Students with disabilities continue facing many challenges after the enactment of the National SNE Policy Guidelines by Ministry of Education (MoE) in 2009. This study, therefore, was to further explore the implementation of National SNE Policy Guidelines in two selected secondary schools in South West Education Division, Blantyre urban, based on interpretative paradigm. The study involved 22 participants and it adopted qualitative methodology to address the issues at hand. Qualitative data was generated using semi-structured interview, observation and documentary analysis. Data was analysed using thematic analysis. The findings of the study revealed that secondary learners continue facing many challenges due to absence of user friendly infrastructure, understaffed of SNET, inadequate T/L materials and that monitoring is at automobile, hence partial implementation of NSNEPG. The implication of the study is that the government should ensure that National SNE Policy Guidelines should be implemented according to its goal of development. The study concludes that Implementation of National SNE Policy Guidelines will not be effective unless monitoring and supervision is done regularly in secondary schools.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

D-B	Deaf-blind
EFA	Education for All
CERT	Centre for Education Research and Training
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
MANEB	Malawi National Examination Board
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoEST	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
NSNEPG	National Special Needs Education Policy Guidelines
SEN	Students with Special Educational needs
SNE	Special Needs Education
SNET	Special Needs Education Teachers
ESIP	Education Sector Implementation Plan

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter overview

This chapter presents a brief historical background of Special Needs Education (SNE), inclusive education and National SNE Policy Guidelines. This is followed by the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions and significance of the study and the chapter summary.

1.1 Background to the study

1.1.1 Special Needs Education Internationally

Every individual has a right to education. This is clearly stipulated in article 26 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 (UN, 1948). Successive international declarations have all emphasized on the need for the international community to commit itself fully to enabling its citizens to access basic education. It is universally recognized that the main objective of education is to provide education to all children, where, even the children with special needs. This draws global attention to the fact that, Education for All" (EFA) is a fundamental human right which cannot be realized without enabling all people who have disabilities, to access basic education. This is to enable them attain their full potential and be able to meaningfully contribute and participate in their society throughout their lives. Making such people access education is important for human

capital development for it prepares those who were most likely to be dependants to become self reliant. However this right has hardly been achieved in many countries mostly in Africa whereby in some areas the achievement of EFA goals indicates a declining trend (UNESCO, 2001).

Many children of school going age are still out of school. The 2003 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report as reported by Ncube (2003) showed that about 115 million of the 680 million children of school going age in developing countries were not attending school. Over 80 million of those children live in Africa. Just over half of the children who start primary school complete this level (Ncube, 2003). This is supported by the observations made by a G8 2005 correspondent, McFerran, who reported that one in every ten children in Kenya and in most African countries, has disabilities and 98% of those children were not in school (McFerran, 2005). In Malawi, despite the government's order on all regular schools not to reject any learner, many learners with disabilities face many challenges in their education. There could be some barriers that hindered them from effective learning. It was necessary to establish such barriers.

1.1.2 Special Needs Education in Malawi

This section discusses the historical back ground of Special Needs Education in Malawi.

Malawi started Formal education for children with special needs in 1950s with the establishment of Chilanga School for the blind in Kasungu, Lulwe in Nsanje and Linga in Nkhhotakota by the South African evangelical fellowship. They taught reading, writing

and arithmetic besides mat and basket weaving (Zimpita, 2008). In 1968, The Catholic Church through Brothers of Mary Immaculate Conception established Mary-view School for the Deaf in Chiradzulu district. In 1967, students with disabilities were selected for secondary education. These students were finally included at Nsanje Secondary School, Centre for Education Research and Training (CERT, 2003, p.22). During the same year, the Malawi government established Montfort Centre for Special Education and provided free education for students with disabilities. Montfort Education Centre for the Deaf was also established in 1971. The Centre offers special Needs Education training for teachers of the deaf lasting for 12 months. In 1983, itinerant teaching programme came into operation in Lilongwe and Salima. Pupils with disabilities were included into normal schools nearest to their homes, and a special needs teacher for those with disabilities visited the pupils in the schools. This later extended to Chikwawa, Mulanje, Ntcheu, Blantyre and Rumphi (Chimutu & Makoko, 2007).

Introduction of a Special Needs Education Unit (SNEU) under the Ministry of Education (MoE) in 1994 facilitated Special Education growth (Kamulaga, 2010). The purpose of introducing the Special Needs Education Unit was to oversee the implementation of a SNE Policy Guidelines that emphasised the inclusion of students with disabilities into the mainstream (MoE, 2009). In 2005, The Special Needs Education Unit was upgraded to full department now a Directorate of SNE in the Ministry of Education. The effort was to strengthen the support system of Special Needs Education in accordance with Malawi Policy Investment Framework (PIF) (MoE, 2000), the Education for All (EFA) strategy (2004) and the National Policy on the Equalization of Opportunities for People with

disabilities (Ministry Responsible for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly now Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare (Chimombo, 2008). There is therefore a need for further exploration of implementation of National SNE Policy guidelines as seven years have passed since it was developed.

1.1.3 Inclusive Education in Malawi

Inclusive Education (IE) is not merely about providing access into mainstream schools for students who have previously been excluded but rather about overcoming the barriers to participation of students and the removal of all forms of exclusionary practice from the learning environment (Mittler, 2000; Kamulaga, 2010). Of all groups that face such discrimination, students with disability are by far the largest of groups excluded and marginalised from quality education today (McLaren & Kearny, 2009).

With many countries in the world advocating for inclusive education over special segregated education, Malawi is not lagging behind (Soko, 2004). In 2006, students with disabilities were enrolled in what were previously totally segregated and special primary schools such as Mary View in Chiradzulu was established (Kaliwa, 2008). Government educational institutions at primary and secondary levels of education enrolled students with special needs education in regular classes. However, not all schools from primary to tertiary levels of education were provided with adequate special resources and Special Needs Education Teachers to teach and support students with impairment (Salmonsson, 2006; Makoko & Chimutu; 2007; Chavuta, Itimu, Phiri Chiwaya, Sikero, Alindiamao, 2008 & Zimpita, 2008).

Malawi Government started providing financial support in order to assist Special Needs Education institutions with grants in 1967 [for the learning difficulties programme] (Chimutu and Makoko, 2007). Additionally, the government has shown interest to improve the situation in SNE through development of various policy documents. The Malawi Growth Development Strategy-MGDS (GoM Nov 2005), for example, in its key strategies lists affirmative policies relating to SNE as a key issue. The fact that the SNE is included in a key policy document like this one is a step forward in addressing SNE.

Again in the documents such as Policy Investment Frame work (PIF, 2001) and the Education for All (EFA) strategy (2002). The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training addressed the need to strengthen the support system of Special Needs Education (SNE). Further to these efforts, the former SNE Department in the MoE Headquarters was upgraded into a Directorate in 2004. All these efforts are geared towards increasing access to education for all children, irrespective of their differences.

Malawi is a signatory to a number of global declarations that aim at providing equal education opportunities to all students with diverse learning needs. One of such declaration is the Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) which advocates for inclusive education and provides the framework and guidance on the implementation of inclusive education at both international and national levels. It states that “schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This includes students with disabilities and gifted children, street and working children,

children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups” Art.2 (Regular schools with inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discrimination, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all). The declaration is in tandem with social model of disability which emphasises the inclusion of students with special educational needs on which the study is based.

The Social Model dwells much on inclusion of all children with disability and a need for people with disability to participate in all aspects of life including education (Chappell, Goodley & Lawthorn, 2001).

1.1.4 The National Special Needs Education Policy Guidelines in Malawi

In 2009 the government of Malawi through the Ministry of Education formulated a policy guideline entitled National Special Needs Education Policy Guidelines (MoE, 2009) which draws from the global declarations that advocate the inclusion of children with disabilities, among others, in the general education system. The formulation of the National SNE Policy Guidelines was a reform in the Ministry of Education system to merge general and special education, creating a unified education system (Ministry of Education, 2007; Chimutu, 2005, Zimpita, 2008; MoE, 2009). This merge of the two separate systems of education to a reformed inclusive education was not an initiative taken by Ministry of Education alone. Rather it was a demand by international human rights agreements, conventions and declarations that education be seen as a fundamental

human right and countries around the globe were to adopt the view of inclusiveness in their education systems (Smith-Davis, 2002). The worldwide human rights treaties have now shifted educational rights from something that was traditionally considered for selective elites only to people with lesser status in the society, particularly those with disabilities (UNESCO, 1994). In the twenty-first century, countries worldwide have experienced this shift from general to inclusive education where “all children regardless of their ability, sex, race, and ethnicity are to learn together in a regular classroom, taught by a regular teacher” (UNESCO, 1994,p.4).The ratification of Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1993 “legitimised the country’s commitment to the achievement of the goals of Education for All (EFA) and CRC” (National Research Institute, 2009, p. 43).

The idea of inclusive education was not to “warrant children with disability to gain placement in the classroom only; it evolved from wider struggles against the violation of human rights and exclusionary practices experienced by people with disability in the economic, social, political and cultural aspects of their lives” (Mutisya, 2010, p.28). It was generally agreed by international human rights treaties that “an inclusive education was the way to address exclusionary practices that people with disability experienced over time” (Kamulaga, 2010, p.26)

This National SNE Policy Guidelines identifies eight major components of special needs education that include: early identification assessment and intervention, advocacy, care and support, management, planning, and financing; and access, quality, equity and

relevance. Provision of teaching and learning resources, user friendly infrastructure, training of Special Needs Education teachers, provision of educational facilities with required supportive Special Need Education service are the major tenets of the policy area relating to quality (Chimutu, 2005; Zimpita, 2008).

However, a study conducted by Kamchedzera (2010) on the education of pupils with disabilities in Malawi's inclusive secondary schools revealed that the implementation of inclusive education in secondary schools is facing a lot of challenges such as insufficient teaching and learning materials, lack of specialised and qualified teachers, and unfriendly / inaccessible infrastructure in some schools. Similar studies conducted by Kamulaga (2010), Chavuta, Itimu, Phiri, Chiwaya, Sikero and Alindiamao (2008) at varied educational levels yielded similar findings. In addition, the study by Chavuta, Itimu, Phiri Chiwaya, Sikero and Alindiamao, (2008) states that environmental and attitudinal barrier and some other challenges to successful implementation of inclusive education in Malawi. This study is an extension to these studies with a special emphasis on the implementation of the National Special Needs Education Policy Guidelines in secondary schools. Therefore, National SNE Policy Guidelines has to be implemented according to its purpose of formulation.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The National Special Needs Education Policy Guidelines emphasise the need for provision of quality education for students with special educational needs at all levels of education (MoE implementation guidelines, 2009). The policy guidelines related to

quality, ensure that students with special educational needs access quality education through: the provision of teaching and learning resources, user friendly infrastructure, training of Special Needs Education teachers, provision of educational facilities with required supportive Special Need Education service (p.3)

To ensure SNE services, “government is expected to provide relevant and adequate resources for the running and management of Special Needs Education in secondary school and monitor the effectiveness of implementation of special needs education programmes and other services” (Implementation guidelines, 2009, 2 : iii).

However, seven years after development of the National SNE Policy Guidelines, secondary school students with special educational needs seem to continue facing many challenges in their education. According to studies by Rampana (2015), Chimutu and Makoko (2000), Chavuta, Itimu, Phiri, Chiwaya, Sikero and Alindiamao (2008), Kamulaga (2010) and Kamchedzera (2010) established that Special Needs Education Teachers are not enough at secondary school level, there are inadequate teaching resource material, some students learn without basic learning materials such as Braille, books, audiological equipment and learning aids. The monitoring of implementation of inclusion in secondary education is also the challenge as studies on monitoring of the implementation of inclusive education are scarce. This study was further undertaken to see if the present practices of inclusive education meet the standard laid down by statements presented in National SNE Policy Guidelines. This is because enacting a

policy is one thing, while reporting and evaluating the paramount aspects used to gauge the success or failure of a policy process, is another.

This study could further explore any problems associated with the implementation process over time. The main purpose of National SNE Policy Guidelines is to create better conditions to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities in mainstream educational institutions.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to explore the implementation of National SNE Policy Guidelines in two secondary schools in Blantyre Urban.

1.4 Research Questions

1.4.1 Main Research Question

The research addressed the main research question:

How are secondary schools implementing National Special Needs Education Policy Guidelines?

In order to address this main research question, sub-research questions have been developed.

1.4.2 Sub- Research Questions

1. What does the National SNE Policy Guidelines stipulate about its implementation?

2. How are students with special educational needs (SEN) accommodated in the selected inclusive secondary schools?
3. Is there any specialised supervision and monitoring for teachers who teach students with special educational needs?
4. What are the challenges being faced by schools in the implementation of the Special Needs Education Policy Guidelines and what strategies can be used to address such challenges?

1.5 Significance of the study

The findings from the study would contribute to the body of knowledge in the sense that they will provide useful literature on inclusion of students with special educational needs in secondary schools in Malawi.

The findings from the study would also contribute to policy in the sense that neglected issues about National Special Needs Education Policy Guidelines would be highlighted and be used to sensitise the nation. The findings would further assist policy makers to review the strategies of implementing inclusion of students with special educational needs in secondary schools.

Lastly, the findings from the study would contribute to practice in the sense that government might come up with mechanisms to supervise and monitor the special Needs education teachers.

1.6 Definitions of the terms used

SNE: Chavuta, Itimu-Phiri, Chiwaya, Sikero and Alindiamao (2008), defined SNE as a system for providing a conducive learning environment students who may require extra support in order to achieve their potential. According to Kamulaga (2010, p.8), “SNE is a specially designed instruction that meets the unusual needs of an exceptional students.”

In this study SNE is valued as a system that provide appropriate user friendly infrastructure, teaching and learning materials, appropriate preparation of lessons and teaching in accommodating students with special educational needs, monitoring and supervising of SNE teachers.

Assistive Devices: These are appropriate aids, appliances, technologies and other support systems that facilitate effective learning of students with special educational needs. (Chavuta, Itimu-Phiri, Chiwaya, Sikero, & Alindiamao, 2008).

SNE Teachers (SNET): A teacher trained to assist students with special educational needs (Chavuta, et al, 2008)

Visual Impairment: This refers to “weakening or damage of the ability to see” (Hawkins, 2001, p.206, 221)

Hearing Impairment: It is “weakening or damaging of the ability to hear” (Hawkins, 2001, p.221, 500)

Policy: Refers to “a country’s developmental course of action proposed by the government and submitted as a legislative document stating what has to be done and by whom regarding a major change in social behaviour (Gale, 2006 cited in Racheal, 2013, p.39). A policy is also defined as “an authoritative allocation of values written in a document which provides guidelines and principles to aid decisions to achieve rational outcomes that can be adopted by members within an organisation in national, regional or local levels of governments, regardless of public services or private sectors” (McMenamin, 2010; Paliokosta & Blandford, 2010; Kearney & Kane, 2006). The study defines a policy as an authoritative Guidelines and principles by the government’s decisions to achieve rational outcomes that can be adopted by members within an organisation in national, regional or local levels of governments, regardless of public services or private sectors. Similarly, it is used in this study to mean authoritative written document which provides guidelines and principles to aid decisions to achieve effective teaching and learning of students with special educational needs.

Policy implementation: Policy implementation is “concerned with working within the structures and practices through which policy objectives are put into practice” (Fitz, 2001, p.40).

Inclusive Education: According to UNESCO (2009, p.8) Inclusive Education is “a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children, youth and adults through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing and eliminating exclusion within and from education.

It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision that covers all children of the appropriate age and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children”.

Therefore inclusive education has the foundation in education for all for an intention that all the children must attend school regardless of their disabilities.

1.7 Chapter summary

Various issues concerning inclusive education in Malawi and the National Special Needs Education Policy Guidelines have been discussed in this chapter. It has been shown that implementation of National Special Needs Education Policy Guidelines in secondary schools in Malawi is facing many challenges (Chimutu & Makoko, 2007). A number of studies have uncovered some of these challenges. Gaps in these studies have led to further exploration of implementation of National Special Needs Educational Policy Guidelines in selected secondary schools. Areas of focus are what the National SNE Policy Guidelines stipulate such as; infrastructure, teaching and learning resources, preparation of lessons to accommodate students with special educational needs and provision of specialised supervision and monitoring of special needs education teachers in order to ensure effective education for students with special educational needs in secondary schools.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter reviews literature and studies related to the implementation of National Special Needs Education Policy Guidelines. The structure of the chapter is based on the main themes from the research questions and the emergent themes from the analysed data. The chapter then discusses the theoretical framework that informed the study. Thereafter, the chapter summary brings the key issues that came out from the reviewed literature.

2.1 The National Special Needs Education Policy Guidelines in Malawi (NSNEPG)

The National Special Needs Education Policy Guidelines was established in 2009 by the Ministry of Education with the goals on Special Needs Education.

2.1.1 The goals and objectives of NSNEPG

The goal of developing the NSNEPG in 2009 was to develop the personal, social and academic competences of students with special educational needs in the country (MoE, 2009). The objectives of National SNE Policy Guidelines are:

1. to provide education and /or vocational training to students with Special Educational Needs (SEN);
2. ensure equitable access to all students with SEN at all educational levels, provide educational facilities with necessary provisions to support education of students with SEN;
3. ensure that all education institutions create and provide supportive learning environments, increase provision of Special Needs Education (SNE) services by all education stakeholders;
4. improve co-ordination and networking among SNE stakeholders;
5. provide standards and ethical practices to be obtained in the provision of SNE services; (p.16).

The objectives of NSNEPG value students with SEN. However, what is stipulated in the NSNEPG differ from what is on the ground. For example, on the provision of education to students with SEN. It is very difficult that all secondary schools would provide education to students with SEN because not all secondary school have user friendly infrastructure and available teaching and learning materials to suit these SEN. Secondary schools have inadequate SNET and there is less supervision for SNET and as a result students with SEN are not fully accommodated in secondary schools although the NSNEPG highlights the support for students with SEN.

1.1.4 The guiding principles

The guiding principles in the implementation National SNE Policy Guidelines are milestones towards the achievement of global and national targets for SNE implementation guided by Malawi Development and Growth Strategy (MDGs) and the human right approach to programming the implementation of National SNE Policy Guidelines shall take into consideration the multiplicity of partners involved in the delivery of SNE services (MoE, 2009). The policy guidelines shall be implemented taking into consideration the relevant policies and programmes addressing SNE issues:

1. No student with SEN shall be discriminated against or segregated in the provision of education services on the basis of age, gender, race tribe, health status, disability, HIV sero status, economic status, religion and political affiliation;
2. Education provision for students with disabilities shall be integrated and harmonized with other interventions and services relating to the care and welfare of student and the policy shall promote the spirit of self-reliance in students and youths with SEN as opposed to a dependency syndrome (p.6)

The National SNE Policy Guidelines covers three broad areas of Special Needs Education (SNE), namely; access and equity, quality and relevance, governance and management.

One of the broad areas of SNE is quality where students with SEN should be provided with quality education which equips them with the necessary and relevant skills,

knowledge, value and attitudes to make them responsible and productive citizens. The objective of this policy area is to ensure that students with special educational needs access quality education. The government on quality has two policy statements and one of which was to establish and maintain agreed minimum standards for the provision of quality education for students with special needs at all educational levels. To achieve this policy statement, the following strategies were outlined in National SNE Policy Guidelines: the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training will put in place logistics on the supply and distribution of specialised teaching and learning resources, develop and implement Special Needs Education supervisory, inspection and advisory mechanism, conduct continuous professional development for special Needs Education Teachers (SNET) and ensure all teacher trainers have a minimum requirement a Master's degree in Special Needs Education. The second policy statement on quality was that the government shall improve qualified Special Needs Education Teacher pupil ratio to between 1:15 and 1:5 depending on severity of disability by 2015. To achieve this policy statement the Ministry of Education and Vocation Training stated. The Ministry will train and deploy adequate qualified Special Needs Education Teachers at all levels" (p.9).

1.1.5 What the NSNEPG stipulates about its implementation

National SNE Guidelines intends to guide government and other stakeholders on how to include students with special educational needs in education intervention and manage SNE programmes. National SNE Policy Guidelines will raise awareness to different stakeholders about students with special educational needs. The guidelines include a detailed overarching statement on inclusion, which clarifies the principles that the

education system at all levels must follow in accordance with NESP and United Nations Convention.

They also give guidance on how to effectively provide for the management of SNE in the country. This is to ensure that all students with special educational needs overcome their educational challenges.

The guidelines have been developed to promote the inclusion of students with special educational needs as means towards attaining a more inclusive society, bearing in mind their existence in the schools and the demand for exclusive interventions. The guidelines will empower providers of SNE to plan and implement programmes that are relevant to the Malawi context.

Through these Guidelines, the Government will be able to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of SNE programmes. The government and other service providers will be able to provide appropriate resources for the running and management of SNE.

The guidelines provide a clear indication that Malawi is heading towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals and the MGDS. Successful implementation of the Guidelines will ensure that all students with special educational needs access and receive adequate quality SNE. It is therefore, the intention of the government to encourage all providers of SNE to adhere to all Guidelines (National SNE Policy Guidelines, 2009)

2.2 How students with SEN are accommodated in terms of the learning environment and infrastructure

The society in Malawi is looking for possibilities to include the students with disabilities and youths in learning activities (Soko, 2004; Salmonsson, 2006). UNESCO (2004a; 2001) and Ogot(2005) highlight that students who have diverse needs and inaccessible environment within and outside, the school may contribute in providing such learning environment. There is therefore need to adapt the environment to suit the diverse students' needs. This involves organising the classroom and the school compound including building ramps to classroom and school buildings, construction of adapted latrines, enlargement of classroom windows, painting walls to improve the lighting and levelling of the play grounds to ease mobility. The class environment should consider the students learning space; hence it should be equipped with rich learning areas for students to learn at their own pace (UNESCO, 2001). Although the ministry had directed all the regular schools should enrol all the students despite their differences, it was uncertain if all the schools had adapted the user friendly infrastructure to suit all the students.

However, lack of supportive infrastructure in schools denies the free accommodation of students with disabilities (Ndhlovu, 2008; Korir, 2009; Chavuta et al”2008). Schools need to have an atmosphere that is friendly, caring and supportive and these calls for equal opportunities and accessibility to all resources, services and responsibilities (Chimutu & Makoko, 2007).

This view is in line with the social model of disabilities which advocates environment to be manipulated in a desirable way so that a student acquires what will help him in the future and the model sees the steps as the disabling barrier (Barnes, 2009). It is therefore, obvious, that in order to achieve successful inclusive education, it is critical to address the challenges affecting SNE services at the grassroots levels.

2.3 How the students with SEN are accommodated with regard to teaching and learning resources

Moodley (2002) points out that in order for the students to be active participants in the learning and teaching process, institutions must ensure that teaching and learning materials are used as well as made available to all the students with special needs according to their needs, UNESCO (2004c) adds that the students must be provided with learning materials in formats that meet their individual needs. In an inclusive setting, students would require other resources over and above what is provided by the school.

In inclusion it is emphasised that SNET should use locally available resources to support learning (Moodley, 2002). Randiki (2002) and Ogot (2004a) advised that, the available teaching and learning materials should be placed at a central place, where schools could access them. Making use of local artisans to make and repair the teaching and learning devices can also help in reducing the problem (Moodley 2002). Noting that some of these teaching and learning devices are very expensive and others are not locally available, it was uncertain if regular schools have the appropriate resources for all the students with special needs.

However, very few studies have been carried on SNE in Malawi with a focus on secondary level of education (Makoko & Chimutu 2007). Kamchedzera and Aubrey (2010) carried out a study on the education of students with disabilities in Malawi's inclusive secondary schools. The study aimed to contribute towards knowledge generations through the exploration of the extent to which Inclusive Education policy initiatives in Malawi's secondary schools have appropriately responded to the context of practice and the experience of students with disabilities and their teachers. Their study established that inclusion policy does not succeed if there is no responsiveness to the views, experiences and needs of teachers, pupils' "within" learning factors, and historical factors that may have influenced the development of SNE in secondary schools. The study found out that inclusion is well accepted in the contexts of influence, contexts of text production and practice as an approach that encourages non-discrimination.

The study further revealed that implementation of Inclusion Policy in secondary schools failed because of lack of teaching and learning materials, lack of specialised and qualified teachers, and unfriendly and/or inaccessible infrastructure. However, the researcher would like to monitor the implementation of monitoring which is on automobile as established through the research and come up with remedies.

2.4 How teachers accommodate students with SEN in the way they plan and deliver the lessons

According to Wong (2009), lesson plans affect not only SNET instruction but also classroom management. He commended that planning should be practical and usable, economical in terms of teacher time and strengthen the educational program. He further advises that depending on the grade level and subject matter, teachers may be required to follow curriculum designated. Spooner (2007) argued that modified lesson plans would be needed for students receiving special education needs services. Lesson planning is one of the roles of SNET. Consistent with the meaning of inclusive education, SNET role generally refers to the way they execute their duty to teach students with disabilities in the regular classroom (Ainscow, 2007; Jordan, Glen & McGhie-Richmond, 2010). The SNET role includes daily duties such as planning, teaching, and developing strategies to reduce issues affecting their students' learning (Wearmouth, Edwards, & Richmond 2006; Florian, 2008), and they also "identify resources to support progressive inclusion" (Agbenyega, 2007, p. 108).

In addition, the SNET role also includes assessment testing (Bourke, 2010; Opertti & Brady (2011). "SNET play a key role by addressing the diversity of students' expectations and needs through innovation teaching and learning strategies such as establishing rapport with SEN that do not marginalise them within the broader education system" (p. 470). For such SNET, "their good intentions and good teaching practice will carry all their students forward into a more equal school or society in which all students will perform well" (Claiborne, Cornforth, Davies, Milligan & White, 2009, p. 49). The

nature of the SNET role does not only limit to the norms of teaching a lesson but it also includes their personal sensitivity to the complex nature of the specific disabilities of their students (Bourke, 2010), and the way they reach out to their students so that no student suffers from their practices while delivering their lessons (Jordan et al., 2010)

“Where inclusive classroom is practised, all children learn and grow in the environment that they will eventually learn together. They are prepared for the real world. They do not have to be separated from peers. This gives them a sense of belonging and they grow up as part of the community. They learn with their peers, who are positive role models. It allows them to develop to their maximum potential.” (Vaughan, 2002 cited in Mutisya, 2010, p.42). Inclusive classroom provides, “a diverse and stimulating environment and opportunity for students to grow and learn the virtues of being accommodated, accepted, respected and cared” (p.42). The students learn to support one another despite their differences (UNESCO, 2004c, 2004e).

They learn to enjoy being with others who are different from themselves, including how to be sensitive to and adapt to these differences. All students learn together and value their relationships, despite their diverse backgrounds or abilities. Their self-esteem is enhanced. “Teachers make adaptations that make better sense in an inclusive classroom and for individual student, as students with SEN face different kinds of barriers in accessing education. SNET are flexibility to accommodate the diverse abilities and interests of these students by the use of variety of teaching approaches” (Mutisya, 2010, P,35). These approaches are appropriate to the student’s ability and learning process.

2.5 Whether there is specialised supervision and monitoring for SNET who teach SEN

According to Jones & Harry (2011) monitoring is “to track implementation and outputs systematically, and measure the effectiveness of programmes”. It helps determine exactly when a programme is on track and when changes may be needed.

Monitoring forms the basis for modification of interventions and assessing the quality of activities being conducted. As one way of monitoring the implementation of National SNE Policy Guidelines, it is indicated that “Ministry of Education will prepare progress reports on a quarterly and annual basis” (MoE, 2009, p.15). However, there is a challenge of absence of supervisory structures that link schools, and education divisions to the SNE Directorate at the Ministry headquarters (p.5).

The Special Education Department (2006, Article, 13, pp. 40-41) United Arab Emirates (UAE), clarifies “excellent monitoring of Special needs education as well as supervising teachers in inclusive setting.” The Senior Supervisor of Special Needs Education provide supervision to the special education teachers in the educational zone, develop and facilitate implementation of training programs to enhance knowledge and skills of the special education instructors and conduct field visits to support and monitor the implementation of the general rules of the special education programs in coordination with the guidance of special education.

The Special Education Department (2006, Article, 13, pp.42 further explains that the Central Department Personnel also monitors the implementation of laws and regulations

regarding the rights of individuals with special needs in schools throughout the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Further, the Special Needs Education teachers are responsible for accepting students with special needs and provide them with equal opportunities to learn, participate in the meetings, training courses, workshops and special activities aimed at improving the quality and delivery of special education programs and services, monitor the implementation of special education programs and provide periodic reports on the status of these programs and services, monitor and support all instructions as issued by the Director of Special Education of the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry engage in ongoing professional development to enhance the acquisition of knowledge and skills in the field of special education, conduct field visits to schools to observe the implementation of inclusive education and prepare and implement vocational programs at inclusive schools, or at schools that have students with special needs.

The Special Education Department (2006, Article, 13, pp.36 states that the UAE also has organisational structure at the central office or departmental level that consists of a Director of the Special Education Department who maintains overall responsibility for the administration and provision of special education programs and services in the United Arab Emirates. The Director along with departmental staff which consists of senior supervisory special education professionals and consultants provide, direct and indirect supervision and consultation to school personnel in the educational zones and schools to ensure the development and implementation of high quality educational programs and services to meet the needs of students with special needs throughout the UAE.

Despite the roles in Special education Needs Department, (UAE) has introduced the Federal Law No. 29 in 2006, regarding the Rights of Persons With Special Needs which promotes the philosophy of inclusive education by ensuring that all students with disabilities in public and private educational institutions in the UAE have access to equal educational opportunities as a result the number of students with disabilities included in general education schools is increasing. The Philosophy for Special Education stipulates that. “each student is unique in his own way and needs to be provided with a safe, caring and stimulating environment to grow and mature emotionally, intellectually, physically and socially.” Educators demonstrate a commitment to teach all students and provide them with a safe and supportive environment to develop to their maximum potential based on their individual strengths and challenges (p.14).

The government of Malawi highlights the effective monitoring of Special Needs Education programme in which the government and other service providers will be able to provide relevant and adequate resources for the running and management of Special Needs Education (MoE & Vocational Training, 2007).

However, Chimutu and Makoko (2007) indicate that government supervisory structure has not coordinated well with primary schools which operate in isolation. Since the study was done at primary school level, this has prompted further study on how secondary schools are implementing NSNEPG.

2.6 Challenges faced by schools in the implementation of NSNEPG and the strategies used to address such challenges

This section discusses the challenges secondary school face in implementing NSNEPG and strategies used to address such challenges.

2.6.1 Financial constraints

MoE (2009, p.4) highlights that schools have inadequate financial resources to implement NSNEPG. For example, procurement of teaching, learning, assessment resources and assistive devices; construction, rehabilitation of resource centres, capacity building, maintenance of specialised equipment; of administrative and supervisory structure that link schools, zones/clusters, districts, and educational divisions to the SNE Directorate at the Ministry headquarters. This is as a result of inadequate budgetary allocation by MoEST. For instance out of the government funding of K12 billion the Ministry of Education got in the 2005-2006 fiscal year, only 0.1% (12 million) of this amount was allocated to SNE sector (Chimutu & Makoko, 2007). This was deemed insufficient but against the budget requirement which was not indicated. In the year 2007-2008 the Sector got K11 million, also said to be inadequate. “In 2006-2007, the sector received K27 million with an additional K60 million earmarked for materials,”(Chimutu and Makoko, 2007, p.22-23). These amounts are for only the Directorate while the schools are funded through the District Assemblies. There is indication in the SNE policy that the Ministry will ensure that 5% of the Ministry’s budget goes towards SNE funding. This commitment is in the right direction;

However, there is need also at the lower levels (District Assemblies) to ensure that funds reach the destinations with similar commitment. Chimutu and Makoko (2007) suggest that it may be necessary for the SNE to be cost centres just to ensure that funds flow properly to the institutions to allow the centres to plan properly for their activities. Some schools call for the contributions from parents but they do not usually assist.

2.6.2 Limited Capacity to train SNET

Effective delivery of SNE is negatively impacted by an acute shortage of SNET at all levels within education system. There is limited capacity to provide training to SNET at secondary and university levels. “This problem is further compounded by retirements, HIV/AIDS, deaths, and brain drain.” (Kamulaga, 2010, p.22)

For instance, most teachers do not have communication skills for communicating with students who are deaf-blind (Chimutu & Makoko, 2007; Chavuta et al, 2008; Kamchedzera & Aubrey 2010; Chavuta, 2010; Munthali, 2011; Chaula, 2014). Moodley (2002) asserts that when teachers are trained and have the skills to handle children with special needs, they normally gain courage in their work. Awareness of various disabilities makes them have positive attitudes towards the students. Teachers can experience greater job satisfaction and a higher sense of accomplishment when ‘ALL’ children are succeeding in school to the best of their abilities (UNESCO, 2004d). Teaching thus becomes a joy, not a chore.

There is need for training teachers in SNE and providing in-service training for the others so that they can handle students with special needs professionally. Through pre-service training and in-service training, they would gain skills and competence and develop positive attitude which is critical for practice of inclusive education (UNESCO, 2004d, 2003, 2001).

2.6.3 Environmental barriers

Inaccessible infrastructure such as classroom, transport, long distances to schools, sports and recreation facilities and public utilities are barriers for students with disabilities. Kamchedzera (2010) emphasises on this point that secondary school have no user friendly infrastructure to accommodate students with disabilities.

2.6.4 Attitudinal barriers

Negative attitude is a major barrier to the development of SNE in Malawi (Chimutu & Makoko, 2007). Children and youth with SEN face discrimination, lack of parental responsibility, neglect, rejection, abuse, and overprotection by some parents. This also could be aggravated by lack of information, misinformation, cultural practices, beliefs and values. This is not in line with Social Model of disabilities as the model aim at eradicating the attitudinal and environmental problems faced by people with disabilities by understanding them as full members of the society and adjusting situations to enable them to adapt and function within their society (Kett, Lang &Trani, 2009). Further, there is little co-ordination among stakeholders on issues of SNE.

This can impede the effective policy implementation since key players operate in isolation. “Lack of co-ordination among stakeholders, result in duplication of efforts, dilution of ethics and standards, and focus on one area of SNE at the expense of others.” (MoE, 2009, p.5)

2.6.5 Inadequate teaching and learning materials

According to De Jong, (2005) the teaching and learning materials have to be provided to all students with SEN. Teaching methods and content shall be accessible to all students. Selecting appropriate teaching practices is needed to embrace inclusiveness. Further, Anwer (2012), states that, schools that include students with SEN must use a variety of teaching approaches and these should be appropriate to the student’s ability and learning process. Noting that in regular schools the teaching methods used are tailored for students assumed to have no special needs; it has been established through a systematic study that teachers were able to vary methods according to the diverse needs of students with special educational needs. Ainscow (2007) indicate that when teachers understand student’s disability backgrounds completely, they can use appropriate teaching strategies and perform their duties more confidently. For the teacher to assist students with SNE effectively, he or she must use a variety of teaching approaches. According to Rahaman (2011), these strategies include collaborative teaching, role-plays, feedback, discussions, homework tasks and group work. These strategies help students with SEN get an appropriate education, through specialised instruction, in a regular classroom and break the barrier between special education and regular education.

Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001) also contend that teachers need to emphasise aspects that need to be learned so as to draw the attention of students to the relevant aspect that is to be learned. Teachers should also verbalise their actions and those of students, through the use of words that students can easily understand. As Runswick-Cole (2011) puts it, “teachers must deliver best practice” (p. 117), which includes teaching a lesson that does not exclude any student of the moment (Florian, 2008).

An example is a teacher considering an alternative strategy that would include a boy who uses a wheelchair to participate in their regular Physical Education lesson without the sense of exclusion (Runswick-Cole, 2011).

2.6.6 Curriculum adaptation

Adapting the curriculum is a must-do action in a class with students with diverse learning needs because it is the way to keep all students in the school (Florian, 2008). Further, Zimmerman (2011) and Moodley (2002) argue that teachers can make adaptations that can make better sense in the local context and for the individual students. Teachers can re-write, reorganise, add to, or re-cast the information for student to access the regular curriculum material independently, mediating existing materials, as well as providing additional instructional support, guidance, and direction to the student in the use of the materials.

Teachers might mediate the barriers presented by the materials so that one may directly lead the student to interact with the materials in different ways. For example, one might have students survey the reading material, collaboratively preview the text, and create an outline of the material to use as a study guide, and finally, through selecting alternate materials, teachers might select new materials that are more sensitive to the needs of students with disabilities or are inherently designed to compensate for learning problems. For example, use an interactive computer program that cues critical ideas, reads text, inserts graphic organisers, defines and illustrates words, presents and reinforces learning in smaller increments, and provides more opportunities for practice and cumulative review. In order to hold students with disabilities in classrooms to complete their education, curriculum adaptation, user friendly infrastructure, non-discrimination and co-ordination is necessary (Kamulaga, 2010) . However, student's school life expectancy and their interest in remaining at school cannot be identical across the globe (Ghergut, 2012), but it varies significantly between the wealthier countries and third world countries (Ainscow, 2012).

2.7 Theoretical Framework

Contemporary issues in disability and inclusion in education have their origin in the discourses of the Medical and Social Model of Disability (Slee, 2008). The models of disability are associated with different value systems, attitudes and behaviours with contrasting ideas between disability and inclusion (Pearson, 2009).

“Within these models, arguments about children with disability gaining equal access to education provoked worldwide movements to support an inclusive education.” (Torombe, 2013, p.23). A brief summary of each theory is provided in the following section

2.7.1 The Medical Model of Disability

The Medical Model of Disability viewed disability as a sickness or disease of some sort whereby only the medical profession could intervene with treatment to correct it as much as possible (Mulvany, 2000). This theory of disability views problems experienced by people with disability as the consequence of a disease (Kett, Lang &Trani, 2009). These ideas “made it possible for medical professionals to measure a person’s limitation and devise corrective procedures to ensure the greatest degree of normalisation”(Torombe, 2013). For example, “when a wheelchair user is unable to get into a building because of the stairs, the Medical Model would suggest that it is the way the wheelchair is made that restricts the person with disability access to the building”(Torombe,2013,p.24). However, Barnes (2009) argues that the medical lens is fixed on the individual’s disability and the larger political, economic and material structures that are at play in people without disability in a society fall somewhere outside the frame.

The Medical Model focuses on individual’s health status, impairment and capacity limitation, and failed to address social factors such as discrimination, prejudice and the inaccessibility people with disabilities faced (Officer& Groce, 2009). It saw disability purely as a problem of the person with disability, without considering the difference between the types of disability (Mulvany, 2000). Impairment is “any loss or limitation of

psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function” While disability is “what reduces the person’s full function and participation in all activities due to the loss of the body part” (MoE, 2009.p.vi). The medical model emphasises that because of the physical and psychological defects in their bodies, people with disability were more dependent, unintelligent, unattractive, helpless and childlike and unable to fulfil tasks (Fisher & Goodley, 2007; Badley, 2008).

The limitation of the Medical Model is that it sees only the alternative path a wheelchair user could take, such as the lift. The medical lens narrows its sight to wheelchair provision as a solution rather than considering what other things the wheelchair user can do to survive (Olive, 2004). Other senses and parts of the body still function for this person. And the Social Model of Disability is an alternative lens that has challenged the Medical Model’s tradition of overlooking the normal functions and abilities of people with disabilities (Torombe, 2013).

2.7.2 The Social Model of Disability

The Social Model of Disability is defined as a theory that sees disability as “a product of specific social and economic structures and aims to address issues of oppression and discrimination of people with disability that are caused by institutional forms of exclusion and by cultural attitudes embedded in social practices” (Barnes, 2009, p.3). The social model believes that “attitudinal and environmental barriers are the predominant obstacles existing in society: people without disability tend to fix their gaze on the disability of people rather than noticing their abilities” (Mulvany, 2000 cited in Torombe 2013, p.25).

It advocates that places like buildings, schools and playing grounds should be made suitable to accommodate people with varying disabilities (Chappell et al., 2001).

The Social Model of Disability, aim to eradicate the attitudinal and environmental problems faced by people with disabilities by understanding them as full members of the society and adjusting situations to enable them to adapt and function within their society (Kett, Lang &Trani, 2009). It became a tool for supporting the principle of inclusion in society by taking a firm stand that no longer should a person with disability be considered inferior nor seen as unworthy but as a full human being (Olive, 2004; Barnes & Mercer, 2004). From this perspective, “the Social Model of Disability has shifted the negative stereotypical attitudes towards people with disabilities and drawn people to appreciate that everyone, with and without disabilities is equal.”(Skrtic 1991 cited in Torombe, 2013, p.25).

Therefore, the Social Model of Disability has “the incremental influence that sparked human rights movements across the globe” (Barnes, 2009, p.3) and it called for people with disability to participate in all aspects of life including an inclusive education (Chappell et al., 2001).

Usually, a functional theory could enhance a practitioner’s ability to work with others and also generate a range of ethical and educational logical solutions to educational problems (Macfarlane, 2007). Social Model of Disability used in this study allows inclusion of students with disabilities in teaching-learning practice. The implementation framework of

inclusive education practice illustrate implementation as addressed in this study meaning provision of user friendly infrastructure, adequate teaching and learning materials, sufficient Special Needs Education Teachers (SNET), planning and delivering lessons that also respond to students with special educational needs and monitoring and supervising SNET.

Disabilities are constructed on the basis of interpretations made because of social values and beliefs (Thomas & Loxley, 2001). Within this view, inclusive practice enables Special Needs Education providers such as Education Division Office and schools to pursue appropriate strategies for students with disability.

The underlying premise is that Education Division Office and schools are all experts in different ways, and that their different experiences and understandings are of value for having a better understanding on the theoretical base of academic achievement and disability, they need to identify the practices in inclusive education for students with disabilities.

This has been established by this study. According to Walter (2008, p397.), “we may consider disability as a condition that makes it difficult for someone to do the things that other people do”. The discourses of inclusion interpret that if appropriate environment could be provided every student has equal potentialities to learn (Kamchedzera & Aubrey, 2010, p 33). According to Barr and Smith (2008) the right discourse of disability

is linked with inclusion discourse. It establishes rights of student with disabilities in the society and the classroom.

The framework had been formulated to understand inclusive practice, which is viewed from two levels: the Macro and Micro levels. The Macro level in this study includes the services provided from the broader perspective of inclusion practice focusing on monitoring and supervising Special Needs Education at Educational Division level.

On the other hand, the Micro level concentrates on school level which focusing on accessibility of infrastructure, planning and teaching of Special Needs Education Teachers (SNET), availability of/ and teaching and learning materials of students with special educational needs and availability of SNET in secondary schools.

To gain a pragmatic insight of inclusive education practice, we need to understand quality implementation as accessible infrastructure, provision of resources (teaching and learning materials) and human resource (Special Needs Education Teachers), planning and teaching in accommodating students with disability and monitoring and supervising SNET in schools. Social Model of Disability emphasises that surrounding is important to students with Special Educational Needs and that all students are entitled to education (Barnes, 2004). According to Jones and Harry (2011), monitoring is to track implementation and outputs systematically, and measure the effectiveness of programmes. It helps determine exactly when a programme is on track and when changes may be needed. Monitoring forms the basis for modification of interventions and

assessing the quality of activities being conducted. The study by Kuyini and Desai (2007) on SNE in Ghana also showed that attitudes towards inclusion and knowledge of inclusion are directly linked with effective teaching practices in an inclusive setting.

The framework below was developed to understand implementation of National SNE Policy Guidelines in all school institutions in light of social model of disabilities that support inclusion and that successful implementation of NSNEPG should follow inclusive education implementation framework.

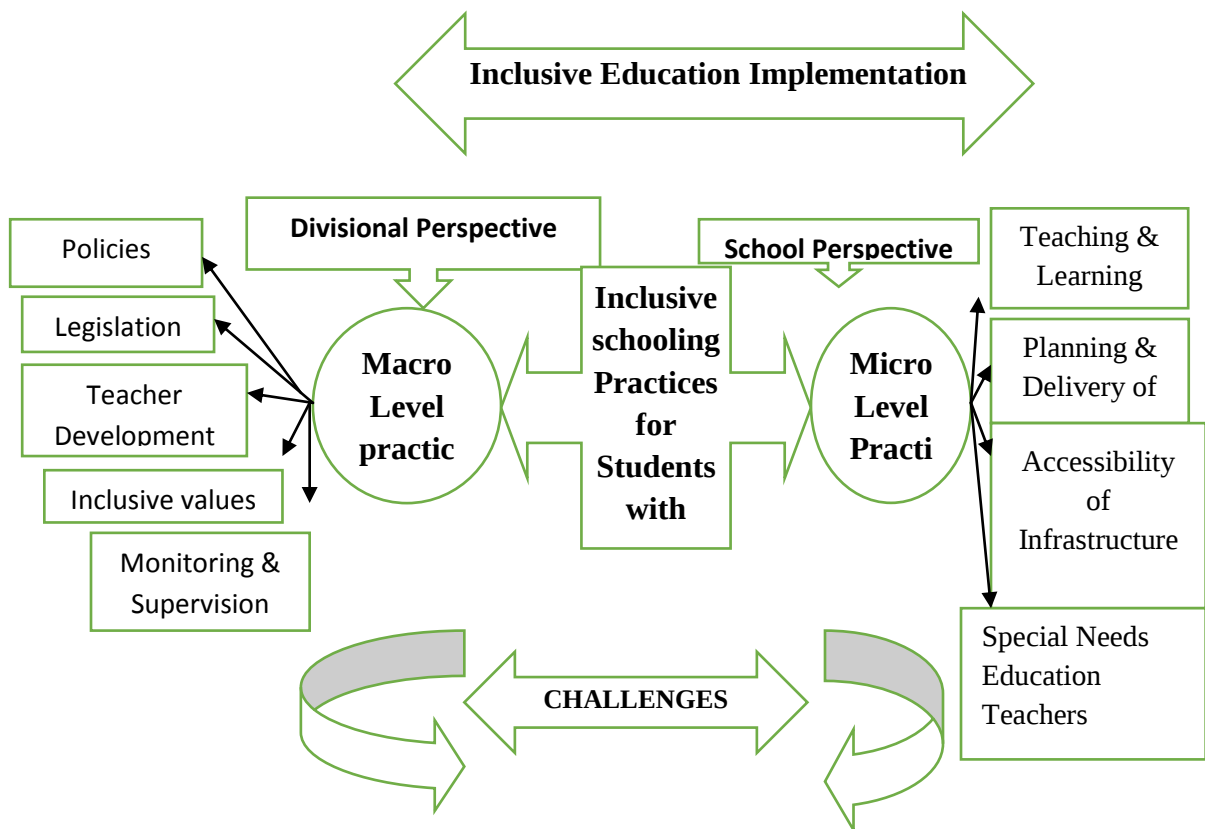


Figure 1: Implementation framework of inclusive education practice

The implementation framework of inclusive education practice recognises the implementation of National SNE Policy Guidelines at micro level practice that provides teaching and learning materials, planning and delivery of teaching, to accommodate students with special educational needs, availability of accessible infrastructure and provision of Special Needs Education teachers (SNET). Further, at macro level practice, the provision of teacher development, inclusive values and monitoring of SNET to be done. If the education providers such as Education Division offices and Schools cannot realise the needs of students with disability, successful implementation of National SNE Policy Guidelines could take place. For example, Maddern (2009) identified the lack of understanding on the needs of students with visual disabilities as one reason for the difficulties of not including them.

Inclusion concerns from Education Division support to school wide support (Macfarlane, 2007). For this reason, selecting appropriate inclusion practices is needed to embrace inclusiveness (De Jong, 2005). Hence, the study sought to explore how the secondary schools implementing National Special Needs Education Policy guidelines in two secondary schools in Blantyre Urban. However, the National SNE Policy Guidelines provide mechanism for effective and standardized implementation of National Policy on Special needs Education.

2.8 Chapter summary

The review of literature indicates the gap between what is stipulated in the National SNE Policy Guidelines, conceptual framework and what is on the ground. For example, the National SNE Policy Guidelines states the provision of user friendly infrastructure while on the ground there is absence of what has been stipulated in the National SNE Policy Guidelines. Hence, the government have mechanisms for implementation of NSNEPG to reflect formulated objectives.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Chapter overview

This chapter discusses the research design and methodology adopted for the study. The chapter first discusses the theoretical perspectives that guided the choice of the research design and methodology. Second, is the discussion of the overall approach and rationale of the study, the location and population in the study, the sample and sampling procedures that were used, data generation methods, data analysis procedures, as well as ethical considerations that were made and limitations of the study.

3.1 Theoretical perspectives

Several theories and approaches have been established to give meaning to different education concepts. Each theory has its meaning and context in which if applied will produce desired outcomes. “A theory has its meanings, terms, ideas and some of them have a model which elaborates the given phenomenon.” (Chaula, 2014, p.20) In the social sciences, most theories are associated with social problems existing in the society, among them are those related to learning (p.20).

For example; students with special needs are in this category. My study is on exploration of implementation of National SNE Policy Guidelines in secondary schools. The theoretical framework that the researcher will work with to explore this study is social model theory.

The researcher used social model theory perspective because in implementing inclusive education there are thoughts that students with special needs have difficulties in adapting to new environments such as being an inclusive class. Social model theory postulates that students with disabilities have to be included in educational settings through the cooperation with the environment. It is also believed that, people construct their knowledge on the basis of their experiences from everyday life.

However, the researcher before the development of the research design and methodology reviewed the theoretical perspectives underlying the approaches used and their implications for this study. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p.22), research is "guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be studied and understood". Such sets of beliefs and feelings are referred to as paradigms (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p.22).

Research paradigms entail "our understanding of what one can know about something and how one can gather knowledge about it" (Grix, 2004, cited in Kamchedzera 2010, p.94). Practically, researchers apply research paradigms differently, narrowly or broadly (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; 2005).

According to Opic (2004), educational research has been influenced by a post-positive (interpretative), naturalistic subjective paradigm. The positivists believe that "there are patterns and regularities, causes and consequences, in the social world just as there are in the natural world" (Denscombe, 2002 cited in Grix, 2004, p.81). "The positivists are criticised for making the assumption that there is no division between what we perceive and the way things are, that the world is 'real', is not mediated by our senses and is not socially constructed" (Grix, 2004, p.81). Cohen; Manion, Morrison, (2003, p.19) argue that positivists disregard "our unique ability to interpret our experiences and represent them to ourselves". Yet, people can and do construct theories about themselves, their world and act upon them (Cohen et al" 2003).

The paradigm which succeeded positivism is called the 'post-positivism or interpretative paradigm'. This paradigm is associated with qualitative methodology. The post-positivists perceive reality as a construction in individuals' minds so that it does not exist 'out there'. The assumption is that through interaction with the social environment, people construct meanings about their world and experiences. This construction differs from one person to another and because of these variations, multiple realities exist (Merriam, 2002; Cohen et al" 2003; Mertens & McLaughlin, 2004). This qualitative methods study is located within an interpretative paradigm because it sought to explore what a National SNE Policy Guidelines stipulate about its implementation, how are the SEN accommodated in the selected secondary schools, the availability of any specialised supervision and monitoring for the teachers who teach students with SEN and the challenges being faced by schools

in the implementation of the SNE Policy Guidelines and the strategies that can be used to address such challenges. This allowed the understanding of how National SNE Policy Guidelines implemented in the context of practice.

The concept of disability as a social construction (Mertens and McLaughlin, 2004) has different meanings for different people. Mertens and McLaughlin (2004) stated that the concept of multiple realities as well as social construction of reality entails that the perceptions of different types of persons must be sought.

3.2 Research design

Research design may be referred to as the plan of the study that will answer the research questions. Research designs are “the specific procedures involved in the research process which are; data collection, data analysis and report writing”(Cresswell, 2012, p. 20). In addition to that Yin (1994) explains a different way of thinking about research design that it is a “blueprint” of research, looking at four problems: what questions to study, what data are relevant, what data to collect and how to analyse the results. Further, Research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data (Bryman, 2012). Research design keeps the study centred on its purposes, while accommodating the inevitable twists and turns occasioned by real world contingencies as they are met in naturalistic inquiry (Janesick cited in Bazeley, 2013).

The purpose of research design is to help the researcher to organize his or her ideas in a way that the researcher will be in a good flow. Bryman (2012) gives five types of

research design which are; experimental, cross-sectional or survey, longitudinal, case study and comparative design. The study chooses case study design to work with.

3.2.1Case study

The researcher employed case study design in order to address the issue at hand and in depth. Stake (2004) gives the definition of a case study that is both a process of inquiry about the case and the product of that inquiry. Yin (2003, p. 18) argues that “case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”.

Yin (2003) also views case study as a research strategy with a strong descriptive purpose. Case study has a tendency of allowing flexibility of the instrument used in data collection and allows reasonable research of the study. Cresswell (2007) gives the concept of case study that, it is a qualitative approach in which the researcher explores a case or cases over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection. For example the sources of information can be observation, interview, audio-visual material and documents and reports. In this study, the researcher has used interview, observation and documentary analysis. Gall, Gall and Borg (2007, p. 447), gives the meaning of case study that “Case study is an in depth investigation of two or more phenomenon in natural settings considering the perspectives of the participants involved in the phenomenon”. Choosing case study design helped in exploring the implementation of National SNE Policy Guidelines in two secondary schools in Blantyre Urban where 22 participants were

involved. Case study is important because by using it, the collection of sufficient data was done while focusing on small population.

There are several procedures one has to undergo when conducting a case study in qualitative research. Cresswell (2007) has explained some of the procedures which are; first, researchers should determine if a case approach is appropriate to the research problem. Second is that researchers need to identify their cases or case. Third, data generation in case study research is typically extensive, drawing on various sources of information, such as observation, interviews, documents and audio-visual materials. The next procedure is that the type of analysis of this information can be a holistic analysis of the entire case or an embedded analysis of the specific aspect of the case. In the last interpretative phase, the researcher should report the meaning of the case. This stage is also referred to as the lesson learned.

There are different types of case studies such as in-depth, instrumental and intrinsic case study. The study employed intrinsic case study. As identified by Stake (2004) intrinsic case study is carried out because one wants a good understanding of a particular case.

Furthermore, many case researchers rely on subjective data such as the testimony of participants and the judgement of witnesses but to make empirical data more objective there should be the use of replicative, falsification and triangulation methods (ibid). This is also emphasised by Bazeley (2013) that intrinsic case study is more significant to sufficiently represent the case than to draw generalizations. That is why the researcher

used; interview, observation and documentary analysis. It is insisted in case study designs that the use of more than two ways of data generation might help a case study researcher to avoid subjective data.

Gall et al, (2003) gives some advantages and disadvantages of a case study design in a qualitative research. Through plenty description, a researcher can bring a case to life. Another is that readers of case study report may have a better basis for developing theories, designing educational interventions, or taking some other actions. Furthermore thick description helps readers to compare cases with their own situations. A good case study report will reveal the researcher's perspective and enable the readers to determine whether the investigator has the same perspective on the phenomenon as they do. Case study is also emergent quality in a sense that researchers can change the case on which the study will focus, adopt new data collection methods and frame new research questions. The disadvantages of a case study are; it is challenging to generalise the findings to other situations. Ethical issues may arise if it shows difficulties in the report to cover the character of the society or those who were studied.

Furthermore, case studies are highly labour intensive and require highly developed language skills in order to identify constructs, themes, and pattern in verbal data and to write a report that brings the case alive for the reader.

3.3 Methodology

In order to explore the implementation of National SNE Policy Guidelines in secondary schools qualitative approach was used. Qualitative approach allows researchers to get at the inner experiences of participants, to determine how meanings are formed through culture and to discover rather than test variables (Corbin & Straws, 2008, p.5).

Creswell (2012) stresses that, qualitative research is suitable in addressing a research problem which you do not know the variables and need to discover. In line with this, De Vaus (2002) argues that qualitative method are often regarded as providing rich information about real life people and situations and being more able to make sense of behaviour and understand it within its wider context. The natural settings of this study was; in an inclusive classrooms where teaching process occur. Teachers were observed and interviewed on how they teach in their classes. This helped to find out how they implemented the SNE Policy Guidelines for example, from this observation the researcher was able to find out the methods used in accommodating students with disabilities in implementation of National SNE Policy Guidelines in an inclusive education classroom.

Stake (1995 cited in Chaula, 2014, p.32) gives some characteristics of a good qualitative study that its observation and immediate interpretations are validated through the use of more than one method of data collection, its report assist readers to make their own interpretation. Another characteristic is that researchers are not just methodologically knowledgeable and experienced in some substantive discipline but competent in the

relevant disciplines. In addition, Cresswell (2012) identifies some of the characteristics of qualitative research which include: helping in exploring a problem and developing a detailed understanding of a central phenomenon; stating the purpose and research questions in a general and broad way as per the participants' experiences; allowing collecting information based on words from a small group of individuals so that the participants view is obtained; helping in analysing the data for description and themes by text analysis and interpreting more meaning of the findings; and finally, writing the report using flexible, emerging structures and evaluative criteria, and including the researchers' subjective reflexivity and bias.

Qualitative approach was selected because the characteristics above supported the provision of detailed information about the implementation of SNE Policy Guidelines. The participants allowed the researcher getting into respondents' personal world and gaining deeper and clear understanding of their experiences and feelings. The nature of the study and kind of data to be generated demanded this approach for example personal interview, observation and documentary analysis.

3.4 Location and Population

The study was conducted in two secondary schools namely; secondary school 'A' and secondary school 'B' in South West Education Division, Blantyre, Malawi. Students with special educational needs were selected to these secondary schools. The study included the Education Division Manager as the provider of SNE in the division, the 2 deputy head

teachers and 6 SNET as direct implementers of SNE in secondary schools, 12 students with special educational needs as the direct beneficiaries of the SNE Policy Guidelines.

3.5 Sampling procedure

Fridah (2007) cited in Milner (2008, p.40) defined “sampling as the act, process, or technique of selecting a suitable sample, or a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population.” The qualitative approach has no single defining sampling procedure: rather, the choice of sampling method is determined by the purpose of the study (Bamberger, 2000). So purposive sampling was used in the study. Purposive sampling is “where the researcher ‘handpicks the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality. In this way, they build up a sample that is satisfactory to their specific needs” (Kamulaga, 2010, p37). The technique allows the researcher to choose a sample that can maximise what we can learn (Mbewe, 2004).

The Sample selection process looked at secondary schools that include students with special needs in their respective secondary school and found that they are two such secondary schools. By choosing the South West Education Division, automatically the Education Division Manager was also chosen. In addition, it was convenient for the researcher as the participants were within the division. The deputy head teachers were selected because the head teachers were busy with Form Four MANEB Science practical examinations at the time the researcher was collecting data. The SNET who were available were selected as others had gone for Malawi School Certificate of Examinations

invigilation. The researcher interviewed forms one and three students with special educational needs as they were the only groups found, others were writing Form Four examinations and others had already written form two examinations.

3.6 Data generation methods

For the purpose of obtaining in-depth, holistic qualitative data, documentary analysis, interviews and observation were used in the study

3.6.1 Documentary analysis

Documentary analysis was also used as one way of generating information throughout the study. The Head-Teacher's admission file and registers provided information on trends of enrolment of students with special educational needs in both schools from 2010/2011 to 2014/2015 academic years. The sense of using documents is that documents add a useful direction to the study and provide triangulation of data (Bryman, 2001).

The use of more than one source of data for investigation creates greater confidence in the findings, even though the access to some relevant documentary materials was difficult. Bell (1998) cited in Magombo (2008) states that some documents give false information due to biasness intending to deceive the readers other than the researcher. Therefore, the intention of the researcher in this study was to use genuine documents as research evidence. The challenge the researcher face during generation of data through documents was that the head teachers misplaced the documents. However, the researcher had to wait for the head teacher to check thoroughly, though it was time consuming.

3.6.2 Interviews

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2000, p.510) “interview is a presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and reply in terms of verbal responses.” An interview is a useful way of getting a large amount of data quickly and makes data collection somewhat systematic for each respondent. Logical gaps can be anticipated and closed. “Interviews remain fairly conversational and situational” (p.511) .The interviews were used to generate data which was descriptive in nature. However, the use of interviews may lead to omitting important and salient topics and the flexibility in sequencing and wording questions can result in substantially different response from different perspectives, thus reducing the compatibility of responses. To overcome this challenge the researcher ensured triangulation of the data through generation of similar data from multiple points in time and a variety of methods was used to build the picture that the study was investigating (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

22 participants were involved in the study where the Education Division Manager, Special Needs Education Officer, 2 deputy head teachers, 6 special needs education teachers and 12 learners with special educational needs were interviewed,

A Supplementary information for the study which was obtained from documentary analysis including the admission book and class registers. The documentary analysis provided valuable information that could not be obtained from the semi-structured interviews and observation. (Appendices 3-7)

3.6.3 Observation

Observation is defined as the act of watching, describing, analysing and interpreting the actions and behaviour of people who are central aspect in virtually any enquiry. Observation allows the description of behaviour as it appears in its natural setting, (Gall et., (2007). Observation of behaviour in its natural setting allows for the researcher to take into account important contextual facts that may influence the interpretation and use of results (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). The purpose of observation is to review a variety of existing sources (e.g., documents, reports, data files, and other written artefacts) with the intention of collecting independently verifiable data and information.

A major advantage of observation as a technique is its directness. The researcher does not ask people about their views, feelings or attitudes; the researcher watches what they do and listens to what they say. “Directness contrasts with, and can often complement information obtained by virtually any other technique” Fraenkel & Wallen (2000, p.536). Observation enabled the researcher to observe the methods used by SNET the directly in different classrooms. Observation guide answered to the following research questions:

What methods does the SNE Teachers use to accommodate students with special educational needs at secondary level of education?

Observation was done in two secondary schools: A and B with the intention of directly observing the methods used by SNET in accommodating students with special educational needs. The form one and form three classes were observed where the students of special needs are placed. And, how are students in secondary schools accommodated

in terms of infrastructure? Infrastructures of two secondary schools are observed in order to correlate with the data obtained from interview.

3.7 Data generation tools

To generate data, the researcher utilised different types of tools, for example: semi-structured interviews, observation guide and documentary analysis guide.

3.7.1 Semi-structured interviews

The study used semi-structured interviews to respond to the following questions:

1. How are students with special educational needs accommodated in terms of infrastructure?
2. How are students with special educational needs accommodated in regards to learning materials?
3. How are teachers accommodating students with special needs in the way they plan lessons and teach?
4. Is there any specialised supervision and monitoring for teachers who teach students with special educational needs?

These have an advantage of offering respondents freedom to talk about what is of significance to them while maintaining a loose structure to ensure that all important topics are covered (Bell, 1993). Semi-structured interview guides were constructed for the groups of respondents.

The questions on semi structured interview guide covered the areas on user friendly infrastructure available in secondary schools, teaching and learning resources, accommodation of students with disability in preparation of lessons and teaching, supervision and monitoring of SNET.

The data generated through semi structured interview guide provided the answer to the following research questions:

1. How are students with special educational needs (SEN) accommodated in the selected inclusive secondary schools?
2. Is there any specialised supervision and monitoring for teachers who teach students with special educational needs?
3. What are the challenges being faced by schools in the implementation of the Special Need Education Policy Guidelines and the strategies that can be used to address such challenges?

The use of semi-structured interview had the privilege that the questions were prepared prior to the interview. Laforest (2009) recommend that questions prepared ahead allow the interviewer to be prepared and appear competent during the interview. Further, Laforest (2009) further argues that semi-structured interview encourages two way communication as those being interviewed can ask questions of the interviewer.

In this way it can function as an extension tool. However, as a researcher, when using semi-structured interview, you have to abide by confidentiality. In this study, the

participants were assured that the information will be used only on research purpose not as a tool for embarrassment

However, semi-structured interview guides were constructed for each group of respondents and this created a challenge as the interview guides limited the researcher on what to explore while other pertinent issues were not addressed on implementation of National SNE Policy Guidelines. This was established through this study. As the researcher used multiple sources to ensure triangulation such as observation, documentary analysis; those pertinent issues which were not addressed in semi-structured interviews were taken care of in other data generation methods.

3.7.2 *Observation guide*

Observation guide answered to the following research question:

What methods does the SNE Teachers use to accommodate students with special educational needs at secondary level of education?

Observation was done in two secondary schools, The researcher observed user friendly infrastructure for each school in order to check the availability of user friendly infrastructure for students with special educational needs and four class observation two from each secondary school with the intention of directly observing the methods used by SNE Teachers use in accommodating students with special educational needs. The Form One and Form Three classes were observed where the students of special needs are placed. Observation as a tool is less demanding in nature, which makes it less bias in working ability, and is a very direct method for generating data or information best for

study of human behaviour. Singh (2010) emphasises that that data collection using observation methods is accurate in nature and also is very reliable. However, observation as a method, problems of the past cannot be studied by means of observation. The researcher in this study used triangulation of data generation tool .such as documentary analysis.

3.7.3 Documentary analysis guide

Documentary analysis responded to question one. ‘What does the National SNE Policy Guidelines stipulate about its implementation? ’The analysed documents were, Class registers, Admission book, selection list and National SNE Policy Guidelines.

Class registers were analysed as the researcher wanted to check the availability of students with special educational needs. The Head Teacher’s admission file and registers provided information on trends of enrolment of students with special educational needs in both schools from 2010/2011 to 2014/2015 academic years. The National SNE Policy Guidelines was checked in order to find out the implementation procedure that Ministry of Education would follow in implementing National SNE Policy Guidelines in secondary schools. Much privilege of using documentary analysis is the access to information that would be difficult to get it in any other way, such as people or cases that might not be willing to talk in a formal research interview or might be difficult to track down (Laforest, 2009).

However, this too is time consuming as other documents are complicated to follow (Singh 2010). The researcher was well prepared when using this tool, time was dully allocated in examining the documents.

2010/2015 to 2014/2015 academic years

Table 1: Enrolment of special needs students in two secondary schools

Secondary	Year: 2014/No of LSNs	Year: 2015/No of LSNs
A	13	16
B	37	41

3.8 Data Management

Qualitative data was recorded and stored systematically in a laptop with a password. The comments made by Education Division Manager, Deputy Head-teachers, SNE Teachers and Students with special educational needs were quoted in words to support researcher's assessment of various discussions (Berg, 2007). In addition, the researcher posted the data to her email box for safe keeping.

3.9 Data Analysis

Marshall and Rossman (2003. p, 270) defines data analysis in a qualitative research as “a process of deep immersion in the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials you have collected; systematically organising these materials into salient themes and patterns; bringing meaning so that the themes tell a coherent story”. Qualitative data was

analysed using thematic analysis. This is allocating data according to its theme which was developed in course of data generation. Marshall and Rossman (2003), further, added that “one important feature about qualitative data analysis is that throughout the study one describes, analyses and interprets data, although different activities may be more focused and instrumental at various times.”

A six phase analytic procedure of qualitative data analysis by Rossman and Rallis (2003) was followed which begins with the stage of organizing the data, cleaning up the unmanageable and overwhelming data to polish up the field notes and transcribed data more retrievable.

The researcher made sure that all the field notes were dated, the exact setting of data generation enclosed, and all the participants particulars also were included. This was important because the study targeted different groups of respondents of different status such as the Education Division Manager, the Deputy Head teachers, the SNET and Students with special educational needs). This stage is vital because it saves time. Rossman and Rallis (2003) also agrees that data cleaning saves time and creates more complete records and stimulates analytic thinking.

After ensuring that the data was clean, the second stage was reading and reviewing the data repeatedly in order to ensure if there were gaps that needed to be filled before generating categories and themes. This repetition of reading of data made the researcher to be familiar with that data. The interviews were recorded in a phone and were played

over and over to make sure all the important and relevant data for the study was picked out. In addition, all the data collected through interviews from the Education Division Manager (EDM), Deputy Head-Teachers, SNET and students with special education needs were transcribed verbatim.

In the third stage, several themes were generated based on the outcome of the data as Rossman and Rallis, (2003) called this stage “generating Categories and themes.” Themes are important because they assist in grouping the data according to similarities and facilitate expansion through further explanation. The categories explored in the study were as follows:

Table 2: Categories explored in the study

CATEGORY	THEME
Infrastructure [1]	Availability of user Friendly Infrastructure in secondary schools.
Resources [2] Human resource material resource Financial resource	Availability of teachers, SNET , Assistants Teaching and Learning materials, infrastructure Funding/Financial support
Teaching Methods [3]	Teaching methods SNE Teachers use in accommodating students with special education needs.
Supervision & Monitoring [4]	Effects and supervision of Monitoring on SNE

Categories were coded as shown in Table2. Thus easing interpretation of data and providing relevant information needed to determine the issue on implementation of National SNE Policy Guidelines in secondary schools.

The fourth stage after generating categories and themes in data analysis is coding. Rossman and Rallis (2003) states that, coding is the formal representation of analytic thinking.

Further, they defined a code as “word or short phrase that captures and signals what is going on in a way that links it to some general analysis issue.” Coding is critical because it links the themes. The step involves thinking through the evidence of the themes and categories generated earlier. Relevant data from the semi-structured part of the interviews was coded. The achievement was through the production of hard copies of all data and the data was coded by hand. As shown in ‘Table 1’ above each category generated had a number representing it. The number was written next to the line with the related categories and each different number had a different colour to avoid confusion.

The fifth stage was data interpretation. According to Patton (2002, p.480) “Interpretation means attaching significance to what was found, making sense of findings, offering explanations, drawing conclusions, extrapolating lessons, making inferences, considering meanings, and otherwise imposing order.” In this study the interpretation was based on three contexts of interpretation as advocated by Rossman and Rallis (2003) who shows that interpretation is participants’ understanding, common-sense understanding and

theoretical understanding. Thus, the interpretation was centred on story-telling, making sense on what the participants said in the field, and relating all participants' experience and expressions to theories and other important issues. Data interpretation is a vital stage whereby all the themes or categories that were created lead to the narration of meaningful summary of the study.

Sixth stage is the search for alternative understanding in which a researcher needs to search for, identify, and describe them and then demonstrate how his or her interpretation is sound, logical and grounded in the data (Rossman and Rallis, 2003).

3.10 Issues of Trustworthiness

According to Guba and Lincoln in Schwandt (2001, p.258) trustworthiness is “a simple set of criteria that have been provided for judging the quality or goodness of qualitative investigation”. Creswell (2002) in Milner (2008, p.40) describes triangulation as “a process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data collection in descriptions and themes in qualitative research”. The researcher examines each information source and finds evidence to support a theme. The issues that render the study trustworthy are as follows: At the analysis level, triangulation of results was done to ensure objectivity by drawing from several data sources and methods to inform the same issue.

The other aspect is sharing of experience with classmates and workmates which Rossman and Rallis (2003) describes as activities of community of practice. The activity of

community of practice in this research mainly involved asking questions and seeking support in form of comments on the research instruments. As such, discussing some of the issues in the study gave me confidence so that the work gained credibility.

In addition, the study was set in such a way that it respected the ethical considerations that are supposed to be observed in any standard research. The design and the instruments used were relevant to the study because they assisted in identifying issues that eventually contributed significantly to the sought results. The variety in the instruments in this study is deliberate to ensure trustworthiness in the data collection about the phenomenon and context under study.

3.11 Ethical consideration

Ethical consideration as defined by Cohen et al, (2007) is “a way of being sensitive and considering the rights, duties and responsibility of individuals who are participating in a research study in terms of their status, religion, race, ability and age”. Ethics include how to show respect for the key aspects of the human character.

3.11.1 Confidentiality

Knowing that this study dealt with real people in real situations and had real consequences, it was obliged in accordance with human rights provisions as enshrined in the ‘Constitution of the Republic of Malawi’ where everyone has a right to privacy. As such, the study was conducted in accordance with research ethics by ensuring that the ‘participants’ responses were treated with utmost confidentiality in the course of study in

which confidentiality relates to the researcher's responsibility to give assurance to the participant and the way to keep secret the origin of information (Mertens & McLaughlin, 2004).

Confidentiality was achieved through the researcher promising the participants that what they discussed would be anonymous (Denscombe, 2007). For example, the researcher provided a participant information sheet highlighting confidentiality and anonymity to overcome what Mertens and McLaughlin (2004) advised that in all research that involves students there should be a concern about privacy and revealing personal identifiable information.

3.11.2 Anonymity

The study not only recognized the importance of knowing one's own code of ethics and moral principles as per Rossman and Rallis (2003), but also ensuring participants' anonymity; hence the researcher protected the identities of the respondents.

3.11.3 Informed Consent

Luttrell (2010) states that the concept of informed consent assumes the transparency of a social and psychological reality that enables a researcher to provide full and accurate information about the research to autonomous subjects who are able to make rational and informed choices" Informed consent is part of the protocol of the research process (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). In this research, the researcher made sure that "participants had adequate information regarding the research, and the participants were capable of

comprehending the information and have the power of free choice enabling them to consent to or decline participation in the research voluntarily” (Mertens & McLaughlin, 2004). The researcher made known to participants all possible dangers and consequences likely involved in the research process.

3.11.4 Gate Keepers

Creswell (2003), also states that ethical procedures during data collection is to gain the permission of individuals in authority (e.g. gatekeepers) to provide access to study participants’ at the research site. This was done in both secondary schools where the study took place. The head-teachers were given the introductory letter based on the research topic before meeting any participant and before interviewing the Education Division Manager (EDM). Further, participants were provided with the background of the study to eliminate suspicions. This was very vital as the participants were fully aware of the aim of the study and that helped them understand their role as participants in the study. This is agreement with Kidder et al” (1981, p.381) cited in Milner (2008, p.41) who stated that “withholding information about research in which a person consents to participate is a questionable practice, the right of free choice has been curtailed and, as a result, human dignity has been diminished.”

The informed consent facilitated their willingness to respond in the study and their withdrawal if they wished to do so. On the part of participants, this minimised uncertainty. Further, the researcher and the interviewees had a better relationship through qualitative semi-structured interview method as face-to-face interview reduced the degree

of anonymity in both participants' data (Cohen et al., 2007). Participants have to be protected because when sensitive issues have been revealed, others who read the research findings may want to know the source of the information. For that matter, the researcher was aware of consequences the research could cause. In this research, the researcher was mindful to present the data in neutral text (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). This means that some parts of the data is held back because of security for the participants. Cohen et al, (2007) states that researchers have to bear in mind "Who will read the results of the research?" and try to write up results that will not readily identify individual participants.

3.12 Limitations

The limitation was related to generation of data from students with visual, hearing and deaf-blind impairment. It was challenging to generate data from student with hearing disabilities from both secondary schools as they were relying on the non-verbal communication and sign language. However, the researcher had the assistance from the special needs education teacher, in interacting with students with hearing impairment, who was the interpreter during the discussions. It was also very challenging to the researcher to generate data from a Deaf-Blind student from secondary school 'A' as she was completely depending on her friends to explain everything to her. To overcome this, the researcher interviewed the student with Deaf-Blind disability in the presence of the SNET who interpreted everything said to the researcher.

3.13 Chapter summary

The overall approach of the study was qualitative research design. Data collection instruments included; semi-structured interview guide, observation checklist and documentary material review. The sample comprised of EDM, secondary school deputy head teachers, SNET, and students with special educational needs (SEN). Data analysis was through the phases described in the chapter. The chapter also included ethical considerations and experienced some limitations.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Chapter overview

National SNE Policy Guidelines stipulate about its implementation? How are students with special educational needs (SEN) accommodated in the selected inclusive secondary schools? Is there any specialised supervision and monitoring for teachers who teach students with special educational needs? What are the challenges being faced by schools in the implementation of the Special Need Education Policy Guidelines and the strategies that can be used to address such challenges?

4.1 What the National SNE Policy Guidelines stipulate about the implementation

The evidence from the analysed National SNE Policy Guidelines revealed that the Guidelines have been formulated with the aim of providing a universal framework that will assist all education implementers to effectively deliver SNE services in Malawi.

Therefore, the government and other stakeholder will provide efficiently mainstream SNE issues; provide guidance and standardisation in the implementation of SNE; enhance integration of holistic services focusing on all categories of SNE and promote equitable allocation of responses towards the attainment of MDG.

NSNEPG revealed three priority areas, and these are, access and equity in which creation of a positive learning environment for individuals with special educational needs will be created, closing gap between students with special educational needs and those without and ensuring that effective and efficient systems are in place for identification. Further, the Ministry of Education shall provide access to education to all levels, eliminate the imbalances between students with special educational needs and those without, bring awareness to the public about individuals with disabilities and their right to education and ensure the students with special educational needs receive adequate care and support services.

The second priority area revealed that quality and relevance of students with special educational needs should be provided with relevant quality education which will equip them with necessary skills, knowledge, value and attitudes to make them productive and responsible citizens.

The Ministry of Education on this area shall establish and maintain agreed minimum standards for the provision of quality education for students with special educational needs at all education levels, ensure that national curricula respond to the needs of students with special needs education at all times and develop inspection and supervisory Guidelines on SNE.

The third priority area on governance and management revealed the proper systems of government and management for effective and efficient delivery of SNE. The Ministry of

Education shall ensure that SNE has a proper governance and management structures with its objective on improving and expanding governance, management, planning and financing to ensure proper delivery of the SNE at all levels.

What has been stipulated in NSNEPG value students with SEN. However, what is implemented on the ground is different from what the NSNEPG stipulates. Secondary schools that accommodate students with SEN, experience a lot of challenges such as inadequate SNET, inadequate teaching and learning materials, lack of user friendly infrastructure and there is less supervision for SNET as a result students with SEN are not accommodated fully in secondary schools as they encounter a lot of challenges as secondary school are not providing necessities required to students with SEN. This shows partial implementation of NSNEPG

4.2 Availability of user friendly infrastructures in secondary schools

The findings from the interviews with Education Division Manager, secondary school deputy head teachers and the special educational needs students' on infrastructure revealed that some of the secondary schools have user friendly infrastructure for students with special educational needs whilst others do not have. For example, during the interview, the EDM explained that;

“Effective Learning is a process. It requires not only teachers teaching but also the environment which is accommodative. However, most secondary schools do not have ramps, flash doors, they have stairs, no lower shelves in the library, hostels, classrooms, and library have steps which makes it difficult for the wheelchair users to access the buildings..” (Interviews with EDM, August, 2015).

The EDM emphasised that user friendly infrastructure is very important to education for students with special Needs. The EDM explained that the National SNE Policy Guidelines stipulated the provision of suitable environment for students with special educational needs at all levels of education in the country, Malawi (MoE, 2009). The information about infrastructure in secondary schools is that some secondary schools have user friendly infrastructure while others are not. This absence of user friendly infrastructure made learning difficult for students with special educational needs.

In addition, the secondary school deputy head teacher in School 'A' pointed out that the infrastructure in the school is not user friendly and gave an example that the path leading to classrooms, library, resource centre, Physical Science, Biology and Agriculture labs have steps. He showed much concern with the students with special educational needs. In his concern he stated that;

“To tell the truth, this secondary school has no user friendly infrastructure to accommodating students with special educational needs. Although students with special educational needs are selected to this school, I believe they feel out of place as all the paths leading to classrooms, library, hostels and labs are full of steps and difficulty for visual impaired students and wheelchair users to access.”(Interview with deputy head teacher, secondary school 'A', June, 2015)

Contrary to this, the deputy head teacher from secondary school 'B' described secondary school 'B' as a user friendly infrastructure for students with special educational needs. He elaborated that the classes, library, labs have the provision of wheelchair users. Furthermore, due to the availability of lower shelves in the library students are able to go

to resource centres on their own. The only challenge faced by students with special educational needs especially those with visual disabilities (total blindness and partial vision) is the path from the hostels to classrooms because of the small stones. He explained;

“The minor challenge is the path from the hostels to classrooms which has small stones and students with visual and low vision impairments complain about these stones.” (Interview with deputy head teacher, secondary school ‘B’, June, 2015).

In addition, a special needs education teacher for students with visual impairment at School A explained that;

“Students with VI have disadvantages in accessing building at this secondary school because every foot path leading to classroom, library, and hostels and even to the resource centre has steps. Their friends help them each and every day” (Interview with SNET secondary school ‘A’, June, 2015)”

Another special needs education teacher for students with visual impairment shared her experience and explained;

“We had a case in 2009 where a student with visual impairment student wanted to go to hostel, all her friends were already gone, she missed the path she used to travel, she took a foot path where they are 12 ‘WIDER STEPS’ as they call them ‘PAMAWIDER’. She did not manage to complete the steps. She fell down, rolled down the steps. She had bruises all over her body. She was taken to hospital where she was treated” (Interview with SNET secondary school ‘A’. June, 2015)

The third special needs education teacher for students with visual impairment from the same secondary school commented also on the environment along the path where the student with visual impairment used to walk. She stated that;

“Despite the steps the foot path has but also thorny bushes along the path. As SNET in visual impairment, I have been going to the administrators to assign ground workers to remove these thorny flowers, but all is in vain” (Interview with SNET secondary school ‘A’, June, 2015)

The interviews with the students with disabilities revealed that secondary schools are accessible to students with visual impairment. One of the students with hearing impairment from secondary school ‘A’ commented on accessibility of the environment. She commented;

“Walking around the secondary school campus is not a problem but for the VI students, their first days especially the form ones in a new environment can be challenging as they depend on other students to help them get around until they get used to the place”. (Interview with student hearing impairment, secondary school ‘A’, July, 2015)

One of the students with visual impairment from secondary school ‘B’ emphasised that;

“I find the secondary school generally accessible to me as I do not have ‘mobility problems.’ (Interview with student visual impairment, secondary school ‘B’, July, 2015)

The second student with visual impairment from the same secondary school ‘B’ commented on the accessibility of the school. She stated that;

“The students with visual impairment become comfortable once they get used to the environment. Others like those who use wheel chairs would certainly face difficulties visiting the classes which are located a distance as the paths from the hostels to classrooms have stones”. (Interview with student with visual impairment, secondary school ‘B’ July, 2015).

Further, one of the students with visual impairment from secondary school ‘A’ commented on accessibility of the school. She stated that;

“The secondary school buildings are not accessible to us, I solely depend on my friend to go round the premises of school.”(Interview with student with visual impairment, secondary school ‘A’ July, 2015).

In addition, a student with Deaf-Blind impairment from secondary school ‘A’ was assisted by her friends in expressing her views on accessibility of secondary school. She complained;

“I feel I am not welcomed at this secondary school. Starting with classes, our own resource centre, labs and even the library where I access books the paths leading to them are full of steps. I compare secondary school and primary school; I was more comfortable at primary than secondary education since everything accommodated me as a special needs student.”(Interview with a Deaf-Blind impairment student secondary school ‘A’, July, 2015).

The observation schedule further revealed that the buildings at secondary school ‘A’ are accessible to students with visual impairment, however, the footpath leading to building have steps which limit the students with special educational needs especially those with visual impairment. The researcher also observed secondary school ‘B’ using the check

list, where she found the buildings were accessible to all students with special educational needs including those with visual and low vision students.

In this case, the findings suggest that not all secondary schools are suitable for accommodating students with special educational needs. The EDM as an education provider has the knowledge of what type of environment the students with special educational needs is supposed to have after reading National SNE Policy Guidelines Guideline, Secondary school 'B' is in line with the National SNE Policy Guidelines and social model of disability as it provided the students with special educational needs with suitable environment by having the structures which are user friendly.

However, Secondary school 'A' is contrary to what has been stipulated in National SNE Policy Guidelines on provision of education facilities that support education of students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and this is against social model of disability which discourages disabling environment (Barnes, 2009).

To ensure inclusive learning environment for students with special educational needs, all secondary schools should provide them with special learning support and services. Secondary school 'B' has made an effort towards a more accommodative physical environment for students with special educational needs as they have flattened most areas in the corridors where there were steps into ramps.

From the findings, secondary schools accommodate students with disabilities. However, some of these students have challenges in accessing infrastructure of secondary schools as it is made not in favour for these students with disabilities. The findings in this study corroborate the findings reported by Munthali, (2011). In his study of situational analysis of persons with disability, he pointed out that it is difficult in implementing inclusive education as not all schools have user friendly infrastructure. This is tandem with the study of Kamchedzera, (2010) on implementation of inclusion policy in Malawian Secondary Schools which pointed out that inclusive education is not successfully done in secondary schools due to absence of user friendly infrastructures in other secondary schools.

4.3 Provision of Resources in Secondary Schools

This section looks at provision of resources in terms of teaching and learning materials and personnel. All participants were asked to comment on the provision of resources for students with special educational needs in secondary schools.

4.3.1 Teaching and Learning Materials

The findings from the interviews with Education Division Manager, secondary school deputy head teachers, the special needs education teachers and the special educational needs students on provision of resources revealed that secondary schools have inadequate resources for students with special educational needs in secondary schools. For example, during the interview, the EDM pointed out that;

“Teaching and learning materials are inadequate for students with special educational needs in secondary school. This is due to inadequate funding from the government through Ministry of Education to education division which results into insufficient Provision of teaching and learning material to SNE”. (Interview with EDM, August, 2015)

From the response on funding, it shows that the Directorate of Special Needs Education, receive little funding from MoE which is not enough to cater for the students with special educational needs in secondary schools. For instance out of the government funding of K201,485 million the Ministry of Education got in 2014-2015fiscal year, only 0.02%(K38 Million) of this amount was allocated to the Directorate of Special Needs Education sector, (ESIP II, 2013/14 -2017/18, .p.68).

Proper delivery of special needs education at all levels needs improved financing and this is also a policy area aiming at improving education management, planning and financing of Special needs Education sector so that there is proper delivery of Special Needs Education at all levels.

This is in resonance with the social model of disability which allows inclusion of students with special educational needs at all levels of education (Barnes 2009.). However, the EDM explained;

“The Education Division Office has a budget on Special Needs Education. However, funding depends on what the office has received for the year. If the government of Malawi has funded enough money for education to the division, then, special needs education also receive enough funding, or the opposite can happen.” (Interview with EDM, August,, 2015)

Although a budget is always allocated to the Directorate of Special Needs Education, the funding is always merger according to the EDM. She further explained that;

“I checked the records for five consecutive years, the funding from the government is inadequate and the department of Special Need Education automatically suffers. Though I am only nine months in Education Division office, I have seen, not enough funding is allocated to Special Needs Education. (Interview with EDM, August, 2015)

She was much concerned on teaching and learning material. She commented;

“Lack of Teaching and learning materials affect teaching and learning process for students with Special educational needs. I am much concerned with inadequate teaching and learning materials for the students with special educational needs in secondary schools since the core of education dwell in teaching and learning materials.” (Interview with EDM, August, 2015)

The findings from the interviews with deputy head teachers on teaching and learning materials revealed that secondary schools have inadequate teaching and learning materials,. For example, during the interview, the deputy head teachers explained that teaching and learning materials are inadequate in both secondary schools. In his comment the deputy head teacher secondary school ‘A’, pointed out that;

“It is pathetic to have secondary schools with teaching and learning material for all students with special educational needs which is not enough. For example: the visual impairment students are lacking Braille books, the hearing impairment students are lacking hearing aids and low vision students are lacking big print books.”(Interview with deputy head teacher secondary school ‘A’, June, 2015)

Further, the deputy head teacher secondary school 'B' pointed out that;

“This secondary school has a challenge in repairing the gadgets for the students with the hearing impairment as they are expensive. To make things worse, secondary school has no enough computers that produce sound for teaching and student process for students with visual impairment.” (Interview with deputy head teacher secondary school 'B', June, 2015)

The findings from the interviews with Special Needs Education teachers on availability of teaching and learning resources revealed that both secondary schools have inadequate resources. For example, during the interview one of SNET for hearing impairment from secondary school 'B' stated that;

“Hearing aids are expensive; the school cannot manage to buy them. These hearing aids are provided by Mont Font College to the resource centres though not enough”. (Interview with SNET hearing impairment secondary school 'B' June, 2015)

Another SNET for students with HI from secondary school 'B' indicated that;

“The school does not provide the hearing aids, they are very expensive comparing to the funding the schools receive. However, he added, Mont Font College provide hearing aids though they are inadequate comparing to the students with hearing impairment at this school” (Interview with SNET students w hearing impairment secondary school 'B', June, 2015)

The findings from the SNET revealed that both secondary school A and B provide Braille books to students with visual impairment. However, one of special needs education teachers for students with visual impairment from secondary school 'B' stated that;

“The provision of Braille books is insufficient comparing to the students the school have. The students sometimes share the Braille book which is not recommended.”(Interview with SNET visual impairment secondary school 'B', June, 2015)

Another SNET for students with visual impairment for students with visual impairment from secondary school 'A' commented;

“The secondary schools provided Braille books but are not enough. the resource room is full of Braille books which are outdated and we do not use them.”(Interview with SNET visual impairment secondary school 'A', June 2015)

Two of the SNET for students with visual impairment from secondary school 'A' and 'B' 'were much concerned with students of Low Vision. One from secondary school 'B' pointed out that;

“The large print books are not available at this secondary school; the visual impairment SNETs are always enlarging the work of low vision student which is tiresome to the part of these teacher.” (Interview SNET visual impairment secondary school 'B', June, 2015)

The findings from the students with low vision revealed that the students with low vision have challenges in using the books. One of the students from secondary school 'B' highlighted the challenges as follows;

“I have a challenge with big print books. The secondary schools do not give us enough big print books. The SNETs for students with visual impairment are the ones who transcribe small print to large print for us to access what has been written.” (Interview with student low vision secondary school 'B', July, 2015)

Another student with low vision from secondary school 'A' complained on the same challenge of big print books. She pointed out that;

"I have a challenge in reading the books as most of the books are not of big prints" (Interview with student low vision secondary school 'A', July, 2015)

In addition, the findings from special educational needs student revealed that the availability of teaching learning materials in both secondary schools are inadequate. One of the students with visual impairment from secondary school 'A' emphasised that;

"I have a challenge when it comes to learning process due to inadequate Braille books. I sometime share a book with my friend who is not in accordance with my condition, I am not assisted. (Interview with student visual impairment secondary school 'A', July, 2015)

She further commented that;

"The issue of Braille books could be handed well if the secondary school is made aware of the challenges students with visual impairment meet if there are no enough Braille books before enrolment, so that they would have prepared well in advance". (Interview with student visual impairment secondary school 'A', July 2015)

One of the students with hearing impairment from secondary school 'B' also complained on having a challenge on accessibility of hearing aids. He explained;

"I wonder why I am at this secondary school, because the hearing aids are the necessity for me. However, the administrators of the school claim that the hearing aids are expensive and cannot manage to buy them".(Interview with student hearing impairment secondary school 'B' June, 2015)

Another student with hearing impairment from the same secondary school complained that;

“I have even find difficulties in repairing aids when damaged. My parents come to my rescues in repairing my hearing aids”. (Interview with student hearing impairment secondary school ‘B’, July, 2015)

The response of EDM, deputy head teachers, SNET and students with special educational needs on teaching and learning material, illustrates that students with special educational needs are not receiving proper assistance to help them attain educational aspirations which shows partial implementation of National SNE Policy Guidelines in secondary schools. This is contrary to the objective of National SNE Policy guidelines on ensuring that all education institutions create and provide supportive learning environment (MoE and Vocational Training, 2009, p.6). The lack of teaching and learning material is contrary to providing supportive learning environment as stipulated in the National SNE Policy Guidelines to compromise the education of students with special educational needs. Additionally, lack of materials is not in tandem with the social model of disability that focuses inclusion of students with disability at all level of education barriers of students with disability. (Barnes, 2009).

The findings in this study corroborate the findings reported by Chavuta (2010) and Munthali (2011). The studies established that there are inadequate teaching and learning materials in secondary schools. Some of these are insufficient Braille books for visual impairment students, lack of large print books, hearing aids and assistive devices.

Further, Kamchedzera and Aubrey (2010) pointed out that implementation of Inclusion Policy in secondary schools failed because of lack of teaching and learning materials.

This is tandem with what the study has established that secondary schools are failing to implement National SNE Policy Guidelines due to inadequate teaching and learning materials.

The secondary schools are not providing enough teaching and learning materials to students with special educational needs as revealed from the findings. Teaching and learning materials are essential for learning process to take place, yet the secondary schools are in deficit of the material resources. This means the partial implementation as the secondary schools are not providing adequate materials. The findings on teaching and learning instructions is not in line with social model of disability as lack of teaching and learning instructions encourages discrimination among students. The National Policy on Special Needs Education Policy Guidelines also highlights the need for inclusion of students with special educational needs through provision of adequate teaching and learning instructions to ensure successful implementation of the policy.

However, findings from this study cast doubt whether this would be realized as shown from the inadequacy of teaching and learning materials.

4.3.2 Human resource – SNET

The findings from the interviews with EDM on deployment of SNET for students with disabilities revealed that SNET are deployed to assist students with special educational needs.

However, they are understaffed, and not all categories relating to the number and diversity of students with special educational needs are deployed. In her statement she explained;

“The staffing at secondary school level is inadequate. The shortage of staffing has come because of many factors such as funding constraints for training SNET” (Interview with EDM, August, 2015)

Further, the EDM commented on provision of SNET as stipulated in National SNE Policy Guidelines. She stated that;

“The National SNE Policy Guidelines stipulated the provision of SNET for students with disabilities and emphasised that all regular teachers are supposed to have the skills and knowledge of Special Needs Education in compromising education for student with special needs and implementation of National SNE Policy Guidelines”.(Interview with EDM, August, 2015)

The EDM further revealed the status of regular teachers. In her comment she explained;

“Orientation of regular teachers is supposed to be frequent as they are in an environment of students with special educational needs that needs skills and knowledge of SNE.” (Interview with EDM,, August, 2015)

Further, the findings from both head teachers from secondary schools ‘A’ and ‘B’ on availability of SNET for students with disabilities revealed that SNET are inadequate in both secondary schools.

One of the deputy head teachers from secondary school ‘A’ explained the status of SNET that are under staff. In her explanation, she pointed out that;

“The school has a deaf-blind girl; however, the deaf-blind Special Needs education Teacher is not available. Those SNET for hearing and visual impairments are responsible for her. However, they complain of having difficulties to communicate to this student”. (Interview with deputy head teacher secondary school ‘A’, June, 2015)

Another deputy head teacher from secondary school ‘B’ commented on the shortage of SNET. In his comment he explained;

“It is difficult to identify the students with low vision, and learning difficulties students as the secondary school is not having the Special Needs Education Teachers for these special categories.” (Interview with deputy head teacher secondary school ‘B’, June, 2015)

The information from EDM and deputy head teachers on SNET revealed that secondary schools are understaffed which shows students with special educational needs are not receiving education as required.

This is not in line with quality education that National SNE Policy Guidelines stipulated on students with special educational needs (MoE, 2009) and contrary to what social model of disability advocates in striving to overcome the various barriers encountered by people with disabilities (Barnes 2009).

With regards to information on orientation of regular teachers in secondary schools, many regular teachers have no basic knowledge and skills in Special Needs Education hence there is less attention being given to students with special educational needs in inclusive secondary school setting as everything is left in the hands of Special Needs Education Teachers Chimutu and Makoko (2007). What the study has established collaborate with Chaula (2014) and Moodley (2002) asserted in their studies that when teachers are trained and have the skills to handle students with special needs, they normally gain courage in their work. Awareness on various disabilities makes them have positive attitudes towards the students with SEN.

The National SNE Policy Guidelines emphasised the need to provide education to students with special educational needs in all educational institution and at all levels of education. However, information from the EDM and head teachers shows negligence of deployment of SNET and training for the regular teacher.

This would not help government realise the goal of National SNE Policy Guidelines. This also is against the social model of disabilities that discourages disabling environments to students with special educational needs.

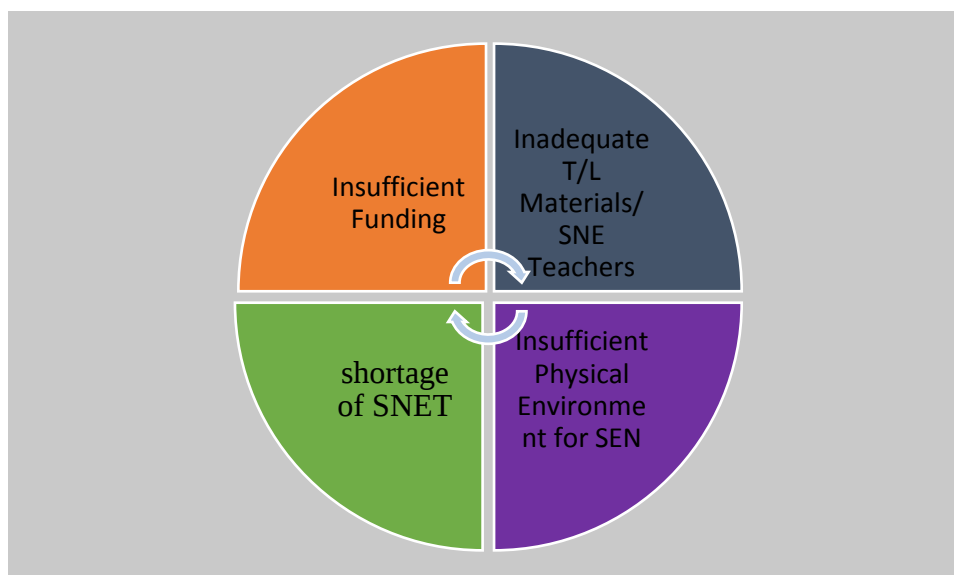


Figure 2: Emerging challenges the secondary school experience in implementing NSNEPG

4.4 Planning lessons and teaching of SNET in accommodate students with SEN.

This section looks at how planning lessons and teaching of Special Needs Education Teachers in accommodating students with special educational needs in secondary school. All SNET were asked to comment on how they plan and teach in accommodating students with SEN in secondary schools.

The findings from SNET on planning lessons and teaching of students with SEN revealed that SNET use different methods in order to accommodate SEN such as sitting plan, Chain and fading, drilling, participatory group work discussion and sometimes field trip education visits. One of the SNET for students with hearing disability from secondary school 'B' commented on the method she uses in accommodating student with hearing impairment. In her comment she pointed out that;

“In my classroom I use sitting plan Methods, I place a student with hearing impairment at a right place so that they may have an access to me as I am interpreting to them using sign language and my lips.”(Interview with SNET hearing disability secondary school ‘B’, June, 2015)

Another SNET for hearing disability from secondary school ‘B’ commented that;

“Other students are long- sighted. I place these student at the back of the classroom where she/he can manage to have a better sight on the chalkboard or to the direction where I am gesturing or showing a picture containing information or if the student is short sighted, then as a specialist teachers I place the student in front of the classroom for better access on the chalkboard and myself as a specialist” (Interview with SNET hearing disability June, 2015).

The researcher observed the form one class where one of SNET for students with HI from secondary school ‘A’ was teaching. The researcher observed students with hearing disability being placed at the direction where they were accessing the special Needs Education teacher when interpreting using sign language and lips. The students were responding to the question when asked.

The researcher also observed a lesson taught in Form Three by another SNET for student with hearing impairment from secondary school ‘B’. The researcher observed the students with hearing impairment being considered by the SNET for hearing impairment. The students with hearing impairment were guided where to sit. When asked the reasons why those act, she explained;

“As SNET, we would want students with hearing impairment to understand the concept we are teaching and thus why we always ask questions to them. Me as an individual, I would like to evaluate if students with hearing impairment understood what I have taught” (Interview with SNET hearing disability secondary school ‘B’, June, 2015)

Further, one of the SNET for student with hearing disability from secondary school ‘B’ indicated that he uses Chain and fading method. In his comment he said;

“When teaching students with hearing impairment, I follow step by step in order to make these students understand the concept I am teaching”. (Interview with SNET hearing impairment secondary school ‘B’ June, 2015)

One of the SNET for students with hearing impairment from secondary school ‘B’ defined ‘fading’ as a method that SNET use in classroom environment where students have already the knowledge of a concept and is a reminder of the previous lesson as a result they fade some of the letters, word or a sentence in order for students with special educational needs to be reminded what they learnt in previous lesson”.

The researcher observed a Form Three class in which one of the SNET for students with low vision impairment was teaching from secondary school ‘B’ using ‘Chaining and fading method’ . The researcher observed step by step teaching. The SNET for student with visual impairment wrote a sentence on chalk board and start rubbing vowels and consonants one after the other. In conclusion the students with low vision were asked the questions constructed from the lesson and students with partial vision was answering the questions.

Further the SNET for visual impairment from secondary school 'A' and the other SNET for students with visual impairment from secondary school 'B' explained the method they use in accommodating students with SEN. SNET from secondary school 'B' for students with visual impairment explained;

"I use participatory group work discussion method". (Interview with SNET visual impairment secondary school 'A', June, 2015)

The researcher observed a Form One class where SNET for students with visual impairment was teaching at secondary school 'B'. The researcher observed the SNET for students with visual impairment using participatory group work discussion methods where students with visual impairment were included in the groups of regular students. The SNET for visual impairment was going round the groups checking if all students with visual impairment were participating in contributing ideas to the task given. When asked why he was going round the groups, he responded;

"As the visual impairment students are in group work discussion with regular students they are able to interact and discuss the task given by the teacher and they are able to remember what they have discussed in the group work discussion." (Interview with SNET visual impairment secondary school 'B', June, 2015)

Further, another SNET for students with visual impairment from secondary school 'A' stated that;

“I found very easy in assisting students with visual impairment in my classes using participatory method, once the students of special educational needs are told to participate in different activities in classroom environment, they remember the activities they participated in.”(Interview with SNET visual impairment secondary school ‘A’, June, 2015)

The researcher also observed the form one class where the SNET from secondary school ‘A’ was teaching and observed that students with visual impairment were participating in role play in classroom environment. Two of the SNET for students with hearing impairment from secondary school ‘A’ and another SNET for students with visual impairment from secondary school ‘B’ stated that they mostly use drilling method.

One of the SNET for students with visual impairment from secondary school ‘A’ explained that drilling method encourages the student to memorise the concept which leads to understanding of the concept being taught. The researcher observed form one class where a SNET was teaching and using drilling method.

The researcher observed an English lesson where the students with visual impairment were made to memorize the definition of ‘Transitive and Intransitive verbs.’ students were made to repeat: ‘A verb is Transitive when it expresses an action which passes over to an object.’ While ‘A verb Intransitive when the action does not pass over to an object.’

Further she commented on drilling method, she explained;

“Drilling method is one of the best methods in assisting students with special educational needs because these students have challenges in understanding the content I am teaching them, so the best way is to make

them memorise and they will remember what they have memorised. However, she continued, it is very difficulties using drilling method with the deaf-blind students.” (Interview with SNET visual impairment secondary school ‘A’, June, 2015)

Another SNET for students with visual impairment from secondary school ‘B’ explained the method which motivates SEN which is educational trips. In his comment he explained;

“Educational visit and outdoor learning opportunities is one of the best methods in teaching students with special educational needs. It was long time ago when I had an education visit with students of special educational needs and the students were excited as they were able to explain what they saw and hear during the visit (Interview with SNET visual impairment secondary school ‘B’, June, 2015)

However, he complained about the lack of support secondary school render to educational trips.

During observation SNET used participatory group work discussion method more frequently. Other SNET used drilling method and sitting plan method. However, chaining and fading method was not used so often

The information obtained from the study revealed that SNET are implementing what has been stipulated in National SNE Policy Guidelines. For example, it is stipulated that the government will create a positive and least restrictive learning environment for individuals with special educational needs to easily access educational services.

Close the gap between students with special educational needs and those without and ensure that effective and efficient systems are in place for identification. Thus, in the secondary schools, SNET used variety of teaching and methods to reach their full potential in education and make positives.

4.5 Availability of Specialised Supervision and Monitoring for SNET in secondary schools

This section looks at availability of specialised supervision and monitoring for special needs education in secondary schools. All participants were asked to comment on availability of specialised supervision and monitoring for special needs education in secondary schools

The findings from the interviews with the EDM and SNET revealed that the EDM understood that the Education Division office has a role on the implementation of National SNE Policy Guidelines in Secondary schools. The failure and success of implementation of educational policies has a contribution in education (Chimutu and Makoko, 2007). On monitoring and supervision, the EDM stated that;

“The Education Division office have a separate department of Special Needs Education who handles the issues of students with special educational needs in which the Desk Officer of Special Needs Education is allocated to monitor and supervise SNE.”(Interview with EDM ,August, 2015)

This response indicates that the Education Division Manager at divisional level has the practitioner who is responsible for monitoring and supervising the SNE in secondary schools. However, this presence of separate office does not mean monitoring and

supervision is done in secondary schools. However, the EDM advised the researcher to meet the Desk officer for Special Needs Education who explained that monitoring and supervision is one of his duties and the challenge is that he visits secondary schools rarely. The researcher probed further explanation on reasons why rare supervision on SNE. In his response, he said;

“SNE sector encounter a lot of challenges, but the source of all challenges is insufficient funding. SNE does not have adequate funding from Ministry of Education and this lead to very little resource to be distributed in secondary schools especially to the SNET, students with various disabilities in secondary school. However, I visit the secondary schools to check how resourceful and if they are able to use TALULAR (Teaching and Learning Using Available Resources)” (Interview with Desk Officer SNE, August, 2015)

From what the Desk Officer said, it indicate that monitoring and supervision is hindered by financial constraints as the Desk Officer does not respond to the need of SNET and students with disabilities in secondary schools. However, the education of students’ with disabilities depends on the availability of resources. The act is not in resonance with social model of disability and what NSNEPG stipulates on inclusion.

The findings from both secondary school deputy head teachers during interview revealed that monitoring and supervision is done at secondary school level. One of the deputy head teachers from secondary school 'A' commented on monitoring and supervision. In his comment he stated that;

"I personally monitor the SNET and even observe the teaching in classes in which the students of SEN are allocated. I even encourage the students to report on the challenges they meet during classes and even from the hostels while on campus."(Interview deputy head teacher secondary school 'A', June, 2015)

The other deputy head teacher secondary school 'B' also commented on monitoring and supervision. In his comment he said that;

"I am the patron of students with special education needs so that monitoring and supervision of Special Needs Education teachers should not be a problem."(Interview with deputy head teacher secondary school 'B', June, 2015)

The information from the EDM shows that at divisional level there is provision of implementation of National SNE Policy Guidelines through the provision of separate office in which the Desk officer for SNE is allocated. However, The Desk Officer for SNE rarely supervises the SNET due to financial constraints as per his comments (Oral Interview, June, 2015). This shows partial implementation of National SNE Policy Guidelines as the education provider such as MoE is not providing enough of funding for SNE as required.

This therefore compromises education for SEN in terms of unuser friendly infrastructure and lack of teaching and learning aids. Though monitoring and supervision is done in secondary schools, they depend on TALULAR which is in tandem with social model of disability (Barnes, 2009) and in line with what is stipulated in National SNE Policy Guidelines (MoE, 2009).

The findings from the study are well corroborated with The Special Education Department (2006, Article, 13, pp. 40-41) United Arab Emirates (UAE) that indicates the excellent monitoring of SNE as well as supervising SNET in inclusive setting. The Senior Supervisor of SNE provides supervision to the SNETs' in the educational zone, develops and facilitates implementation of training programs to enhance knowledge and skills of the special education instructors and conducts field visits to support and monitor the implementation of the general rules of the SNE programs in coordination with the guidance of special education.

In addition, the UAE introduced the Federal Law No. 29 in 2006, regarding the rights of persons with disabilities which promote the philosophy of inclusive education by ensuring that all students with disabilities in public and private educational institutions in the UAE have access to equal educational opportunities.

The study has established that other studies conducted on SNE did not dwell much on monitoring and supervision while this study found out that monitoring and supervision is at automobile.

Further, the study has established that implementation of National SNE Policy Guidelines is very difficult as it lacks physical monitoring and supervision by education providers. The education providers in this study are the EDM and the Desk Officer for SNE at education division.

4.6 Chapter summary

The findings discussed in this chapter have revealed that the National SNE Policy Guidelines implementation is a challenge in secondary schools as the sector of SNE is not given enough funding from the Ministry of Education which result into infrastructure which is not user friendly, in adequate teaching and learning materials. However, SNET accommodate students with SEN through the use of diverse methods when teaching in an inclusive classroom setting. Monitoring and supervision is at automobile. Unless physical monitoring and supervision from education division improves, the implementation of National SNE Policy Guidelines will be effectively.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the conclusion and implications of the findings of the study about the implementation of the National Special Needs Education Policy in two secondary schools in Blantyre urban. The study answered the following research questions:

1. What does the National SNE Policy Guidelines stipulate about its implementation?
2. How are students with special educational needs (SEN) accommodated in the selected inclusive secondary schools?
3. Is there any specialised supervision and monitoring for teachers who teach students with special educational needs?
4. What are the challenges being faced by schools in the implementation of the Special Need Education Policy Guidelines and what strategies that can be used to address such challenges?

5.1 Conclusion of the findings

The conclusions are presented according to the research questions and the implication follows:

5.1.1 National SNE Policy Guideline

What the National SNE Guidelines stipulate about its implementation is contrary to what is on the ground. For example, a guiding principle concerning discrimination: No student with disabilities shall be discriminated or segregated against in that provision of education services on the basis of age, gender, race, tribe, health status, disability, HIV sero- status, economic status, religion, political affiliation is not totally respected or followed. This is mainly done due to failure of government to provide enough funding to secondary schools, such that some students are discriminated automatically.

5.1.2 User friendly infrastructure

The study found that not all secondary schools have user friendly infrastructure. For example, in one of the secondary schools, paths leading to main structures e.g. library, hostels and classrooms have a lot of steps at secondary school 'A' such a secondary school was not purposely built to accommodate students especially those with mobility and visual impairment. However, secondary school 'B' made an effort to flatten most of the steps into ramps around the teaching area for better accommodation of students with disabilities.

5.1.3 SNET lesson planning and delivery

On the other hand, the study has revealed that both secondary schools ‘A’ and ‘B’ accommodate students with special educational needs through the use of diverse methods in planning and delivery of their lessons. Some of the other methods used were: Participatory group work, sitting plan, drilling, chaining and fading methods.

5.1.4 Monitoring and supervision of SNET

The study found that supervision and monitoring of SNE teachers is not done in secondary school. However, SNE Desk Officer at division level is responsible for this. The study established that the main challenge is financial constraints in the department of SNE. Further, secondary school deputy head teachers supervise and monitor the SNET in their respective secondary school. The SNET use diverse teaching methods in accommodating all students without excluding those with Special educational needs.

5.1.5 Challenges in secondary schools in implementing NSNEPG

The main challenge is shortage of funding in SNE department in secondary schools which led into:

1. Shortage of user friendly infrastructure.
2. Inadequate teaching and learning materials.
3. Deployment of SNET.
4. Rare monitoring and supervision of SNET.

In order to overcome these challenges the government of Malawi has to improve on funding SNE Directorate.

5.1.6 Implication of findings of the study

The findings of the study have various implications. For example, absence of user friendly infrastructure at secondary school ‘A’, inadequate teaching and learning materials, understaffing of SNET, and absence of supervision and monitoring of SNET in secondary schools reflect partial implementation of National SNE Policy Guidelines. This shows that even though the National SNE Policy Guidelines was developed to ensure inclusion of all students despite student’s disabilities, still students with special educational needs are still disadvantaged as they do not have the required infrastructure, teaching and learning materials, and they lack enough SNE teachers.

Another implication is that there is breakdown of communication in implementing National SNE Policy Guidelines. This is shown when the Education Division Manager (EDM) referred the researcher to Desk Officer for SNE to explain better on supervision of SNET in secondary schools. This indicates that the EDM does not properly follow up what the National SNE Policy Guidelines stipulate about its implementation.

In addition, the findings of the study imply that Special Needs Education is being neglected in terms of funding. This is a great challenge because better running of SNE requires enough funding. This insufficient funding in SNE results into shortage of user friendly infrastructure, Inadequate teaching and learning materials, understaffing of

SNET and rarely monitoring and supervision of SNET. These make education for students with SEN difficult and they feel neglected.

Further implication of the study is that supervision of SNET is mainly done at secondary school level. This is shown when the deputy head teachers from both secondary schools 'A' and 'B' show much interest in supervising the SNET in their respective secondary schools, while the Desk Officer for SNE visits to these secondary schools with the aim of supervising SNET are very rare.

This is contrary to the objective that students with SEN will be provided with conducive environment for their education. Other SNET would not use diverse teaching methods in accommodating student with SEN due to absence of supervision.

However, the findings of the study revealed that SNET were accommodating students with SEN through the use of diverse methods in both secondary schools. Hence, there is partial implementation of National SNE Policy Guidelines in secondary schools

5.1.7 Suggested areas for further research

1. At the time of research, there were no wheelchair users in both secondary schools. A similar research could be carried out on such learners to get their perception on the phenomenon studied.

2. As the study revealed that monitoring of SNE is at automobile, a study could be conducted to find out what impact this has on the achievement of SEN.

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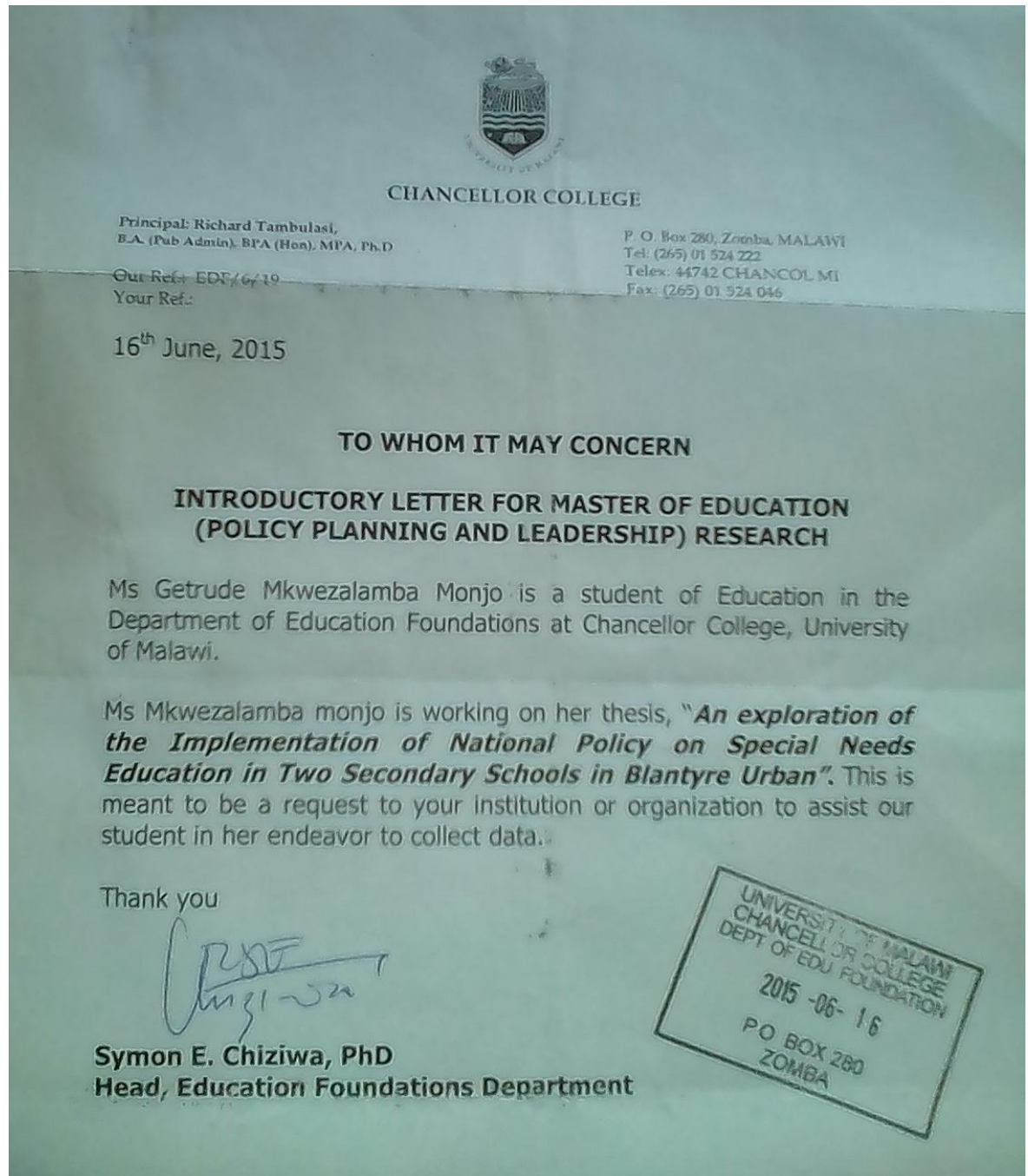
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Introductory letter from Chancellor College



Appendix 2: Introductory Letter to every Participant

Dear participant,

My name is Gertrude Mkwezalamba. I am a second year Master of education (Policy, planning and Leadership) student at Chancellor College.

You have been selected to participate in this study. The purpose of this study is to explore the implementation of National Policy on SNE in secondary schools in Malawi.

The information you will give as you participate in this interview will be important and valuable. I will therefore be very grateful if you answer the questions honestly and carefully.

The answers you give to the questions will be confidential. To ensure confidentiality, please do not disclose your name during interview. You have a right not to respond to the items you feel uncomfortable with. Where the question is not clear, please feel free to ask me for clarification.

Lastly, I would like to thank you for sparing your time to participate in this study

Appendix 3: List of Participants and the Month of Interview

June, 2015

- Two deputy head-teachers from secondary school 'A' and 'B' were interviewed.
- Eight SNET from secondary school A,, and 'B' were interviewed

July, 2015

Twelve students with SEN from secondary school 'A' and 'B'.

August, 2015

- The Education Division Manager: South West Education Division
- Desk officer for SNE: South West Education Division

Appendix 4: List of SNET Observed

June, 2015

SNET for hearing impairment students secondary school 'A' teaching form 'One' class

SNET for visual impairment students secondary school 'A' teaching form 'One' class

SNET for visual impairment student secondary school 'A' teaching form 'One' class

SNET for hearing impairment secondary school 'B' teaching form 'Three' class

SNET for hearing impairment secondary school 'B' teaching form 'Three' class

Appendix 5: Observation Check list School A & B

June, 2015

A. Infrastructure Observation

- ✓ Rating scale: Availability of user friendly infrastructure.
- Absence of user friendly infrastructure

Availability of user Friendly infrastructure	School A	School B
Flash doors		
Ramps		
Toilets		
Wheel chair usage : Classrooms, Hostels & Labs		
Lower shelves in library		

B. Class Lesson Observation

Methods used in accommodating SSNE	School A	School B

Appendix 6: Interview Guides for Education Division Manager (EDM)

August, 2015

Position:

Date:

Sex:

Time

A. User Friendly infrastructure

The National Policy on SNE stipulates the provision of conducive environment for students with special educational needs at all levels of education in the country Malawi.

1. How accessible are secondary schools in accommodating students with SEN?

B. Provision of resources

2. Does the Education Division provide adequate resources for accommodating for
student with SEN in secondary schools?

C. Monitoring and supervision

3. How is monitoring and supervision taking place in secondary schools for accommodating students with SEN?

Do you have any question or comment?

Thank you for participating in this study.

Appendix 7: Interview Guides for Desk Officer: SNE.

August, 2015

Position:

Date:

Sex:

Time

Is there any specialised supervision and monitoring for SNE Teachers at secondary school level?

Do you have any question or comment?

Thank you for participation in this study

Appendix 8: Interview Guide for Deputy Head teachers

June, 2015

Secondary school:

Date:

Sex:

Time:

A. User Friendly infrastructure

The National Policy on SNE stipulates the provision of conducive environment for students with special educational needs at all levels of education in the country Malawi.

1. How accessible is the secondary school in accommodating students with special educational needs?

B. Provision of resources

2. Does the secondary school provide adequate resources in accommodating students with special educational needs?

C. Monitoring and Supervision

3. How is monitoring and supervision taking place for enhancing accommodation for students with special educational needs at this secondary school?

Do you have any question or comment?

Thank you for participation in this study

Appendix 9: Interview Guide for SNET

June, 2015

Secondary school:

Date:

Sex:

Time:

A. User Friendly Infrastructure

1. How accessible do you think the secondary school is for accommodating students with special educational Needs?

B. Provision of resources

2. Does the secondary school provide adequate resources in accommodating students with special educational needs?

C. Planning lessons and teaching

3. What methods do you use in teaching and learning process in order to accommodate students with special educational needs?

Do you have any question or comment?

Thank you for participating in this study

Appendix 10: Interview Guide for Students with SEN.

July, 2015

Secondary school:

Date:

Sex:

Time:

Type of disability:

Age:

A) User friendly infrastructure

- 1) How accessible are the secondary school buildings?

B) Provision of resources

- 2) Does the secondary school provide adequate special learning materials?

Do you have any question or comment?

Thank you for participating in this interview.