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THE CHALLENGES HINDERING EFFECTIVE UTILIZATION OF TEACHING FACILITIES IN THE DELIVERY OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN CHEMBA DISTRICT COUNCIL, TANZANIA

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Abstract: **The study sought to examine the challenges hindering effective utilization of teaching facilities in the delivery of inclusive education in public primary schools in Chemba District Council, Tanzania. This study was informed by the Social Model of Disability Theory where the environment and institutional barriers that hinder learners with disabilities from actively participating are highlighted. Qualitative methodology with an interpretivist paradigm was used where a multiple case study design was used. Four public primary schools within Chemba District Council practicing inclusive education were selected using a purposive sampling technique. This study involved 41 respondents where four were headteachers, eight were classroom teachers, twenty-eight were pupils and one was a District Special Education Officer. Findings indicate that the use of teaching facilities for inclusive education was inhibited by various interlinked constraints. These include overcrowding in classrooms, lack of specialized teaching facilities like Braille machines and books with large fonts, teacher inadequacies in terms of knowledge about inclusive education, lack of communication between teachers and students suffering from deafness, lack of special education experts, and uneven provision of teaching facilities in schools. The study also found out that most available facilities were not sufficient, unused, or even inaccessible due to lack of technical skills on the part of the teachers. The study concludes that, it is evident that the efficiency of the teaching facilities in ensuring inclusivity in education is not only dependent on their availability but also teachers' professionalism, resource equity, and learning environment. The study recommends the best way to increase the use of the teaching facilities in inclusive education, the study suggests increasing the availability of assistive teaching facilities and ensuring their equitable distribution in addition to recruiting experts in special education and improving monitoring and maintenance systems in the schools.**

Keywords: **Inclusive education, teaching facilities, pupils with disabilities, assistive aids, competencies of teachers, government-owned primary schools.**

1. INTRODUCTION

The challenges to the effective use of learning centers in Chemba District Council are characteristic of the failure to implement policies effectively across the Global South and Sub-Saharan Africa. The progressive national statutory policies are often hindered by serious problems of inadequate resources, bureaucratic barriers, and institutional barriers at the local level. As a result, there is a huge gap between policy intentions and classroom practice of special needs children.

To provide an example of this universal trend, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016) and National Education Policy (2020) of India require barrier-free settings, adaptation of curricula, and use of assistive technologies for inclusion. Unfortunately, there is an inability to optimize resource allocation by the rural public schools because of severe budget restrictions and delays in procurement and training of mainstream teachers (Sharma & Kumar, 2022).

Along a parallel path in West Africa, the government of Ghana implemented the Inclusive Education Policy of 2015 to establish the Inclusive Education Resource Centers (IERCs) aimed at enhancing resource sharing and teacher training. Even with this structure, however, rural primary schools experience several challenges including physical obstacles, shortage of special materials like Braille devices, and lack of maintenance staff resulting in untapped resources (Adebayo & Salami, 2021).

Along the same lines in the same region, Nigeria through its policy on special needs education in 2018 calls for local governments to equip schools with functioning resource rooms and learning devices. The implementation of the policy, however, suffers from poor funding, very high pupil-teacher ratio, and inadequate training for teachers making them view assistive devices as an additional device (Ogunyemi et al., 2022).

Moving onto Southern Africa, South African Education White Paper 6 (2001) seeks to change mainstream institutions by using "Full-Service Schools" and specialized centers. In spite of that, rural-urban disparities persist, as there are still problems in the form of infrastructure backlog, shortage of specialized assistive technology, and overwhelmed teachers teaching big classes (Nel & Walton, 2021).

This similar situation is seen in the region of East Africa, where Persons with Disabilities Act in Uganda seeks to facilitate inclusive education and adaptive instruction material. Nonetheless, due to constraints such as overcrowded classrooms, examination system and constant scarcity of basic materials such as Braille paper, many assistive facilities become inoperable (World Bank, 2023).

Building on the East African perspective, the Kenyan Sector Policy for Children and Trainees with Disabilities (2018) demands adaptive infrastructure and flexible assessment strategies. However, despite this requirement, rural primary schools are still faced with poor equipment, limited teacher professional development, and stigma based on socio-cultural aspects (Okot & Amanya, 2020).

Finally, at both the national and local levels in Tanzania, the National Strategy for Inclusive Education (2022-2026) mandates the Local Government Authorities to guarantee adaptive and accessible learning environment (MoEST, 2023). However, the local application of inclusive education policy in Chemba District Council remains highly constrained by limited budget, remote location, unreliable grants, and the shortage of special education officers. This has resulted in poor school infrastructure and absence of adapted learning tools in public primary schools, as well as inefficient use of existing facilities due to untrained teachers (Bakari, 2025; Mwambe & Mrema, 2024).

Statement of the Problem

An inclusive primary education system is paramount in ensuring that pupils with special educational needs acquire basic skills like functional literacy and numeracy and hence help break the cycle of poverty and social deprivation (Bakari, 2025; World Bank, 2023). As per the Tanzanian National Strategy for Inclusive Education 2022–2026, public primary schools should offer adapted teaching facilities like Braille material, tactile devices, wheelchair ramps, and adjusted desks to create equal opportunities for these children (MoEST, 2023). Nonetheless, in rural areas like Chemba District Council, children with disabilities continue to suffer from extreme educational exclusion, dropouts, and poor learning experiences because of dilapidated and inaccessible teaching facilities or those that are not used at all (Charles & Otieno, 2023; Singal, 2021). It therefore means that these learners will continue suffering from the denial of their right to quality education.

However, even though there has been sufficient literature covering some of the macro issues facing inclusive education including budget deficits at the national level, policy formulation deficiencies, and stigma, there has not been sufficient empirical evidence covering the use of teaching facilities within local governments (Adebayo & Salami, 2021; Sharma & Kumar, 2022). The vast majority of Tanzanian literature evaluates the availability of teaching facilities using an administrative perspective without sufficient knowledge about the reasons why such facilities are not being used or stored away in classrooms located in rural areas (Mwambe & Mrema, 2024). In particular, there is no empirical evidence about the interplay between localized training issues for teachers, supply-chain constraints related to maintenance of the facilities, and supervisory issues at the district level preventing their daily use in Chemba District Council public primary schools (Bakari, 2025).

In addressing these gaps in society and practice, this research will seek to examine the difficulties that prevent the proper use of teaching facilities in providing inclusive education in the public primary schools in the Chemba District Council of Tanzania. The specific objectives of this study include examining the state of the existing teaching facilities, identifying the problems faced by teachers in utilizing these facilities during teaching and learning, and analyzing the district administration-related problems with regard to the procurement and maintenance of the facilities.

Research Objective

To examine the challenges hindering effective utilization of teaching facilities in the delivery of inclusive education in public primary schools in Chemba District Council, Tanzania

Research Question

What are the challenges hindering effective utilization of teaching facilities in the delivery of inclusive education in public primary schools in Chemba District Council, Tanzania?

Significance of the Study

The study gives practical insight and important information to the Government of Tanzania through MoEST and PO-RALG. Through the study, policy makers were provided with the necessary information on the operational challenges faced in Chemba District Council which could be useful in refining the National Strategy for Inclusive Education and the budgeting process. Besides, the study provided local government authority officials (LGAs) with necessary information on how to adopt procurement strategies and improve facility maintenance in order to obtain results from the use of public funds allocated for inclusion infrastructure.

The study would help educational stakeholders including school administrators, headteachers, quality assurance officers, and teachers to develop practical insights for implementation. The study exposed specific pedagogical and technical skills gap in the mainstream teachers, therefore helping in developing in-service training programs for them. School administrators could benefit from this research through acquiring knowledge about resource management and classroom practices, therefore helping in optimizing the use of teaching facilities in schools.

This research made a significant contribution to the local community, civil society organizations, NGOs supporting disabled rights and inclusive development in the region of Chemba District. The findings of the research revealed the functional status of teaching facilities and the challenges that children with disabilities encounter within the educational process. These issues helped raise public awareness and involve the local community in activities related to school administration. Increased public awareness helped promote inclusive schooling policies, eliminate socio-cultural stigmas associated with disability, and get involved in protecting and preserving the school infrastructure.

This research filled an important gap in the current literature concerning the issue of the effective use of teaching facilities and the pedagogical approach to special needs children in a district context in rural Sub-Saharan Africa. New empirical information and the analysis of Chemba District Council allowed forming a baseline and theoretical basis for further research in the area. Researchers and academicians, dealing with special needs education, educational management, and policy implementation could use the findings and methods employed in this research for comparative studies.

Theoretical Framework

The study is based on the Social Model of Disability Theory that was initially formulated by Michael Oliver (1983) and further explained in Oliver (1990). The theory emerged as a critique of the traditional medical model of disability which sees disability as an impairment of the individual that requires medical intervention or personal adjustments. Unlike the medical model, Social Model of Disability assumes that disability is mainly a product of social, environmental, and institutional barriers that limit the full participation of persons with impairments in social life. According to Social Model of Disability, barriers like inaccessible learning environment, lack of teaching facilities, limited assistive devices, overcrowded classrooms, and poor teacher preparedness significantly contribute to the exclusion of learners with disabilities from meaningful participation in educational process (Oliver, 1 990; Selisko et al., 2024). Removal of these barriers through proper adjustment of environment and instruction makes possible the equal access, participation, and learning opportunities for all learners.

The relevance of this theory for the present study consists in the emphasis it places on environmental and institutional barriers to inclusive education. Teaching facilities such as adapted instructional materials, assistive devices, and accessible learning resources are among the elements that can limit the participation of learners or facilitate it. Thus, by means of

Social Model of Disability, this study will investigate how the utilization of teaching facilities and challenges that limit their use impact the delivery of inclusive education in public primary schools in Chemba District Council.

2. EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

This part presents the literature reviews, which have been conducted from different places of the world in order to the gap, which exist in the study.

The availability and proper utilization of teaching facilities are crucial to the successful implementation of inclusive education. However, existing literature indicates that many primary schools, especially in the developing countries, experience a number of problems associated with the utilization of such facilities, including the lack of well-trained teachers, negative attitude, lack of appropriate assistive and instructional materials, poor infrastructure, and overcrowded classrooms (Gurnani, B., & Kaur, 2025). Therefore, the identification of the specific challenges that affect teaching facilities in promoting inclusive education is vital. The following presents empirical studies that further analyze these challenges.

Worldwide, the existing empirical studies reveal that the absence of adapted classrooms, teaching aids, accessible materials, and specialist resources makes learning environment excluding. Providing good teaching conditions directly affect the implementation of inclusive education. The lack of teaching facilities makes teachers unable to adjust to teaching methods and to support learners to actively engage in the learning process. To find out what the issues are in putting inclusive education into practice in the UK, (Ainscow, 2020) carried out a systematic review of different research studies. It was found that some schools did not have teaching facilities and infrastructure based on the international regulations. Moreover, teaching staff backgrounds in the four schools showed that only one of them had special education background. The study found that the inclusive education requires infrastructure development and teacher training. But there is very little empirical research in the local context.

In East Africa, an empirical study recently found that lack of resources such as classroom access and assistive technologies, makes the promotion of inclusive education difficult in elementary schools. In this regard, Simiyu (2024) conducted a descriptive survey study to analyse the influence of teachers' characteristics in the implementation of inclusive education in Kenya. Results indicated that there was a high correlation between the availability of the resources and the quality of practices of inclusive education. The study found that for teachers to work effectively in an inclusive environment, there is a need for adequate infrastructure, including adapted materials. Thus, the study highlights the significant role of the availability of teaching facilities; however, there are still few empirical studies in the local context.

In Tanzania, empirical studies have shown that many classrooms in primary schools are inadequately equipped and there is insufficient access to assistive materials for inclusive teaching in the country. For instance, Mohammed & Almasi (2024) used a mixed-methods research approach to examine the lived experiences of special education teachers in the inclusive education implementation process in selected primary schools. Data were collected with the help of interviews and observations. Findings indicated that the lack of adequate number of teachers, teaching facilities, problems related to curriculum, big class sizes, and lack of pedagogical skills hinder the implementation of inclusive education. Nevertheless, the study reveals the issue that hinders the implementation of inclusive education, but, there is still a limited empirical research regarding the effectiveness of teaching facilities to promote inclusive education in public primary schools in the local context.

In general, the empirical research at the global, regional and local levels identifies the issues surrounding inclusive education (Ainscow, 2020; Simiyu, 2024; Mohammed & Almasi, 2024). Based on these studies, it can be seen that the non-availability of teaching facilities has a negative effect on the implementation of inclusive education. The study touches upon ramps, classrooms, furniture and toilets as factors that promote inclusive education, while there is still a lack of empirical studies on the utilization of teaching as a factor in promoting inclusive education in the local context. The main purpose of the present study is to examine the problems which hinders the effective utilization of teaching facilities to promote inclusive education in public primary schools of Chemba District Council, Tanzania.

3. METHODOLOGY

The research adopted the interpretivist paradigm through the use of qualitative research designs that used multiple cases within four public primary schools in the Chemba District Council, Dodoma Region, Tanzania where facilities for inclusive education teaching were put in place. Forty-one participants, including four heads of school, eight classroom teachers, 28 pupils, and one District Special Education Officer were purposively selected to give in-depth information on the usage and challenges surrounding these facilities. Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions involving pupils, observation

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of classes, and analysis of lesson plans and school inventories provided data for this study. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis which involved familiarization, coding, developing themes, and interpreting the findings in line with the objectives of this research. The methodology and findings were reliable and valid due to the use of triangulation, member checking, and audit trail.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Challenges Hindering Utilization of Teaching Facilities

The findings from interviews, classroom observations, focus group discussions and documentation review identified several interrelated challenges that limit the utilization of teaching facilities in public primary schools in Chemba District Council. These challenges include overcrowding in classrooms, lack of specialized facilities, inadequacy of teacher preparation, communication barriers, lack of special education specialists and inequality of distribution of facilities between schools. Overcrowding in classrooms emerged as a major barrier in the studied schools. At School D, classroom observation shows that approximately 112 pupils are crowded in a single classroom, limiting teachers' movement and use of teaching aids. The classroom observation shows that;

The Sample of Teacher's Lesson Plan from School D Showing the total number of pupils registered and attended in class.

LESSON PLAN

School Name: D **Class:** IV

Teacher's Name: B **Date:** 28/5/2026 **Time:** 5: 00 – 5: 30 am

NUMBER OF STUDENTS

REGISTERED			**ATTENDED**		
Girls	**Boys**	**Total**	**Girls**	**Boys**	**Total**
67	45	112	59	41	100

Main Competence: Master the history of nation-building and ethics in the period of 1961-1966

Specific Competence: Identify national symbols as the identity of the nation.

Main Learning Activity: Explain the uses of national symbols.

Specific Learning Activities: within 30mins, the learner should be able to correctly explain 2 national symbols (coat of arms/shield and flag)

Teaching and Learning Materials: Pictures, coat of arms (shield), and flag (toys)

Reference: T.E.I. (2023). Pupil's Book": History of Tanzania and Ethics, Standard Four, T.E.I, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Page 151

TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

Stages	**Time**	**Teaching Activities**	**Learning Activities**	**Assessment Criteria**
Introduction	5 mins	Enable learners to sing the National Anthem	Sing the National Anthem in an orderly manner.	Sing the National Anthem correctly
Competence Development	10 mins	Enable learners, in groups, to discuss questions related to national symbols and their uses.	Answer the questions correctly in groups	Answer the questions correctly
Design	10 mins	Enable learners to identify national symbols and their uses by answering oral questions.	Answer the questions orally one by one	Answer the questions correctly
Realization/Assessment	5 mins	Enable learners to do an exercise.	Do the exercise in an orderly manner.	Do the excise correctly

Remarks: The competence has been taught, Learners who did not understand will be given additional questions. In the next period, I will continue with the competence of nation building.

Source: Field Data (2026)

A similar case has also been noticed in School B, where the shortage of space made it difficult for teachers to carry out interactive and inclusive learning activities.

Another problem that limited utilization was the lack of specialized teaching facilities. According to the observations carried out in school C, there was only one Braille machine available and it was supposed to be shared between several classes.

As Teacher A stated:

> "*The only available machine is that of the Braille and this is for use by all classes in our school since we only have one. Sometimes we do not use this machine while other classes conduct lessons without it. The lesson takes more time since we do not use the machine and this irritates the pupils and makes it difficult to complete the syllabus within the required time."*(Teacher A, School C, Classroom Observation, 26 May 2026).

As reported by pupils of school D during an FGD:

> *"The learning facilities at my disposal were few as I had access only to a few large books printed in print while other subjects' facilities were absent; therefore, it hindered my participation in learning. As there are only two or three large print books available for the whole class, therefore, five or six students must huddle around one table to get access to just one book. Whenever the teacher teaches at a quick pace or writes on the blackboard, I cannot follow due to my inability to read normal print."*(Pupils D, FGD, 28 May 2026).

One more issue that negatively affected the utilization process was the lack of appropriate teacher training in inclusive pedagogy. Many teachers lacked the necessary practical skills to be able to make the most of facilities available.

According to the Head Teacher of school C:

> *"Adequate training of teachers who had no knowledge and skills of special education during their training; inadequate skills of operating equipment; lack of Braille machines and communication problems with hearing impaired students make daily classroom delivery highly challenging. All of our teachers have been trained for general education, and therefore, when they get any special equipment or a hearing-impaired student joins them, they become completely helpless. They want to teach but since they don't know sign language or how to operate special equipment, they resort to their old ways of teaching, which ignore the learning of those with special needs."* (HT C, Interview, 26 May 2026)

Communication barriers, especially with the hearing-impaired learners, as well as the absence of special education specialists limited participation even further.

Head Teacher stated during the interview:

> *"Communication barrier makes it difficult for pupils with hearing disability in learning since the other teachers that do not have special education skills find it hard to communicate with them. The fact that a teacher lacks sign language or even visual techniques in communicating makes the pupils with hearing disabilities sit and not understand anything taught. In turn, the teacher concentrates on the other pupils who can hear and leaves those with hearing disabilities behind in their learning."* (HT C, Interview, 26 May 2026)

Document review revealed unequal distribution of facilities across schools as well as presence of expired materials in some cases.

Thus, according to school inventory records, school A, B and C have got different materials:

> *"My school has got only 4 hard copy books; this is inadequate for all the students in each field. Think of a class having more than 50 students and there are only 4 big books for them. We have no choice but to divide our students into big classes where 10 or 12 students share a single textbook. For visually impaired or physically challenged students, it becomes very difficult to keep up with the lessons with so many other students around them."* (HT A, Interview, 22 May 2026)

Similarly, Head Teacher of School B reported:

> *"I have been given 15 big printed books for 19 students. But what is more important is the fact that 15 of those big printed books are mainly found in just two basic subjects like Kiswahili and Mathematics, but there are no such books in other basic subjects like Science and Social Studies. And hence even though there is a high number, it is not uniform when it comes to all subjects."* (HT B, Interview, 25 May 2026)

As in school C, many facilities and other expired instructional materials, such as sunblock, which were no longer usable were found.

It was stated that:

"1 Braille Machine (BM), 12 large printed books, braille alphabet chart, Michoro Mguso Juzuu I-IV, Marcus, slate, learning cards, stylus, chunk blocks, white can, universal Braille kit, wall learning charts, Memory for collision, and sunblock (expired)' (School C, Document Review, 26 May 2026).

The document review showed a glaring deficiency in regard to item distribution and maintenance. Although crucial items like tactile drawing (Michoro Mguso) and braille material were indicated, important items for personal use, such as sunblock needed by albinism-afflicted learners, were marked as expired.

The findings presented above show that the challenges related to utilization of teaching facilities are systematized and interconnected. Similar challenges have been identified in other Tanzanian studies, where overcrowded classrooms, limited teacher competencies, shortage of assistive materials and absence of specialist support limited inclusive education practices (Mlolele et al, 2023; Mohammed & Almasi, 2024). The literature from abroad also emphasizes the importance of the teacher's readiness, appropriate class size and support systems for the successful utilization of teaching facilities (Ainscow, 2020; Mendoza & Heymann, 2024). From the point of view of the Social Model of Disability, the above-mentioned barriers are the environmental and institutional barriers that limit the participation of learners with disabilities, rather than the result of impairments (Oliver, 1990). In order to improve utilization of teaching facilities, it is necessary to coordinate the interventions aimed at resource adequacy, teacher readiness, manageable class size, equal facilities distribution and specialized professional support.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that the utilization of teaching facilities in the delivery of inclusive education in public primary schools in Chemba District Council is partial. Teachers rely mostly on conventional materials, while specialized materials such as Braille machine were underutilized due to shortages, lack of pedagogical skills and professional support. Utilization was also constrained by Overcrowding classroom, lack of assistive materials, teacher training, communication barriers and lack of special education specialist. Generally, the findings proved that the effectiveness of teaching facilities depends not only on their availability but also on teacher's ability to use them and supporting institutional conditions.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Ministry of Education, Science and Technology improve teachers' professional development on inclusive pedagogy and ensure equal distribution of specialized assistive devices, while Chemba District Council should recruit special education specialists and monitor the utilization of teaching facilities in schools; school administrators and teachers should enhance the utilization of available facilities through appropriate classroom practices, and future research should investigate the effect of teacher training on the utilization of teaching facilities in other districts of Tanzania.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author (s) hereby declares that no generative AI technologies such as large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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