



## Impact of Reforms to Enrolment of Children with Disabilities in Primary Education in Morogoro, Tanzania

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of reforms to enrolment of children with disabilities in primary education in Morogoro Tanzania. The main aim of this study was to find out the role played by government in enabling children with disabilities to access primary education through reforms. For many years, the government of Tanzania came out with various reforms to enhance smooth learning of pupils in primary schools. The survey research design was used in study. The purposive sampling was applied to enable 12 primary schools to be selected. Data were analysed using both descriptive table and statistical techniques. The study found that number of pupils having disabilities increased during implementation of PEDP I and II. The findings of study identified that children with disabilities usually face a lot of problems and sometimes they face challenges with need government interventions.

**Keywords:** Children with disabilities, Reforms.

### Introduction

For a long time, evidence from various studies shows that primary education in Tanzania had encountered many problems from mid-1970s to 1990s, which led many pupils to face obstacles in their studies (Mosha, 1995; Malekela, 1995). Such situation led to general dissatisfaction from parents and public concerning the education standards of primary school leavers in Tanzania. Later on, such situation led the government to implement the Universal Primary Education (UPE) in mid-1970s in order to solve these problems (Omari and Mosha, 1987). Apart from UPE implementation, it was found out that problems in provision of primary education persisted in the country. During UPE implementation, many primary schools experienced inadequate classrooms, shortage of teaching and learning materials, teachers and unavailability of funds to support primary education provision because the government bore the all burden of financing primary education (Mosha, 1995).

In year 2000s, the education sector in Tanzania continued to face a lot of problems, which needed government attention in solving them. Among problems, which faced the education sector they included poor access, high repetition, poor performance, limited access to textbooks, poor teaching and learning environment and a large number of under-qualified teachers (Malekela, 2003). Also it was discovered that in early year 2000s, pupils' enrolment in primary schools declined and at the same time, there was high increase in dropout among pupils from schools (Malekela, 2003). Moreover, it was realized that majority of children from poor families and those with disabilities could not afford to pay for school fees and therefore, many of them did not go to school (Björkdahl and Lundqvist, 2006). These problems had to be addressed with notable improvements.

Therefore in order to solve all these problems, government through donor assistance had implemented Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) to provide financial assistance to poor children to help them access and persist in school. By implementation of PEDP (2002 – 2006 and 2007 – 20011), the government of Tanzania intended to increase participation rate to learners. PEDP had the following strategic objectives; enrolment expansion with equity, quality improvement, capacity building

in governance and management, and better utilizing human, material as well as financial resource (URT, 2001). Other objectives were cross-cutting issues, strengthening institutional arrangements, conducting educational research and carrying out educational monitoring as well as evaluation (URT, 2006).

In regard to enrolment expansion, the major focus was to ensure that all pupils get access and equal chances to enrol in primary schools. The commitment was on ensuring that the government give special attention to equity by ensuring that Other Vulnerable Children (OVC) like the girl child, disabled children, street children, victims of child labour, children living in poor families, children of pastoralist and hunter-gatherer societies are enrolled, attend regularly at schools and complete primary education (URT, 2006).

## **Educational Reforms in Tanzania since Independence in 1961**

Soon after becoming independent in 1961, Mainland Tanzania (then Tanganyika) made deliberate changes in the education system so that it could respond to her aspiration of becoming self-reliant and progressive. In 1967, Education for Self-Reliance (ESR) was introduced (Nyerere, 1967). The policy emphasized on a close link between theory and practice in education, to develop among learners' knowledge, skills and attitudes, which would help them to liberate themselves from poverty, fight against ignorance as well as diseases, and later on, to bring about political and economic freedom (Osaki, 2002). In 1974, Universal Primary Education (UPE) was formally embraced through adoption of the Musoma Resolution (Malekela, 2003).

The resolution made the government of Tanzania to abolish school fees so as to raise enrolment to reach UPE goals (Omari and Mosha, 1987). Such government move to offer free primary education was a decision adopted by many developing countries to remove tuition fee to their children (World Bank and UNICEF, 2009). From mid-1980s to 1990s, the government introduced a macro-policy, which emphasized on privatization and economic liberalization, increased role of the private sector, provision of essential resources to priority areas, increased investment in infrastructure including the social sector and introduction of cost-sharing measures to social services (Mbelle, 2001). Such changes necessitated review and restructuring of the education system such that they led to formulation of Education and Training Policy (ETP) of 1995 (URT, 1995).

In order to put the policy into operation, the Ministry of Education introduced Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) in 1997 for the purpose of addressing problems and issues in the education system (URT, 2008). It derived its objectives from the ETP of 1995 and was a national plan put forward with intention of achieving educational goals as articulated in Tanzania's Development Vision 2025, Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (MoEC, 2001).

From ESDP, more operational plans had been developed for each education level. They included Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) from 2002 to 2006 (URT, 2001), Secondary Education Development Programme (SEDP) from 2004 to 2009 and Folk Education Development Programme (FEDP) from 2007 to 2011 (URT, 2008). The second programme (PEDP II) continued from 2007 to 2011 (URT, 2004).

## **Experience from Other Countries on Implementing Reform**

Several studies found that implementation of reforms had impacts on pupils' learning in primary schools. The study by Deininger (2003) in Uganda found that implementation of Universal Primary Education (UPE) led to reduction of cost of attending education in schools, which later on caused many pupils from poor rural families to be enrolled for studies. The study further indicated that UPE helped in reducing gender gap, which existed between enrolment for boys and girls by establishing gender equality that allowed more girls to be enrolled in primary education (Deininger, 2003). The same kind of findings were revealed in the study done by Colclough and Al-Samarrai (2000) in Sub-Saharan and South Asian countries, which indicated that increase in public expenditure on education had differential impact on school enrolments. For instance, it was indicated that absolute enrolment of pupils in South Asia increased from 48 million in 1980 to approximately 60 million in 1998 (Colclough and Al-Samarrai, 2000).

The study by Lloyd *et al.*, (1998) in Kenya showed that material inputs like total fees and provision of in-service training to teachers had noteworthy impact on pupils' performance in primary education. It was found that in each addition of 100 Kenyan shillings per student, the budget reduced the probability of girls to dropout from study by 6 percent such that it led to their chance of progressing in studies. Such pattern was also found in China, where a study by Lai (2004) showed that there was positive relationship between increase in resources and increase in education outcomes, especially learners' academic performance.

Also, there are other studies, which show impacts of reforms on their implemented communities. For instance, in some countries, apart from interventions used in promoting primary education, there was provision of life skills education to young for the purpose of preventing Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS).

In Uganda, Shuey *et al.*, (1999) indicated that a programme, which aimed at providing standard national school health to pupils

and improving educational curriculum had different effects. The programme involved young learners who were aged 13 to 14 in Soroti district. The mode of study was by involving health educators in cooperation with teachers of respective schools and applied social cognitive theory. The study disclosed that pupils who were subjected to experimental conditions were more than three times less likely to be active in sexual activities at post-test in spite of their locations/place of residences (Shuey *et. al.*, 1999). In the same study, it was even further identified that there was a significant desirable improvement in reports of sexual initiation and on having many sexual partners. More positive attitudes towards premarital abstinence were informed amongst experimental group of participants during post-intervention phases compared to controlled group of learners. Reasons for their success in abstinence were based only on rational decision-making (Shuey *et. al.*, 1999). The study concluded that there was need for quality of delivery of the curriculum and involving in teaching strategies with sufficient quality as well as intensity in order for HIV/AIDS prevention programme to be successful in impacting on behavior (Shuey *et. al.*, 1999). That was said to be achieved well by training those involved in the programme implementation.

In Kenya, there was the study, which was undertaken in primary schools, known as the Primary School Action for Better Health [(PSABH) Maticka-Tyndale *et. al.*, 2004]. The studied intervention was on primary school learners with age ranging between 11 and 16 years old together with teachers and people living in the same community (parents and head teachers). The major aims of the study were to evaluate knowledge, behaviour, attitudes and intentions. The study exposed that a significant communication was to be reached through communication with others. The modes of abstinence applied for were based on the A, B, C, and D approach: A - Abstinence, B - Be faithful, C - Condom, and D - Delay.

The study found no significant changes in either abstinence level or condom use (Maticka-Tyndale *et. al.*, 2004). On the other hand, Maticka-Tyndale *et. al.*, (2004) reported that there were significantly fewer pupils. Among those who completed the survey at the six-month evaluation stage had already started sexual activities compared to pupils who completed surveys prior to PSABH programming. The study reported a significant desirable improvement in reports of sexual initiation matters and even to number of sexual partners someone to have (Maticka-Tyndale *et. al.*, 2004).

Klepp *et. al.*, (1997) studied an intervention programme on HIV/AIDS, which was carried out amongst learners in Tanzania with an average age of 14 years. Their study, which based on the social cognitive theory showed to have different results from those reported from the study by Shuey *et. al.*, 1999 and Maticka-Tyndale *et. al.*, 2004. The study evaluated knowledge of learners, their attitudes and communication regarding AIDS together with susceptibility and use of condoms. Findings from the study recorded changes in the desired directions in all of the evaluated areas. The study noted down an important effect on subjects who were exposed to AIDS information and those who even displayed positive changes in their attitudes towards persons affected with AIDS. Moreover, communication on prevention against HIV/AIDS infection between members was found to have increased (Klepp *et. al.*, 1997).

In due regard, it can be said that studies by Klepp *et. al.*, (1997) and Shuey *et. al.*, (1999) met almost all of their set objectives with regard to changes in sexual behaviour and mainly to the number of learners initiating sexual activity as compared with studies done by Gallant and Maticka-Tyndale (2004) which involved older target groups. Gallant and Maticka-Tyndale (2004) disclosed less positive results due to the fact that participants were older and that a large number of them had already been active in sexual activities. Therefore, such findings indicate that learners are always ready to respond to any interventions when provided to them.

## Problems Faced by Children with Disabilities in Primary Education

The 2010 Millennium Development **Goals** (MDG) Report noted that children with disabilities continued to be left behind despite overall increases in school participation over the past decade (UN, 2013). In Africa alone, fewer than 10 percent of disabled children were in school. It was also found that disability had greater effect on access to schooling than those obtained from socio-economic status, gender or urban/rural settings (Filmer, 2005). The Education for All Global Monitoring Report (2007) estimated that majority of children with disabilities in Africa did not go to school. Of the 72 million primary aged children, worldwide, that were out of school, one third had disabilities (UNESCO, 2007).

It was claimed that child labour, poor health and physical disabilities were some of the major barriers to Universal Primary Education. Furthermore, it was noted that children with physical disabilities were marginalized and not allowed to go to school (UNESCO, 2009). Unfortunately, the group, which suffered mostly, was that of children with disabilities, since in many schools, there were no friendly classrooms, toilets and teachers' offices to enable easier movement (Michael, 2012).

It was also reported by UNESCO that in Sub-Saharan Africa, 48 percent of children did not complete primary school. Many of them were children in fragile and conflict-affected countries, children in rural areas, children with disabilities and girls who were the hardest to reach (UNESCO, 2014).

Furthermore, children with disabilities had limited chances to access education services due to absence of schools in their neighbourhoods, lack of awareness among parents and child labour. Education opportunities for children with disabilities were extremely limited (UNICEF, 2008). Worse still, few available opportunities were almost exclusively accessible to the urban population (URT, 2000). In this study, the term 'Child with a disability' means a child having visual impairment, hearing impairment, intellectual impairment, physical disability, autism as well as the deaf blind and who by the way, if in school system needs special education and related services (Tungaraza, 2010).

## Methodology of Study

The objective of the study was to examine the impact of reforms to enrolment of children with disabilities in primary education in Morogoro urban and rural Districts. The research task was to examine the impact of PEDP I and II on enrolment of children with disabilities during PEDP I and II. In conducting this study, researcher applied the positivist paradigm usually used in investigation of social reality. The quantitative and qualitative approaches were used in data collection. A survey research design was employed to investigate the impact of reform to enrolment of children with disabilities.

A total of twelve (12) schools from urban and rural settings were involved in the study. The sample of this study was purposely selected by considering geographical differences, location and variations of their performances in Primary School Leaving examinations (PSLE). The categorization of these schools on basis of their performance was done in consultation with the District Education Officer (DEO) of the district, where the best-performing schools, medium-performing schools and worst-performing schools in examination results were selected. Before selection to done, the researcher requested a list of all schools from Morogoro Rural District.

## Findings of Study

The study assessed the enrolment situation of children with disabilities in 12 primary schools. The results for this research task were obtained by examining school enrolment data on children with disabilities for the entire period of implementation of PEDP I and II, which started from 2002 to 2011. The results from study done in Morogoro Rural and Morogoro Urban areas showed that the enrolment rate for children with disabilities in primary schools increased by 13 percent when the programme was yet to be implemented in year 2000/2001 (Table 1).

**Table 1: Enrolment of Disabled Children by Sex in All Sampled Schools**

Programme	Year	Sex		Total	Percentage Change
		Girls	Boys		
Pre-PEDP	2000	10	5	15	0
	2001	11	6	17	+13.3
PEDP I (2002 -6)	2002	5	5	10	-41.2
	2003	10	5	15	+50
	2004	6	5	11	-26.7
	2005	5	4	9	-18.2
	2006	3	3	6	-33.3
	2007	4	3	7	+16.7
PEDP II (2007 -11)	2008	7	6	13	+85
	2009	11	9	20	+46
	2010	13	8	21	+10.5
	2011	5	6	11	-48
	2012	8	9	17	+54.5
Post-PEDP	2013	6	9	15	-12
Total		104	83	187	

Table 1 shows enrolment of children with disabilities in primary schools in pre-PEDP, during PEDP-I as well as II and post-PEDP time. For the entire period of year 2000 to 2013, the data showed that about 187 disabled children were enrolled in primary schools located in Morogoro rural and Morogoro urban districts (Table 1). In calculating the percentage of enrolled pupils against number of children with disabilities in each year, results showed that children with disabilities in each primary class accounted for around 1 percent of total enrolled pupils (Table 1). Whereby for more clarification, data showed that in PEDP I the percentage of children with disabilities in each primary school was less than one percent (0.9 percent) and in PEDP II the percentage of children with disabilities in each primary school was 1.2 percent.

The study further found that there was an increase in enrolment of children with disabilities in primary schools over the last five years on closure of PEDP programme. Findings from this study indicated that 123 disabled children were enrolled in primary classes whereby 51 were enrolled during PEDP I and 72 were enrolled during PEDP II in both districts (Table 1). With such trend of enrolment in the two districts, access of disabled children to primary school was less than one percent (0.9 percent) and almost one percent (1.2 percent) of the total enrolment of primary school children enrolled during PEDP I and PEDP II, respectively. Hence, results from this study closely correlate with Government statistics, which showed that one percent of children with disabilities had access to basic education in Tanzania (URT, 2001).

It should be noted that overall enrolment for girls with disabilities had gone up during implementation of PEDP programmes. In 2003 on the rise of PEDP programme, number of girls with disabilities rose from 50 percent in year 2002 to 66.6 percent of all enrolled children with disabilities, while boys fell to 33.4 percent from 50 percent of previous year 2002 (Table 1). In subsequent years, girls consistently continued to outnumber boys (girls 54.5 percent and boys 45.5 percent in 2004, 55.5 percent for girls and 44.4 percent for boys in 2005) (Table 1). It was a good improvement done by parents in sending their children with disabilities to schools to acquire basic education.

Furthermore, the data showed that there were a higher proportion of female (55.6 percent) disabled students enrolled in primary schools than male (44.4 percent) from year 2000 to 2013 (Table 1). That situation led to fluctuation in percentage change every year, where it raised and fell after one year to another. Such pattern marked an increase in number of female pupils against number of boys due to campaigns to parents that insisted them to send their children to schools during PEDP I and PEDP II implementation. In almost after one or two years of having a huge number of enrolment of disabled pupils, there was a noticeable decrease in number of them in class one as indicated in the researched data. For instance, from 2005 to 2007, it was found that in some schools, their enrolment numbers decreased (Table 1).

The major reasons for such trend were due to school administrators' tendency of enrolling pupils with disabilities as normal pupils. That happened mostly to pupils with physical disabilities, whose disabilities, in one way or another, did not hinder them from participating in studies. Such pupils managed to proceed with their studies continuously while facing minor challenges. They were mostly pupils having not severe physical disabilities, for instance, those having one leg or hand with disability. But for pupils with other kinds of disabilities, for instance, hearing impairment, intellectual impairment and visual impairment, they had to enrol in their special schools, such as Kilakala Primary School located in Morogoro Municipality. The study found that schools, which enrol pupils of the said kinds of disabilities like Kilakala primary school, pupils had to study grades one, three and five for two years and study other grades for one year (which were grades two, four, six and seven). Hence, such situation compelled children with disabilities to study primary school education for ten years instead of seven years. It led to percentage decrease in years 2002, 2004 to 2006.

A marked percentage increase in enrolment of children with disabilities of 50 and 85 in the years 2003 and 2008 was noticed, which might be caused by presented situation (Table 1). In 2003, there were 15 enrolled children with disabilities who made 50 percent increase and 13 as well as 20 enrolled children with disabilities in years 2008 and 2009 in grade one class, which made an increase of 16.7 percent and 85 percent, respectively (Table 1). Not only did enrolment of children with disabilities in absolute form declined but also it occurred in terms of percentage to total enrolment where it declined significantly over its previous level as happened from 2004 to 2006.

Findings from this research revealed that 1.7 percent of children enrolled in primary schools have identifiable disabilities. The researcher was also able to identify types of disabilities of children enrolled in studied primary schools. Results from this study showed that there were visually impaired children, children with intellectual impairments, deaf children and physically impaired children.

## **Challenges faced by Children with Disabilities in Primary Schools**

Through observation of schools' infrastructure, the researcher learned that the environment of studies for children with disabilities was not supportive. They lacked supportive materials like teaching and learning aids, special needs teachers, and accessible as well as friendly environments, which had no barriers for movements, especially to pupils having visual and physical disabilities. Some of the schools had limited access to classrooms, toilets and teachers' offices, such situations hindered pupils to move freely within them. In other schools, the researcher observed that there were no accessible routes in school compounds, no clean toilets for children with disabilities to use and many classroom doors were not wide enough for wheelchairs to pass.

The study found that many children with disabilities though were enrolled to primary schools; their flow of retention was not static since there were rise and fall in their attendance, patterns which gave clue to dropouts. Such pupils with disabilities faced poor physical infrastructure, which impended their learning. Construction of many school buildings either built before or during PEDP did not consider needs for pupils with disabilities. Therefore, many pupils like those having visual and physical disabilities encountered problems of moving around the schools.

Moreover, the researcher identified that infrastructural barriers were impediments to access to education for children with physical disabilities. It was learnt that school facilities like toilets, classrooms, teachers' offices and even school surroundings were unfriendly for children with disabilities to access and use them. Experience shows that shortage of toilets in primary schools usually interferes with teaching and learning processes because pupils have to queue for long periods of time so that they could use few available toilets. Such pattern led some children with disabilities to feel shame and inferior to their colleagues, a scenario, which led to social stigma and prejudice. Presence of social stigma and prejudice might lead parents not to allow their children to attend schools thereby pave the way for poor attendance (UNICEF, 2008). Furthermore, it should be noted that inadequate toilets can be hazardous to health of pupils and the community around schools since such situation can be the source of communicable diseases.

On the other hand, pupils with disabilities faced challenges of transportation, a pattern, which made mobility to be difficult in either urban or rural areas. Many children with disabilities due to economic hardships of their families did not have reliable means of transport to help them move from their homes to schools. By not having reliable means of transportation, such situation made them to be late in classes because much time was spent in travelling. Even in places where there was availability of public transportation, use of wheelchair was also unfriendly.

Since children with physical disabilities did not have reliable means of transport from their residence to schools, it made them to be late in attending classes because considerable amount of time was lost in travelling. Even in urban areas where there is public transport, they are unfriendly for wheelchair users because there is no place to keep their wheelchair. Intentional efforts have to be done by government and stakeholders to ensure that transport facilities to children with disabilities are available and accessible. They have to ensure that all barriers facing children with disabilities while attending classes are removed so as to create friendly environment for learning.

## Conclusion of Study

Results from this study indicated that children with physical disabilities faced significant obstacles to their schooling. Among these obstacles emerged from classrooms which were built by government, it was learnt that these infrastructures were built in the way they became unfriendly to pupils with disabilities. Some of the buildings became stepping stones for pupils to attend their studies. Therefore, for positive results to be obtained there was need for classrooms to be built in a friendly manner so as to accommodate even pupils with disabilities. There was need also for the government to find engineers who could design the structure of these classrooms so as to make them become friendly to pupils with disabilities and ensure that during their constructions, the Tanzania Building Agency (TBA) become the main consultancy agent for the government to ensure that buildings are constructed in acceptable standards.

In order to solve such barrier of transportation for children with disabilities, there was need for the government in collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to offer wheelchairs and other means of transportation to such pupils. Among NGOs there was Foundation for Civil Society (FCS), which provides funds to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to support education sector in monitoring for children with disabilities. But if such an alternative failed, there would be need for the link to be done so as to connect family members with other fund providers like Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF), Tanzania Education Authority (TEA) and Save the Children. The TASAF has to assist poor families, which rear children, whose parents passed away due to different circumstances. For children who are at risk and live in difficult conditions, Save the Children has to make intervention. Lastly, there is need for the government to make deliberate efforts to select few schools, at least in every district, to accommodate children with disabilities. Such primary schools should be transformed to boarding schools so as to make pupils stay and learn properly with comfort.

In conclusion, it can be said that it is very expensive to accommodate children with disabilities and maintain their learning in primary schools if there is absence of special grants for them. Having grants will assist in maintaining and improve school environment as well as provide them with adequate facilities.

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