

The 1990 Jomtien Conference on Education for all, reaffirmed the commitment of the world community to provide basic education for all including persons with special needs. One of the immediate targets proposed in this conference was the expansion of provision of training opportunities. Since then, however, the rapid growth in provision of training opportunities in Kenya has not focused on visually impaired persons. For instance, individuals with visual impairments who qualify for higher training in regular training institutes and colleges still vocational rehabilitation centres (VRC's) for the blind as the only model for their training. Questions have arisen concerning outmoded trends that VRC's offer such as weaving, which lag behind the modern technology. VRC's are also seen as simply part of the oppressive social apparatus through which people with special needs are excluded from social participation due to their segregated setting (Oliver 1990).

Widening access to quality training opportunities for visually impaired persons is seen in terms of including them in regular training instructions. The call for inclusion has attracted involvement of various interest groups and governments. The government of Kenya for instance points out that additional efforts should be put in place to remove barriers separating regular and special education (RoK), 1992).

It is on this premise that this study was designated to identify curriculum barriers to successful inclusion of visually impaired persons in Kenya Polytechnic. Focus was placed on: attitudes, resources, equipment, support systems, teaching-learning strategies, programme content and accessibility.

Literature review focused on inclusion policy, inclusive schools organization, occupational perspective of training visually impaired persons, future role of residential schools in Kenya and literature on related studies. Data were collected through questionnaires, interview schedule and observation checklists. A top administrator on behalf of the principal, 4 heads of departments, 20 lecturers and 100 students participated in the study. Data were analyzed using a qualitative approach based on the research questions.

Some of the major findings were that majority of lecturers, students, head of departments and a top administrator supported inclusion of visually impaired learners in the institution. However, a significant number of their population felt that visually impaired persons should remain in vocational rehabilitation centres for the blind. Participants indicated that the state of the physical environment, teaching-learning resources and equipment in the institution could not support mobility and effective learning for visually impaired students. It was therefore concluded that various curriculum barriers exist to the inclusion of visually impaired learners in Kenya polytechnic ranging from lack of qualified personnel, unfavourable physical environment, lack of special equipment and lack of policy to support admission of visually impaired students. From the foregoing findings and conclusions, a number of recommendations were made including establishment of an inclusive admission policy, in-servicing of staff and or recruiting staff to support inclusion of visually impaired learners and the institution linking with organizations and bodies which cater for needs of visually impaired learners