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Family Barriers for quality Pre-Primary Education for Children with Disabilities in Tanzania: A Case of Lindi Region

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Abstract

This study examined family barriers in the provision of quality of Pre-Primary education for the children with disabilities in Lindi Region, Tanzania. This study was a qualitative inquiry. Data were collected using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. It involved a sample of 23 of the participants. The study established that the provision of the quality Pre-Primary education for the children with disabilities was hampered by a number of the family barriers. These barriers were classified as the socio-economic and socio-cultural barriers within the families. The overall conclusion was that the existing context of the families of children with disabilities was more inhibitive than facilitative for Pre-primary Education for children with disabilities. Among the recommendations were to mobilize and sensitize parents and family members to eliminate the socio-economic and socio-cultural barriers within the families giving Pre-Primary Education to their children with disabilities.

Key words: Tanzania, Lindi Region, Pre-primary education, disability, children with disabilities

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Introduction

This study examined the family barriers for the provision of the pre-primary education for the children with disabilities. It addressed family socio-economic and socio-cultural factors that hinder the provision of the Pre-Primary Education for children with disabilities. The rationale of the study was based on the fact that there has been little information on how family characteristics in terms of socio-economic and socio-cultural influence the provision of Pre-Primary Education for children with disabilities. The study was undertaken considering that the family setting is generally the first learning context and immediate identification of disability cases (World Health Organization (WHO) & UNICEF, 2012). The intention was to examine how the family characteristics influence Pre-Primary Education for children with disabilities.

Pre-Primary Education known as is a part of Early Childhood Education offered to children, including those with disabilities, before they enter primary education. The purpose of this level of education is to prepare children ready for primary education through various activities. Specifically, for children with disabilities, as UNESCO (2006) points out, the quality Pre-Primary Education enables early identification and intervention of impairments and for certain children with disabilities, it facilitates transition into mainstream. It is an important stage which stimulates children in terms of cognitive, psychomotor, and psychosocial-emotional dimensions in early years.

Disability has been differently conceptualized considerably over time. Historically, disability has been understood using a medical model, wherein disability is identified with illness or impairment, such as being blind, deaf or mute, or physically or mentally handicapped, with an emphasis placed on curing the disabled individual (Losert, 2010; UNESCO, 2015; UNICEF, 2015). From social perspective model, disability is seen as a social construct with the emphasis that disability results from the interaction of a person's impairments and the social environment (Losert, 2010; UNICEF, 2015). This means that in learning context, disability is not a characteristic of individual learners rather it is created when barriers prevent individual learners from fulfilling their rights/needs to learning.

The social model is in line with a human rights-based approach to disability. It is also consistent with the World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), which conceptualizes a person's level of functioning as a dynamic interaction between her/his health conditions, environmental factors and personal factors (UNICEF, 2015). The ICF further defines functioning and disability as multidimensional concepts relating to:

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- (a) People's body functions and structures;
- (b) People's activities, and the life areas in which they participate; and
- (c) Factors in the environments that affect these experiences.

Article 1 of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2006 describes persons with disabilities as those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. In Tanzania, the 2009 Law of the Child defines a child with disabilities as 'a child who has long-term or permanent physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which hinders his full and effective participation on equal basis with others' (URT, 2009:10). At the same time, in Tanzania, a Person with disability has been defined by the Persons with Disability Act as 'a person with a physical, intellectual, sensory or mental impairment and whose functional capacity is limited by encountering attitudinal, environmental and institutional barriers' (URT, 2010:9).

As most studies in most developing countries (see Tavola & Whippy, 2010; UNICEF, 2007b) have shown that children with disabilities are undervalued and excluded from socio-economic services, including education (Pre-Primary Education), there was a need to study the barriers for the provision of the Pre-Primary Education for children with disabilities related to family socio-economic and socio-cultural factors in Tanzania. Beyond that the findings would be used by education policy makers, practitioners, leaders and other education stakeholders to develop appropriate pre-primary education programmes and policies for children with disabilities. The study was timely, as it fit into the newly agreed Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), specifically SDG 4 on education which enhances inclusive and equitable quality education for all in all levels of education.

The Government of Tanzania is committed to enhancing the rights to schooling for children with disabilities. The country's legal framework outlines the rights of people with disabilities to education and supports the provision of education to children with disabilities. Both the Law of the Child Act of 2009, the Persons with Disability Act of 2010 and the 2004 National Policy on Disability make obligation that children with disabilities are entitled to equal opportunities to education and training wherever possible to develop their maximum potentials and be self-reliant. The government through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) requires each primary school to have at least one pre-primary education classroom.

The 2014 Education and Training Policy (ETP) calls for increasing opportunities and quality of all levels of education in Tanzania (Jamuhuri ya Muungano wa Tanzania, 2014). The policy calls for pre-primary education for 3-5-year-olds, with compulsory enrolment for one year. ETP makes clear that Pre-Primary Education opportunity should be available for all children without any discrimination based on disability and other factors such as gender, social and economic status, religion and ethnicity backgrounds.

However, studies in Tanzania (see Cosmas, 2018; 2016; DPO Mentoring Project Report, 2013) have shown that Pre-Primary Education for children with disabilities is problematic and

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not embraced. This study sought the issues related to the family barriers for the provision of the quality Pre-Primary education for the children with disabilities.

The Purpose of Study

This study aimed at examining family barriers for the provision of Pre-Primary Education for children with disabilities. The two specific objectives were to:

- (a) Examine family socio-economic factors that hinder the provision of the quality Pre-Primary Education for children with disabilities.
- (b) Examine family socio-cultural factors that hinder the provision of the quality Pre-Primary Education for children with disabilities.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research approach as the dominant methodological strategy. The procedures and processes of qualitative approach, or its methodology are characterized by collecting data in participants' natural contexts; involving multiple sources of data gathered through multiple methods (Stake, 2010). Instrumental case study (Creswell, 2007) was employed in this study with the aim of gaining a general picture of the family issues that impeded the provision of the quality pre-primary education for the children with disabilities.

Purposeful sampling technique was employed to select the participants of the study and schools. The study employed critical case, convenience and snowball sampling strategies as purposeful sampling techniques (Creswell, 2007; Gall et al., 2007). In convenience sampling, the researcher selected the participants of the study who were available and likely to participate. It was useful in sampling teachers who were teaching children with disabilities and teachers with visual disability; education quality assurers and district education officials.

In critical case sampling, the researcher chose the participants of the study that he believed to be especially important because of the position they held or they could provide specific information about a problem. It was used to sample head teachers and ward education coordinators because of their administrative positions. In snowball sampling, the researcher relied on referrals, where one participant of the study recruited others. It helped researcher to capitalize on informal networks of parents of the children with disabilities that might otherwise be difficult to access.

The two district councils were conveniently selected on the basis of urban - rural location and their population characteristics. Participating schools were conveniently selected from the two District Councils. Two primary schools were conveniently chosen on the basis of education services for the children with disabilities in integration. These schools were named as School A (SA) and School B (SB). These schools had the special units integrated to primary schools.

The sample size was guided by saturation strategy in qualitative study (Shank, 2006) in which 15 and eight (8) participants of the study were involved in in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) respectively. The sample for this study included people who had experiences and understanding of the pre-primary education services for the children with disabilities. The sample included the following participants: Two district education officers,

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three primary education quality assurers, two ward education officers, two head teachers, eleven teachers and three parents.

This study employed individual face to face in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). The in-depth interviews were carried out on face to face basis to the head teachers and district education officials. In one district, only one education quality assurers was interviewed while others were in the field. In another district, two education quality assurers were found and interviewed. Interview guidelines were established in order to be consistent in the in-depth interview sessions. Individual face to face in-depth interview sessions were conducted in the chosen areas as per conveniences of the participants of the study. The interview sessions were guided by the interview questions designed for the study.

FGDs enabled the researcher to gain a larger amount of information in a shorter period of time (Gall et al, 2005). There were two groups for FGD sessions. The first group for FGD consisted of four teachers who were trained in the SE, while the second group consisted of four visually impaired teachers, but not trained in any SE. Questions for FGDs were established by the researcher prior to FGDs session.

In the study, content analysis was used to analyze data in different steps. First, the content of data were transcribed and repeatedly read to obtain an overall understanding of the data and gain ideas for further analysis. Then, all the texts were divided into meaningful units related to the research objective. The data were organized in the next step. This process included open coding, and creating main categories and sub-categories. The purpose of creating categories was to provide a means of description and understanding of family barriers of pre-primary education for children with disabilities. In the reporting phase, results in each objective were described by the content of the sub-categories describing the phenomenon under study.

Findings

This study investigated the family barriers to the Pre-Primary Education for children with disabilities. It was noted that the family is a core entity that stands as the children's venue for initial learning and care. It is the children's most immediate environment physically, socially and psychologically. Data from the participants of the study indicated that the socio-economic and socio-cultural factors within the families hindered the Pre-Primary Education for the children with disabilities.

Socio-Economic Factors

This category of the findings was established because there were several utterances from the participants of the study directed towards family socio-economic factors related to barriers to the quality Pre-Primary Education for the children with disabilities. The concerns of the participants of the study on socio-economic aspects to the Pre-Primary Education for the children with disabilities were associated with parents' poverty; and education status and awareness.

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Parents' poverty

Throughout the face to face in-depth interviews and FGDs, the poverty situation of the parents was repeatedly mentioned by the participants of the study to have contributed to the children with disabilities to miss opportunity of attending school. In the views of the participants of the study, the parents and other people in the area lived in poverty and failed to sustain average life, appropriate basic needs, and education to all children. For example, one education official informed the researcher as follows:

...I can assure you that many people in this area live in below poverty line. We face many unique challenges when working with poor parents. The parents are unable to contribute anything for their children's education...The situation is the same even for parents of the Children with disabilities...Generally in our area, children, including those with disabilities dropout from school or do not access basic education because of the poverty of their parents. This applies to all levels of education including the Pre-primary Education ... (Education Officer A)

This means that participants were aware that poverty of parents contributes negatively for children with disabilities access Pre-Primary Education. Children growing up in poverty may suffer from more learning disabilities than children from higher income homes. This may cause negative impact on the overall learning and school achievement of children with disabilities.

The education official's assertion was supported by another education official who had the following to say:

For some parents of the children with disabilities, the poverty prevents them to offer appropriate services including Pre-primary Education... It is known that many people in developing countries are poor...Believe me or not poverty limits many children to attend to school in our district schools... (Education Officer B)

In the same argument that the poverty of parents limits education for the children with disabilities in early years, one district quality assurer was captured saying:

... I tell you, you can't believe in our district, people are poor to afford to buy a kilo of meat a year...leave alone taking single meal a day. How could people like these send the children to school? (District education quality assurer A)

This means that parents' economic status matter for children's learning in Pre-Primary Education for children with disabilities. This implies that parents with poor economic conditions are not able create home learning environment and life support for their children. However, parents with good economic conditions can afford to create home learning environment by supplying them educational learning materials and other life materials like water, food,

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electricity, uniforms and medics. One Ward Education Officer reflecting on the economic status of people in the area emphasized:

...The economic condition of our people in this area is not good as most of the people engage in subsistence farming. Parents are poor...they don't have money to meet their daily life needs...they don't have money to spend on their children's education. These are parents, we expect to send their children to our schools...For parents of the children with disabilities, if they don't have money, automatically they can't send their children to school... (Ward Education Officer A)

Importantly, parents who depend just on subsistence farm and not selling for profit are in worse situation of sending their children with disabilities to school. Such parents are poor and they fail to support Pre-Primary Education for children with disabilities. Parents are economically disadvantaged parents and less able to afford the cost of education of their children with disabilities and consequently, such children do not develop at their fullest potential.

Some parents had low occupation status because they engaged in informal manual jobs. This situation of parents limits their abilities to support their children, including the children with disabilities education. On the matter, one head teacher had the following to say:

Ordinary people in urban areas who engage in manual jobs...they earn little...if these people have the children with disabilities; of course they cannot afford costs for services and care for these children ... (Head Teacher for SA)

Another head teacher added:

...many parents don't send their children with disabilities to school not because of their disabilities but because some parents don't have source of income to get money. In this situation, it is difficult to support their children's education ... (Head Teacher for SB)

The message conveyed here is that participants were aware that parents from good and formal occupations with monthly salaries like nurses, teachers, and medical doctors have better position and assurance of helping and supporting their children with disabilities at home. This is contrary to those parents from the poor informal occupations like as peasants where in most cases they cannot to afford the costs of education of their children.

In the same vein, the teachers as their head teachers pointed out that economic aspects affect parents of the children with disabilities to support their children's education. For example, one teacher stated that:

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Even children without disabilities drop from schools because their families fail to meet the materials including school shoes, clothes, books.... There are two children with disabilities in our street. They haven't been sent to school because their families are helpless...I tell you, parents are poor... (Teacher 1 from SA)

Similarly, for emphasis, one teacher expressed:

...what I can tell is that many children with disabilities are not sent to school because of poverty in many families... Some children with disabilities don't go to school, it isn't because of their disabilities but their parents don't have money... (Teacher 2 from SB)

At the same time, parent participants in the study indicated that their poverty limited them to support their children with disabilities in early years of life. On the matter, a parent of a child with disability expressed the following:

...as you can see the business I do, it is for me to secure money for food for family. Every cent I get goes to food. I don't have surplus to let my child go to school ... (Parent A)

The above quotation indicates such parent is frustrated with life to the extent that she feels helpless. Her views are not function in this era where every parent struggles to educate his/her children regardless of their ability or gender. Parents of this kind cannot help or support education for their children with disabilities.

Another parent was in opinion that people with good employment had opportunity of supporting education of their children. She was not happy with her occupation of small farming. She had the following to say:

...my friend, those with good employment like teachers, nurses... their children enjoy life and education in this village compared to my children who depend on my small vegetable garden ... (Parent B)

Arguing in the same line, another parent provided a vivid example in relation to poverty and failure of parents to support their children with disabilities in early years:

...for example my sister in law has a child with disability, but she hasn't sent her to school as she can't meet the costs because of her son's nature of disability...she has to buy wheelchair, crutches...My sister can't afford the cost ... (Parent C)

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Parents' education level and awareness

In relation to education status and awareness, throughout the in-depth interview and FGDs, the participants of the study repeatedly identified that the larger number of population in the area had less knowledge and awareness of the importance of the Pre-primary Education and education in general for all children, especially the children with disabilities.

The participants of the study informed that the lack of knowledge about the specific children with disabilities and their values, potentials and rights on the part family members contributed to obstacles for the children with disabilities to be in school. This was evident from the participants of the study, for example, one District Education officer had the view on this as:

... I attribute the failure of parents of the children with disabilities to send their children to school to parents' ignorance on disability. Many parents think that disability is inability... They don't know that education is one of their basic rights of the children with disabilities as to all other children. What I can comment is that ignorance of our people hinders them to send their children with disabilities to school... (Education Officer A)

With the above quotation, sometimes parents do not send their children with disabilities Pre-Primary Education because parents do not understand the causes of disability and that disability is not inability. Many parents are not aware that children with disabilities have right to Pre-Primary Education and they can as other children without disabilities.

Similarly, another District Education Officer had the following to say:

To work in the society where many people are uneducated is terrible. These people are not aware of the needs of education of the children... Parents are not ready to send their children to school due to their ignorance of the importance of education. Parents of the children with disabilities also are unaware of the needs of their children... They don't send them to school because of lack of awareness and education to recognize that the children with disabilities can learn... (Education Officer B)

The quotation above indicates that people without education do not find the importance of education to their children particularly children with disabilities. Contrary to this, parents with high education know the importance of education to their children. It is therefore that to work with the society where many people are uneducated is terrible, especially when it comes to education for children with disabilities. Uneducated people are not aware that all need to learn in order develop their potential. As the result children with disabilities are not sent school because their parents are ignorant on the issues of importance of education for children with disabilities.

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Teachers, in a FGD session, extensively described their concern on less knowledge and awareness of parents on the importance of education versus education for the children with disabilities. One teacher stated that:

...many people in this area didn't go to school... They don't know the importance of education... Many parents in our area are not aware of education for the children with disabilities and many family members don't acknowledge the children with disabilities and education for them... However, for parents who are aware of the importance of education for the children with disabilities and acknowledge that these children can learn, their children with disabilities are here at school... (Teacher 4 from SA)

In supporting the above expression in FGD session, another teacher added:

... Lack of awareness of families on the educational needs of the children with disabilities, lack of families' interests to send the children with disabilities to school together contribute to the denial of education for the children with disabilities in our area... When this combines with poor economic status and negative attitudes towards the children with disabilities, education and other services for the children with disabilities are in trouble in many families... (Teacher 6 from SA)

With the above quotations means that beyond poor economic status and negative attitudes towards the children with disabilities, Pre-Primary Education for the children with disabilities is limited by lack of awareness of families on the educational needs of the children with disabilities. It is also related to the lack of families' interests to send the children with disabilities to school. These together contribute to the denial of Pre-Primary Education for the children with disabilities.

Visually impaired teachers in FGD session expressed their feelings that lack of awareness and education of types and nature of disabilities affected the Children with disabilities to access education. It was revealed that the children with disabilities were not sent to school because their parents were not aware and knowledgeable that the children with disabilities can learn and pass and later become specialists in different fields. One visually impaired informed as follows:

...I went to school because my parents were teachers...Now many people don't believe that I'm a teacher too. There were other children like me, but they didn't go to school because their parents weren't aware of the role of education... even those parents didn't go to school... (Teacher 3 from SB)

Another visually impaired teacher emphasized that it was only parents who know the importance of education sent their children with disabilities to school. He concluded that:

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“... Educated families give good basic services of all kinds to all children...”
(Teacher 2 from SB)

Data revealed that parents who participated in the study had negative view on education for the children with disabilities probably because of lack of proper information on types and nature of disabilities. For example, the following statements were direct from parents in in-depth interviews:

...I don't think there's a need of sending the children with disabilities to school...if the normal children (without disabilities) fail...what will happen to those with disabilities? (Parent 3A)

...the children with disabilities are problematic...some are crazy, of course they can kill other children...sending them to school means sending problems to school... (Parent C)

...The way I see the children with disabilities, they can't learn...I think to take them to school is to take the problems to teachers... (Parent B)

Interestingly, even parents of the children with disabilities, who participated in this study, seemed not to understand that their children could learn basic skills if they could be taken to school. This was revealed in the statements when the parents of the children with disabilities in in-depth interviews were asked on their missions of sending their children with disabilities to school. On the matter, the parent concluded:

...after all, if I send this child (with disability) to school will not learn anything. The way I see her...nothing is in her head... (Parent A)

It was in another parent argument that she could not send her son to school instead she could provide him basic life skills at home. She did not see the importance of her son to attend school. She emphasized:

....I don't see any advantage of sending my son to school...I give him basic skills as possible as I can...what will he learn from school? (Parent B)

Socio-Cultural Factors

With regard to socio-cultural aspects, the data from the in-depth interviews and FGDs indicated that conjectural beliefs prohibited the children with disabilities to access Pre-primary Education. The participants of the study disclosed that family members in the community believed that the individual and children with disabilities have magical powers or demons. It was emphasized that many children with disabilities were not in school as many of the family members without children with disabilities had misconceptions and supernatural beliefs on individual with

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disabilities and children with disabilities at large. On the matter, one parent of one child with disability illustrated that:

People who do not have the children with disabilities see my child as misfortune...as if I have done something wrong to God. I believe this child was born in the wish of God... My child is like other children... (Parent A)

The findings revealed that uneducated people believe that the children with disabilities could be used as a tool to earn wealthy. It was unfortunately, if a parent had the children with disabilities and wealthy, it was taken as an evidence. Disabilities are attributed to ‘juju’ business (ritual business) where individual with disabilities or children with disabilities are believed to be used to boost some other people’s businesses. Because of misconceptions and supernatural beliefs on the children with disabilities, it was also revealed that some parents hesitated even to have another child for fear of having a child with a similar condition. This was apparent in the PI with parents of the children with disabilities. A mother parent of the first born child with disability, disclosed:

...My first born son had intellectual disability... I have the second girl baby now but I was fearful that even other children would be like the first born... I just used to ask God and pray that I don’t I have a child like that again as the social cost of having a child like that is very high... (Parent B)

In the same arguments, a parent of third born child with disability insisted that:

...my husband didn’t want us to have another child because of disability of the third born who could not talk and move...my husband complained on the family relatives conceptions on my child...the relatives claimed that child was born because my family had a kind misfortune...

The participants of the study showed their concerns on misconceptions and supernatural beliefs on the children with disabilities that discourage parents of the children with disabilities to send their children to school. Parents fear their children to be seen as magic or demon objects at school or on way to school. According to the head teachers and teachers in the in-depth interviews and FGDs, those beliefs hindered the parents of the children with disabilities to hide their children with disabilities. One teacher, a native resident in the area under study affirmed:

...tell you...in our area, many parents of the children with disabilities feel ashamed and fear as their children are associated with magic practices...Parents are part of our society...they know these beliefs...so what they do is to keep their children with disabilities at home... the parents believe that their children with disabilities remain safe at home... (Teacher 4 from SA)

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It was in the views of participants of the study that because of these conjectural beliefs and patronizing behaviours, family members accorded low social status and priority to the children with disabilities. The following are more other statements made by study participants on conjectural beliefs during the in-depth interviews and FGDs:

...giving birth to a child with disability as to the children with disabilities is associated with witchcraft and prostitution of the mothers during pregnancy... (Education Officer B)

...the Children with disabilities are associated with punishment by ancestral spirits... (Ward Education Officer A)

...the Children with disabilities are rarely sent to school because parents don't believe that they can learn... Parents see as it is wastage of resources to send the children with disabilities to school... (Teacher 5 from SA)

...some families members of the children with disabilities believe that these children were born because of curses that were brought to the family...therefore the children are useless (District education quality assurer B)

It was also evident throughout the face to face in-depth interviews and FGDs that there were pessimistic attitudes towards and low expectations from individuals with disabilities and the children with disabilities. The participants of the study highlighted the predominant negative attitudes maintained within the culture toward those children with disabilities. For example, one education official expressed the following:

...Our culture, our attitude! You know stigmatism... All of these things are a part of what hampers the progress of the children with disabilities and their access to the quality Pre-primary Education. Specifically in our area, once people recognize the child has a disability they say such child can't do anything educationally... (Education officer A)

Some of parents were not ready to send their children with disabilities to school because they believed that these children could not learn. Parents also feared that the children with disabilities could be bullied, disvalued and maltreated. On this, a parent of a child with disability summarized as follows:

...the children with disabilities have deficit in their mind...How can they learn...? Count and write? When parents send their children with disabilities, they end up seeing their children being bullied, stigmatized, maltreated, disvalued...The good option is to keep the children at home and give them basic skills at home. I won't send mine...It is better to hire a specialist to help my child at home... (Parent A)

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Discussion

This study aimed at examining family barriers for the provision of Pre-Primary Education for children with disabilities with the focus on family socio-economic and socio-cultural factors. The study has found that the socio-economic and socio-cultural factors within the families hinder the participation of the children with disabilities in the quality Pre-Primary Education.

Socio-Economic Factors

Family socio-economic status is reflected in income and occupation status as well as educational attainment of family members (Okioga, 2013). In this study, the socio-economic aspects related to parents' poverty, occupation status, education level and awareness of disability within the families hinder the participation of the children with disabilities in quality Pre-Primary Education. According to Okioga (2013), parents with higher socio-economic status involve actively in their children's than parents with lower income. More importantly, parents with good wealth or higher financial resources are more likely to send their children to higher-quality educational services (Egalite, 2016).

This study has found that many parents of children with disabilities have low socio-economic status to support Pre-Primary education of their children. It is clear that a number of people in the study area engage in subsistence farming and business; and manual works associated with low occupational prestige. As to the findings by the Disabled People's Organisation (DPO) (2013), poverty remains a major barrier for children with disabilities to access Pre-Primary Education, despite the fee free education strategy in Tanzania. In the context of Tanzania, poverty poses financial challenges to poor households hence difficulty to finance education, specifically for children with disabilities (Thompson, 2017).

Some parents from low economic power cannot provide appropriate basic needs such food, clothes and shelter; and afford costs for learning materials, uniform and transport. In developing countries like the Union of Comoros, parents of children with disabilities with deficit in income demand government to support them to meet transport, school fees and other related costs (Mattingly & Abdallah, 2016c). Limaye (2016) has asserted that many families with economic hardship in India have difficult to send their children with disabilities to school.

As Egalite (2016) poses, highly educated parents are more likely than their less-educated counterparts to consider the quality of school; pay attention to the quality of their children's teachers; and engage in their children's education and development. In this study, it has been reported by participants that larger number of population in the area has less education. Consequently, not only that many parents do not engage in their children's education, but also they attach less attention and value to children with disabilities and their education, especially Pre-Primary Education.

It is clear in this study that many parents and family members are not aware of causes of disability and the importance of education for children with disabilities. As Limaye (2016) claims that because lack of awareness of various types and causes of disabilities across the society, especially in India, many parents are not aware of the importance of Pre-Primary Education for children with disabilities and how to support them in their education. This study

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has found that lack of knowledge about the specific children with disabilities and their values, potentials and rights on the part family members contribute to obstacles for the children with disabilities to be in school.

Socio-Cultural Factors

Disability, in many developing countries, is associated with evils, curse, bad fortune or the result of witchcraft (DPO, 2013; HakiElimu, 2008; Mattingly & Abdallah, 2016a; 2016b; 2016c). Consequently, some parents feel ashamed and believe that their children cannot learn and there is no value in sending them to school. According to Mattingly and Abdallah (2016a, 2016c), because of misconceptions and taboo, for example in Madagascar and the Union of Comoros, on disability in society and families, parents of children with disabilities feel ashamed to expose their children. Even if the parents are aware of the rights of children with disabilities to access Pre-Primary Education, they fear to subject their children to the teasing and abuse from other people in the society and families, including teachers and children without disabilities (Mattingly & Abdallah, 2016a).

The findings of this study have indicated that socio-cultural aspects played a great role in obstructing the Pre-primary Education for the children with disabilities. The study has disclosed that family members in the community believed that the children with disabilities have magical powers or demons. Consequently, many children with disabilities are not in school as many of the family members without the children with disabilities have misconceptions and supernatural beliefs on persons with disabilities in general. Issues of stigma, ridicule, as well as prejudicial beliefs and attitudes are critical barriers toward supporting the Pre-primary Education for the children with disabilities.

Although negative beliefs towards children with disabilities are slightly changing, this study has revealed that conjectural beliefs prohibited the children with disabilities to access the Pre-Primary Education. Concurrently, the study by DPO (2013) in Tanzania indicates that attitudinal barriers rooted in negative myths and beliefs about the causes of impairments still the most pressing challenges that face children with disabilities to access Pre-Primary Education. According to the report, negative attitudinal barriers disvalue children with disabilities in terms of their capabilities and Pre-Primary Education. Thus, as per DPO (2013), stigma, low expectations and discrimination of children with disabilities are associated with socio-cultural factors limit them to access Pre-Primary Education. Also hiding, segregating and discriminating children with disabilities are common features in the country. Another study by HakiElimu (2008) has found that many parents of the children with disabilities are reluctant to enroll their children into schools, mainly due to cultural and traditional beliefs that discriminate children with disabilities. Likely these have significantly contributed in the poor school enrolment for the children with disabilities.

The findings in this study on socio-cultural aspects in relation to Pre-Primary Education for children with disabilities also resonate in the relevant literature elsewhere in developing countries. For example in countries like Madagascar, Republic of Rwanda and the Union of Comoros, the studies by Mattingly and Abdallah (2016a; 2016b; 2016c) indicate that parents of

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children with disabilities do not enroll their children in Pre-Primary Education because of low expectations from them and on the fear of their children being rejected and humiliated in schools.

In Pacific Island Countries, some families are embarrassed about their children with disabilities and hiding such children is common (Tavola & Whippy, 2010). This is linked to the perception that the children with disabilities are a curse, linked to sorcery, or a punishment for wrong doing. Similarly, as Limaye (2016) points out, in India, children with disabilities in regular schools are discriminated, ignored, bullied, labelled, as well as abused verbally because of the negative attitude towards disability and education for children with disabilities. This situation in India, according to Limaye (2016), leads many parents pull their children out of school.

Therefore, as per studies by DPO (2013), HakiElimu (2008), Limaye (2016), Mattingly and Abdallah (2016a; 2016b; 2016c) and Tavola & Whippy (2010), children with disabilities in most developing countries including Tanzania are hidden, associated with evils, unlikely to enroll in Pre-Primary Education and face difficulties because of the negative attitudes and embarrassment from peers without disabilities and their parents in families. With this situation, it is difficult for children with disabilities to access and attain quality Pre-Primary. As Thompson (2017) points out, sensitization of parents and other family members becomes essential to recognize the right to Pre-Primary Education for every child, including children with disabilities.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The evidence presented in this study underscores the urgent need to scale-up family initiatives to offer Pre-Primary Education for children with disabilities. The findings of the study indicate that the current family context is more inhibitive than facilitative of Pre-Primary Education for children with disabilities. The family context is inhibitive in the sense that there were several family barriers that limit the children with disabilities to access the quality Pre-Primary Education and education in general.

Poverty and ignorance of parents and other people; negative attitudes and practices; and cultural linked beliefs of parents and family members do limit children with disabilities access Pre-Primary Education and education in general. This implies that there is a need of to mobilizing and sensitizing parents and other education stakeholders to abandon improper practices of the parents and family members towards the children with disabilities in Pre-primary Education.

The parents and family members ought to accept their children with disabilities and make efforts to expose them to Pre-Primary Education. This can develop their talents and potential to become active members a learning community. Importantly, the parents and family members ought to allocate resources to the Pre-Primary Education of their children with disabilities even where such resources are meagre. Furthermore, the study recommends the government to mobilize and sensitize these parents who seem to have negative beliefs and attitudes, about the importance and benefits of giving Pre-Primary Education and education in general to their children with disabilities in early years.

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