

**INITIATION OF INCLUSIVITY FOR THE PEOPLE LIVING WITH SPECIAL  
NEEDS IN CHARISMATIC CHURCHES IN KAKAMEGA COUNTY, KENYA**

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REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CONFERMENT OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER  
OF ARTS IN RELIGION OF MASINDE MULIRO UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE  
AND TECHNOLOGY**

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my dear husband, Samuel Imbuka for encouraging me throughout the academic work, to my children; Emmanuel Hope, Praise Lucky, Prince Joshua Baraka, and to my parents for their moral support.

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## ABSTRACT

There is scanty scholarly evidence showing whether persons living with disability (PLWDs) are fully included in Church leadership and involved in Church activities or not. The purpose of this study was to analyze the role charismatic Churches play towards initiating inclusivity for persons living with disability in Kakamega County. The main objectives were to determine the characteristics of people with special needs in charismatic Churches, to examine congregants, leadership attitudes and suitability of charismatic Churches towards people with special needs and finally to investigate challenges and mitigating measures for persons living with disability attending charismatic Churches in Kakamega County. The study was guided by functionalism theory by Emile Durkheim. The study adopted descriptive research design and used qualitative approach. The target population included the clergy, PLWDs, Church ushers, Church elders, family members of the people with special needs and the members of the Church. Purposive sampling and snowballing were used to collect both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected using Interview guides administered to the key informants whereas journals and other relevant sources provided secondary data. Four FGDs were also conducted. Data was analysed through content analysis. The findings of the study revealed that persons living with disabilities in charismatic Churches encompass a wide range of conditions, from physical and sensory disabilities to cognitive and mental health disorders. The use and interpretation of biblical texts that relate to disability provide links to how disability is treated in the charismatic Churches in Kakamega County and many Churches lack ramps, elevators, and accessible entrances, making it difficult for individuals with mobility impairments to access worship areas and other facilities. The study concluded that the characteristics of people living with disabilities portray faith, resilience, and unwavering dedication to their spiritual journey. Also, the suitability of charismatic Churches toward persons living with disabilities holds profound implications for the inclusivity, acceptance, and growth of the faith community. The study recommended the need to provide training sessions for Church leaders, volunteers, and members on disability awareness, sensitivity, and inclusivity. Moreover, disabled people should be invited to facilitate spiritual and professional functions such as preaching, teachings, and conducting disability awareness seminars, which would be relevant for them. And Churches should sponsor pastors, disabled people and their members of the families to various disability awareness seminars such as education, employment and healthcare, which are conducted by the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK).

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## ACRONYMNS/ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ACCD:</b>	Association for the Care of Children with Disabilities
<b>CHAD:</b>	Church Action on Disability
<b>COPOH:</b>	Council of Persons with Disabilities and Other Handicaps
<b>D.D.A:</b>	Disability discrimination Act
<b>DHHA:</b>	Department of Health and Human Affairs
<b>DPI:</b>	Department of Public Information
<b>DPS:</b>	Directorate of Postgraduate Studies
<b>FGDs:</b>	Focus Group Discussions
<b>FOCE:</b>	Federation of Organizations for Community Empowerment
<b>HCK:</b>	Health Commission of Kenya
<b>MMUST:</b>	Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology
<b>NACOSTI:</b>	National Council of Science Technology and Innovation
<b>NCCK:</b>	National Council Churches of Kenya
<b>NKJV:</b>	New King James Version
<b>OI:</b>	Oral Interview
<b>P.L.W.D:</b>	Persons Living With Disability
<b>RR:</b>	Rehabilitation and Resettlement
<b>UN/ECOSOC:</b>	United Nations Economic and Social Council
<b>UN:</b>	United Nations

**UNCRPLWD:** Union of convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability

**UPIAS:** Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation

**WHO:** World Health Organisation

## OPERATIONALIZATION OF TERMS

**Charismatic Churches:** Churches that embrace Holy Spirit, holiness and place to occupy. In this study, these are Christian congregations in Kakamega County that emphasize the active role of the Holy Spirit, engaging in practices that promote holiness, spiritual empowerment, and the manifestation of divine gifts.

**Church Elders:** Church leaders responsible for administration of the entire Church. In Kakamega County, these are individuals who are instrumental in the Church's outreach programs, particularly with regard to inclusivity and supporting people with special needs.

**Disability:** In the context of Kakamega County's Charismatic Churches, disability refers to any physical, mental, or developmental condition that impedes a person's ability to function in typical social, economic, or spiritual settings. It may involve mobility challenges, cognitive impairments, or emotional and psychological disabilities, which may be viewed as limitations in one's full participation in Church life.

**Disabling:** In Kakamega County Charismatic Churches, this involve lack of physical accessibility, social exclusion, or unaddressed needs that limit participation in the Church's programs, such as worship or social gatherings.

**Impairment:** Refers to the specific condition or state that causes an individual to be unable to perform tasks or participate in activities in a typical way. In the context of the Charismatic Churches in Kakamega, it may refer to both the physical and mental limitations of individuals that hinder their ability to fully engage in religious rituals, mobility, or even leadership roles within the Church.

**Inclusivity:** In the context of Charismatic Churches in Kakamega County, inclusivity involves ensuring that people with special needs (physical, mental, or developmental disabilities) are fully integrated into all aspects of Church life. This includes participation in worship services, fellowship activities, leadership opportunities, and outreach initiatives, ensuring equal access and opportunities for all members, regardless of ability.

**Initiation:** it entails implementing programs and practices to foster inclusion of individuals with special needs within Charismatic Churches in Kakamega County, Kenya.

**Mobility:** Mobility refers to the ability of individuals with disabilities to move freely and access all areas of the Church and its activities. It encompasses physical access to Church buildings, availability of transportation for those unable to travel independently, and the Church's role in fostering an environment where individuals with mobility challenges can fully participate in spiritual practices and social engagements.

**Persons with special needs:** Refers to individuals in the Kakamega Charismatic Churches who have physical, mental, or developmental disabilities that require additional support and accommodations. These individuals may face challenges in participating fully in Church life due to their impairments, but with appropriate support, they can engage in worship, ministry, and fellowship activities.

**Ushers:** In the context of the Church, ushers are members of the congregation tasked with welcoming attendees, guiding them to their seats, and ensuring that everyone, including those with special needs, has the support they require to engage in the service. Ushers are key players in promoting an inclusive environment by addressing the needs of people with disabilities, assisting them in navigating the Church building, and facilitating their participation in services and activities.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 General Introduction

The chapter presents background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, main objective, specific objectives, research questions, and significance of the study, justification of the study, scope of the study, limitations of the study, theoretical framework and finally chapter summary.

### 1.2 Background of the Study

Globally, people with special needs have historically faced segregation, mistreatment, and marginalization. It was not until the 20th century that Christian communities began to acknowledge their plight and provide assistance (Hallahan *et al.*, 1982). Despite progress, disability remains a worldwide concern, affecting individuals, families, and societies (Baron & Nuebe, 2002). Early attitudes toward disability ranged from pity and kindness to cruelty and outright exclusion (Taylor *et al.*, 2009). In Europe, between the 17th and 19th centuries, persons with disabilities were treated with indifference and inhumanity (Hallahan *et al.*, 1982). For instance, in the United Kingdom, individuals with disabilities were often confined to asylums, with little to no opportunity for social integration or economic participation.

The Industrial Revolution further marginalized them, as they were considered unfit for the labour-intensive workforce (Scull, 1981). The failure to prioritize their welfare in major global initiatives, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), further exacerbated their exclusion from development programs (World Report on Disability, World Health Organization & World Bank, 2011). Efforts to promote disability rights, including the 2003 Disability Act, have been slow, with weak enforcement mechanisms and limited political will delaying implementation.

At the continental level, many African societies have historically perceived people with disabilities negatively. In some communities, they were considered cursed, incapable, and unworthy of inclusion (Grech & Karen, 2015). In Nigeria, traditional beliefs have contributed to the stigmatization of persons with disabilities, with some communities regarding them as omens of misfortune or punishment from ancestral spirits (Ingstad & Whyte, 2007). This perception has led to their exclusion from education, employment, and social life. In extreme cases, such as under Idi Amin's regime in Uganda, persons with disabilities were subjected to brutal treatment, including being dumped into Lake Victoria as they were deemed unfit for labor. Despite these challenges, religion remains a significant force in shaping social attitudes. Mbiti (1991) posited that religion should address human needs, including offering security, hope, and socialization. Zamani (1984) reinforced this view, arguing that religious institutions should unite communities and provide norms that safeguard human dignity.

In the East African region, Uganda provides a case study of the persistent marginalization of persons with disabilities. Historically, they have faced neglect and systemic exclusion from education and employment opportunities (Lang & Murangira, 2009). Although Uganda has made progress with policies such as the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2006, the implementation of inclusive frameworks remains weak. Many persons with disabilities continue to live in poverty, facing barriers in accessing healthcare and public services. Religious institutions, particularly charismatic Churches, have played a role in disability discourse by emphasizing faith healing, sometimes at the expense of advocating for structural support and inclusivity.

In the context of Kenya, people with disabilities continue to face discrimination and exclusion. In some communities, they are perceived as outcasts, while in the Luhya community, they are labelled "*avalalu*" or "*evinanyenzo*," terms that reinforce social

stigmatization (Mutua, 2017). Despite the constitutional provision in Article 54 of the 2010 Kenyan Constitution, which mandates dignity and respect for persons with disabilities, full implementation remains elusive. Many continue to experience neglect, exclusion from economic opportunities, and social rejection (Treloar, 2002). Their role in public life remains largely unrecognized, with physical disability often perceived as a sign of failure or divine punishment (Njogu, 2008).

At the local level, Kakamega County reflects these broader challenges. People with disabilities in the area face various difficulties, including physical, spiritual, and psychological neglect (Mokhtari *et al.*, 2022). Many are confined to homesteads, denied access to education, and subjected to forced labor. Despite the presence of Churches in the region, which should ideally promote inclusivity, persons with disabilities continue to struggle for recognition and acceptance. Religious teachings emphasize equality and compassion, with biblical references such as *Luke 14:13* and *Matthew 10:8* advocating for care and inclusion (Okware, 2004; Gondreau, 2017). The role of the Church in addressing these injustices, however, remains questionable. While charismatic Churches in particular emphasize spiritual manifestations, including healing and miracles (David, 1992), their doctrinal interpretations and rigid structures sometimes contribute to exclusionary practices.

This study, therefore, aimed at analysing the initiation of inclusivity for people living with special needs in charismatic Churches in Kakamega County. Given the significant role of the Church play in shaping societal attitudes and providing support, the study sought to explore how charismatic Churches could enhance the inclusion of persons with disabilities, ensuring they are recognized, accepted, and actively involved in Church activities.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

In every society, including religious communities, individuals with special needs face unique challenges that often hinder their full participation in social, spiritual and communal life. Ideally, these individuals, like any other, should have the right to express themselves, contribute to discussions, and participate in all activities without facing discrimination or exclusion. Charismatic Churches, which emphasize the power of the Holy Spirit and inclusivity, are ideally positioned to serve as spaces where all members, regardless of their physical or mental abilities, are welcomed and valued. However, the reality is starkly different.

In many charismatic Churches, people with special needs encounter significant barriers to full inclusion. These barriers are not only physical—such as inaccessible Church buildings and facilities—but also attitudinal, rooted in stigma and discrimination. As a result, people with special needs often feel withdrawn, rejected, marginalized, and dehumanized, leading to their exclusion from active participation in Church life. Despite the Church's potential to offer a supportive environment, many charismatic Churches in Kakamega County have either lacked the awareness, resources, or willingness to effectively address these challenges, perpetuating a cycle of exclusion for persons with disabilities. The study sought to unravel the lack of clarity regarding the role of charismatic Churches in Kakamega County in fostering inclusivity for individuals with special needs. While many of these Churches have been established, their leadership structures and approaches to inclusivity remain unclear, particularly when it comes to the integration of people with disabilities into Church leadership and activities.

This study, therefore, aimed to explore how charismatic Churches in Kakamega County can better initiate and implement inclusivity practices, raising awareness and addressing barriers that have long excluded individuals with special needs from fully participating in Church life.

#### **1.4. Objectives**

The study was guided by the main objective and the specific objectives that were derived from it.

##### **1.4.1 Main objective**

The overall objective of the study was to interrogate initiation of inclusivity among the people with special needs in charismatic Churches in Kakamega County.

##### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives**

1. To determine the characteristics of people with special needs in charismatic Churches.
2. To examine the suitability of charismatic Churches towards people with special needs.
3. To assess the challenges and mitigation measures for people with special needs attending charismatic Churches in Kakamega County.

#### **1.5. Research Questions**

1. What are the characteristics of people with special needs in charismatic Churches?
2. How suitable are charismatic Churches in accommodating and supporting people with special needs?
3. What are the challenges and mitigation measures for people with special needs attending charismatic Churches in Kakamega County?

## **1.6. Significance of the Study**

The study provided valuable insights into the inclusion and participation of people with special needs within charismatic churches in Kakamega County. By identifying their characteristics, the research helps stakeholders understand the diverse needs and capabilities of this population, fostering more informed and empathetic responses. Examining the suitability of charismatic churches offers a critical evaluation of how well these religious spaces accommodate and support individuals with special needs, potentially guiding improvements in infrastructure, attitudes and worship practices. Additionally, by assessing the challenges faced and the existing or proposed mitigation measures, the study contributes to the development of effective strategies that enhances accessibility, inclusion and spiritual fulfillment for people with special needs. Ultimately, the findings serve church leaders, policymakers, disability advocates and the wider community by promoting a more inclusive and supportive environment within faith-based settings, aligned with broader goals of social justice and equal participation.

## **1.7 Justification of the Study**

This study is justified in three ways. These are academic justification, and policy justification. This is meant to make the study have a broad scope of knowledge in the academic world and make it more relevant.

### **1.7.1 Academic Justification**

Various scholars have done and written works on initiation of inclusivity among the people with special needs in the society. David W. (1995), a catholic priest elaborates how these persons should be handled so as they feel part of the society per see. Furthermore, David Werner in his works has also placed emphasis on children with disability in a village set-up. He guides the community on the welfare of the persons

with disability. Tedd H. (1998) examines the rights and wrongs on disability. He places emphasis on religion in general and he is so specific on Christianity. He explains how PLWDs should be fully included in the Church matters. Therefore, this study anticipated expounding more on the works of these scholars among many others to fully address the matter of inclusivity to the people with special needs by the charismatic Churches in Kakamega County.

### **1.7.2 Policy Justification**

Various laws have been put in place by various organizations both globally, regionally, nationally and even at the community level. Charismatic Churches in Kenya make their Church laws with reference to the Kenyan constitution as their guide. Therefore, addressing the inclusion of PLWDs is inescapable in any stage. Moreover, the UN-charter on human rights has well-articulated this phenomenon of PLWDs. In this case, the Church is not an exception in the implementation of the law even though it is a spiritual Church organization; it has to adhere to the Kenyan Constitution. In this case, this study focused on how the charismatic Churches in Kakamega County have taken an initiative to ensure initiation of inclusivity of people with special needs. Thereafter, it has proposed ways in which the policy makers should engage in order to improve the act of inclusivity of PLWDs in the Christian fraternity especially the charismatic Churches which are highly mushrooming in the society. The policy makers, thus, will include the new and very contemporary knowledge to the already existing laws and amend where necessary.

### **1.8. Scope of the Study**

This study was confined to investigating the initiation of inclusivity among people living with special needs within charismatic churches in Kakamega County, Kenya. It focused specifically on identifying the characteristics of individuals with special needs

who attend these churches, evaluating the extent to which the church environments, practices and leadership are suitable and accommodating to their needs, and examining the challenges they face along with the strategies employed to address these challenges. The study did not extend to other denominations or counties and limited its analysis to the context of charismatic churches, providing a localized understanding of inclusivity efforts within this particular religious setting.

### **1.9 Limitations of the Study**

People with special needs come from various cultures and ethnics which led to poor communication during the study in cases where he or she had not gone to school. Also engaging the Church leadership for the purposes of data collection, also proved to be a problem, since most of them were only found on Sunday and were busy with Church activities. The researcher however tried to book appointment with the Church leaders for data collection purposes and eventually tried to get help of interpreters to convey the message where need arose.

People with special needs undergo stigmatization in their day-to-day life. Stigmatization led to fear and low self-esteem and also it made people with special needs have low opinion on themselves; a fact that made them not to be readily approachable or hostile. The researcher tried to sensitize them and advise them accordingly on the issue and show them why they should accept themselves so that they participate in the research.

### **1.10. Theoretical Framework**

This study adapted Functionalism Theory by Emile Durkheim (1912), which focuses on the role religion plays in society. Durkheim explored religion in its most elementary and primitive forms and recognized it as a crucial institution in maintaining social order.

He observed that societies face various challenges, including disability, which needs to be addressed. Durkheim believed that religion was the institution best equipped to handle such challenges and promote transformation within society. He argued that religion concerns both ordinary and extraordinary aspects of life, functioning as a social mechanism that promotes cohesion, stability, and overall well-being (Durkheim, 1912).

Functionalism asserts that religion serves as a social institution contributing to the stability, cohesion, and continuity of society. It fosters social solidarity by promoting shared values, rituals, and practices that create a sense of belonging and community (Durkheim, 1912; Jailani, 2024). Furthermore, religion disciplines individuals by transmitting societal values, alleviating frustration, and helping individuals regain a sense of well-being, especially during crises. Durkheim also emphasized that religion supports society by meeting emotional and physical needs (Durkheim, 1912). Additionally, religion represents a collective consciousness, a fusion of individual consciousness that creates a shared societal reality. This collective consciousness helps to maintain social order and cohesion, promoting a sense of shared purpose and responsibility among individuals (Durkheim, 1912; Mason, 2000).

The relevance of Durkheim's theory to this study lies in its exploration of how religion influences societal order and inclusion, particularly for marginalized groups such as people with special needs. Durkheim's assertion that religion functions as a force for social cohesion and stability aligns with the study's focus on understanding how charismatic Churches can promote inclusivity for people with special needs. The theory's emphasis on social solidarity is particularly useful for evaluating how religious institutions can support marginalized individuals, including those with disabilities, in Kakamega County (Durkheim, 1912; Roffey, 2013). The study examines how

charismatic Churches, as religious institutions, contribute to promoting inclusivity and societal well-being through their teachings, values, and practices.

Durkheim's Functionalism Theory helped to interrogate the study's specific objectives. The first objective, which seeks to determine the characteristics of people with special needs in charismatic Churches, was explored through the lens of how religion shapes societal views and attitudes toward individuals with special needs. Durkheim's theory guided the exploration of how people with special needs are perceived within the Church community and how their characteristics are shaped by society's collective consciousness (Durkheim, 1912; King, 2019). The study investigated how the Church's rituals, values, and teachings contribute to defining and understanding individuals with special needs.

The second objective, examining the suitability of charismatic Churches towards people with special needs, was addressed through the theory's focus on religion as a source of social solidarity. The study assessed whether charismatic Churches fulfill their societal role in promoting inclusivity by creating an environment that welcomes people with disabilities. Durkheim's notion of religion promoting solidarity and shared values provided a framework to evaluate how well these Churches integrate individuals with special needs, based on religious principles of care, self-esteem, and participation (Durkheim, 1912).

The third objective, assessing the challenges and mitigation measures for people with special needs attending charismatic Churches in Kakamega County, was also interrogated using Durkheim's theory. Functionalism helped identify the societal barriers that people with special needs face in the Church environment, such as physical, attitudinal, and structural obstacles. The theory's concept of environmental

barriers to inclusion provided insight into these challenges and allowed the study to suggest strategies for overcoming them. It also guided the exploration of how religion can help mitigate these challenges and promote inclusivity within Church settings (Durkheim, 1912).

Durkheim's Functionalism Theory was adequate to interrogate all three specific objectives because it offered a comprehensive framework for understanding the role of religion in society and how it influences the treatment of marginalized groups, like those with special needs. The theory's focus on social cohesion and solidarity facilitated the exploration of how charismatic Churches in Kakamega County can foster inclusivity for people with disabilities (Durkheim, 1912; Rashid, 2023). It helped in understanding how religion shapes perceptions of individuals with special needs, evaluates the inclusivity of religious practices, and identifies barriers to participation. Additionally, Durkheim's framework allowed the study to propose solutions to overcome these barriers, ultimately promoting a more inclusive Church environment.

Despite its strengths, Durkheim's Functionalism Theory has been critiqued for placing too much emphasis on society as a whole, neglecting individual agency and autonomy. Critics, such as Lewis A. Coser, argue that Durkheim's focus on social order overlooks the complexities of modern society and individual action (Coser, 1977). In this study, however, the limitations of the theory were mitigated by contextualizing Durkheim's ideas within the contemporary Church setting. Recognizing that modern society allows for greater individual autonomy, the study adapted Durkheim's theory to account for the diverse needs and perspectives of people with special needs. This approach balanced the emphasis on societal stability with the need for individualized support and inclusivity, aligning with the dynamic role of the Church in modern society.

In sum, Durkheim's Functionalism Theory provided a valuable framework for understanding the role of charismatic Churches in Kakamega County in addressing the needs of people with special needs. The theory facilitated an exploration of how religion fosters inclusivity, identifies barriers to participation, and promotes social change. It guided the study in proposing practical measures for enhancing inclusivity in these Churches. By adapting Durkheim's theory to the specific context of modern society, the study overcame the theory's limitations and highlighted the evolving role of religious institutions in promoting social well-being and inclusion.

### **1.11 Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided a comprehensive foundation for the study by addressing key elements necessary for understanding its context, purpose, and scope. It began with the background of the study, which outlined the role of religion in society, particularly in fostering inclusivity for marginalized groups such as people with special needs. The statement of the problem highlighted the gap in research regarding how charismatic Churches in Kakamega County contribute to the inclusion of people with special needs, emphasizing the need for an in-depth exploration of the subject.

The chapter then detailed the objectives of the study, which included both the main objective—to analyse the role of charismatic Churches in fostering inclusivity for people with special needs—and the specific objectives, which sought to examine the characteristics of people with special needs in these Churches, assess the suitability of charismatic Churches for inclusivity, and evaluate the challenges and mitigation measures in place. In line with these objectives, the study formulated research questions to guide data collection and analysis.

The significance of the study was explained by demonstrating its contribution to academia, religious institutions, policymakers, and advocacy groups working toward inclusivity for people with disabilities. The justification of the study underscored the importance of focusing on charismatic Churches as influential institutions in shaping societal perceptions and inclusion practices. The scope of the study defined the geographical, conceptual, and temporal boundaries, ensuring a clear focus on Kakamega County and the role of charismatic Churches.

The limitations of the study were acknowledged, particularly in terms of accessibility to respondents, potential biases, and challenges in obtaining comprehensive data from religious institutions. Measures were outlined to mitigate these limitations, ensuring credibility and reliability in findings. The theoretical framework adopted Emile Durkheim's Functionalism Theory (1912) to provide a conceptual foundation for understanding how religion fosters social cohesion and inclusion. The theory's key tenets—social solidarity, collective consciousness, and religion as a stabilizing force—were applied to interrogate the study's objectives. The framework also addressed critiques of Functionalism, demonstrating how the study adapted it to the modern religious setting while considering individual agency and diversity within religious communities.

This chapter laid the groundwork for the study by providing a structured approach to investigating the role of charismatic Churches in promoting inclusivity for people with special needs. By integrating a strong theoretical foundation with clear research objectives and justifications, the study positioned itself to offer valuable insights into religious inclusivity in Kakamega County.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

The chapter reviewed works of various scholars from different sources related to the study with the aim of identifying gaps that were to inform the various variables to be examined. The literature review was carried on journals, books, articles, reports, theses, dissertations, newspapers, articles and credible internet sources. The review was guided by both the independent and the dependant variables of the study. The review also took into account the functionalism theory by Emile Durkheim.

#### **2.2 Characteristics of Persons with Special Needs in Charismatic Churches**

One of the leading priests who have written on disabled people in relation to pastoral ministry is Kern (1985). Kern is a Roman Catholic priest in the U.S.A. and his book stresses on how he himself has developed this ministry, and the way people with special needs are handled in Roman Catholic tradition. One of the unique features of this book is that it has discussed the Roman Catholic views, on the training and ordination to the priesthood of PLWDs such as the blind, albinism and the deaf. He further notes that a survey of different seminaries in the United States of America in 1981 indicated that "there were students whose disabilities included blindness, low vision, deafness, cerebral palsy, diabetes, epilepsy, dyslexia or other physical handicaps", studying for the priesthood.

According to Kern (Ibid), indeed the Roman Catholic Church has played a role of ensuring that the people with special needs are well included in the activities of the Church. They have been made to feel fully as part of the ecclesial community. Unaddressed by Kern is the main tasks that the persons with disabilities should be engaged

in. Further, Kern has not informed his audience how other category of Churches engage people with special needs in the Church. Also, he has not elaborated the limits that the persons living with disability should be engaged in. It is on this basis that this study focused on the place of the people with special needs in the society in Kakamega County charismatic Churches.

Werner (1988) in his works, places emphasis on disabled children in a village setting. He gives a guide for community health workers, rehabilitation workers, and families. Furthermore, his work gives a wealth of clear, simple, but detailed information concerning most common disabilities of children which include: many physical disabilities, blindness, deafness, fits, behaviour problems, and development delay. It gives suggestions for simplified rehabilitation, low cost aids, and ways to help disabled children find a role and be accepted in the community. Above all the book helps readers to realize that most of the answers for meeting these needs can be found within the children themselves. It discusses ways of starting small community rehabilitation centres and workshops run by disabled people themselves or the families of disabled children. This book gives very helpful information, but does not address the issue of disability as it relates to religion especially in charismatic Churches as this study executed in Kakamega County.

Harrison (1995) examines the rights and wrongs on disability. He emphasizes religion in general and Christianity in particular. One of the agencies in Britain that deals with disability in relation to the Church is CHAD (Church Action on Disability) The agency ... “not only sets out how to deal with certain practical issues of how disabled people might become more involved in Church life, but also begins to get into grips with some of deeper issues, such as PLWDs trying to get Churches more aware of disability issues, physical accessibility of Church buildings, and how Church life, work and ministry is

to involve PLWDs in Church councils, the running of Sunday schools, lay leadership in the Church, training in theological colleges for the ordained ministry representing various Churches”.

One of the ways PLWDs are dehumanized by the Church and the society in general is the way they refer to them as if they are not human beings. For example, the author illustrates this when he says that when a disabled person is being served tea, the one serving asks a non-disabled person "Does he/she take sugar?" Furthermore, they indicate that the disabled can do much when they are supported and learn from one another for inspiration and enrichment. This emphasizes how the community can contribute much to enabling such people to feel loved and welcome. The book by Harrison does not give the biblical or religious view. It is on this basis that this study anticipated unravelling the place of disability in the charismatic Churches in the society, the case of Kakamega County.

Macquarie and Childress editors of *A New Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (1989) involve some professionals who have written valuable articles on issues related with disability. These would include Warm T. Reich who has contributed significant information on the "care of the handicapped". He further gives one of the clearest definitions of impairment, disability and handicap and how they are related in that order. James F. Childress has written an article on "Care" which is based on Jesus Christ's story of the Good Samaritan. He likens PLWDs to the injured man and the inn-keeper to the Church and society. Furthermore, he stresses the points that are of the striking components of community is for the resident PLWD to feel the sense of "belonging" and "togetherness". This implies that a Christian community should enable its residents to feel this sense of belonging and togetherness whether they are disabled

or not. This clearly shows why this study intended to find out if indeed the people with special needs are included in the charismatic Churches' activities in Kakamega County. Vanier (1995) focuses on how to cater for disabled people, especially the mentally disabled. He stresses how those who cannot care for themselves can be cared for in some caring homes such as those called L'Arche. Vanier, who is the author of this book and founder of L'Arche Communities of the Roman Catholic tradition, states how the mentally disabled people with whom he stayed in 1964 challenged him. These challenges inspired him to start these communities. The summary of his L'Arche communities' vision is that they are "...not a solution to a social problem, but a sign that love is possible and that we are not condemned to live in a state of war and conflict where the strong crush the weak. Each person (including the disabled) is unique, precious and sacred." However, Vanier has not put in details the major activities and events that the physically disabled persons should be included in the society. He has not gone the extent of addressing each disability with what it should be related to in terms of activities and duties. It is on this gap that this study aimed at addressing various disabilities with what they should be engaged in the charismatic Churches to ensure achievement of inclusivity especially in Kakamega County.

Rayan (1991) who are experienced in the ministry to the disabled, have co-authored a very resourceful manual entitled Disability Awareness Manual (1998). Their work is designed to sensitize able-bodied people on how they can assist disabled people wherever they encounter them. It lays emphasis on ten ways of how an able-bodied person can help the deaf, the blind, the physically disabled and the mentally disabled respectively. Rayan (1991) examines the value of integrating PLWDs and uses a figurative language; the preparation of Christ's bride (the Church). She gives good illustrations from the Indian perspective. The Church is challenged as to why it has

neglected the integration of the disabled in its community. Rayan (ibid) further gives an example by positing that:

"Handicap is viewed as a curse, particularly in developing countries. It carries with it a stigma that affects the disabled person... it too often looks as though the Church is meant for the able-bodied people only. That is probably why we do not see so many handicapped people in our Churches and para-Church organizations".

This exclusion contradicts the fundamental teachings of the Church, which emphasize love, acceptance, and the inclusion of all members of society. It raises critical questions about the role of religious institutions in addressing the needs of people with disabilities and the measures that can be taken to foster a more inclusive Church environment.

Kibisu (1984) approaches the issue of the handicapped from integration point of view. She tackles the issue investigating the problem of Integrating People with special needs pupils into regular schools in Nairobi and the surrounding areas. One of the points she raises is that the disabled children are usually treated as abnormal and problematic, which affects these children, their teachers and finally their families. She stresses that the people with special needs children should be given a chance so that they may further their education through integration which enhances their educational performance. The foregoing literature did not give evidence of the care of PLWDs from the perspective of the charismatic Christian community. Therefore, there was need to investigate how charismatic Churches in Kakamega County promotes inclusivity of people with special needs in the Church.

According to Woley and Wilber (1994), Segregation effects can only be reduced by inclusion of people with special needs in all activities done by all human beings. This creates a good environment whereby people with special needs can always feel like full participants in the entire community where they belong. People with special needs gain skills while interacting with others and develop friendship with other people whether

normal or not to live more successful lives in the community. Inclusion allows these people living with disabilities to reduce feelings of isolation and rejection.

Inclusion involves all people with or without disability. This is where all are considered as one. To make people with special needs become inclusive means letting them operate in openness, acceptance and support. This means that inclusiveness does not agree with discrimination (Woley and Wilber, 1994).

Woley and Wilber (1994), further, alludes that in order to normalise people with disability, they should be allowed to do things independently without being supervised. They should also be identified from the families and Church to enable them be fully accommodated technologically and in day-to-day life. Woley and Wilber (ibid) has not addressed the things that they should be allowed to be involved in and to do. He is too general in his argument. This fact therefore is what prompted this study to interrogate these issues with reference to Kakamega County charismatic Churches.

A book by Njogu (2008) titled *culture performance and identity* asserts that our cultures do not give identity to the people living with physical disabilities in our societies. He says that culture is the basic foundation that leads to negative attitudes towards people with disabilities. He says cultures dehumanises people with disabilities. Culture considers some people to be bad omen in some communities to an extend they are either killed or thrown into bushes. Culture according to him derives off one's self-esteem. Low self-esteem denies one opportunity of participation and freedom of participation. Therefore, the people with special needs are denied opportunity of participation. People with special needs are not able to relate freely with others in terms of marriage, and other duties because they are down looked.

Njogu (2008) adds that using bad language on people with special needs discourages them. He says that it is unfortunate that the society has not yet scrutinized the correct language to refer to them.

What Njogu has not addressed is the way in which culture in the society affects the physical disabled persons more so in the charismatic Church and the society at large. Therefore, Njogu's work helped the current research to interrogate and find out how the cultures of the people of Kakamega County have affected people living with disabilities in the charismatic Churches.

A book by Kathleen (2021) titled participation of people living with disabilities in physical activities; a global perspective published online on July 2021, gives an overview of policies for physical activities concerning people living with disabilities (PLWD). In it he discusses the challenges people with special needs undergo when it comes to meeting physical activity guidelines. His work shows that people with special needs are at high risk of serious health problems related to inactivity than people without disabilities. His work indicates that people with special needs are at a great risk of injury and developing non-communicable chronic diseases and age related health conditions. This is brought about by health inequalities and participation caused by barriers to access health care, higher rates of health comprising behaviour and lower rates of receiving disease prevention services.

What Kathleen has not tackled is how these risks can be counteracted when the physically disabled persons are faced with it. Kathleen's work benefited this study through its inquiries to know whether the charismatic Churches took part in offering physical activities. The study also sought to know whether the charismatic Churches understand the risk and challenges people with special needs undergo as far as disability

is concerned. This study also sought to know whether the charismatic Churches have health facilities to cater for the needs of the people with special needs.

Rohwerder (2015) discusses on barriers to inclusion of people with disability, effects of including people with disability and also discusses on different models of disability. He has discussed at length on people with intellectual, mental and disability. He says these people have to be talked to well, listened to attentively and their thoughts have to be allowed to come out clearly without being thought for. He puts it that we have to put ourselves to the level of people living with disabilities whereby using wheelchairs should sit at their level while talking to them which most people do not do. Rohwerder (ibid), thinks that barriers of inclusion, like attitudinal language and communication programmatic institutional and statistical, social barriers, transportation barriers, internalised barriers having inadequate cost of inclusion and lack of participation of people with disability must be eradicated to allow for the well-being of the people with disability. Rowhwerder has not addressed how the mentioned barriers can be removed in order to ensure a proper inclusion of the physically disabled persons. Therefore, the knowledge given by Rohwerder in his work helped the current research to scrutinize barriers of inclusivity to people with special needs in charismatic Churches in Kakamega County and address measures that should be put in place to remove them.

### **2.3. Congregants and Leadership Attitudes and Suitability of Charismatic Churches towards Persons with Special Needs**

In the book by Wang (2013), *A Strategy to Change People's Attitudes Towards Disabled Persons and their Families*, has addressed on various factors and issues that discomforts disabled people in the Church. Their attitude according to him varies with

treatment given to them. Once the treatment is harsh, they decide to stay away from the Church and once it's favourable then they attend Church services. Mostly Wang (2013) says most people in the Church do not interact and accept people with disability. Wang puts it that various Churches have pre-conceived notions and low expectations on people with disability the Church believes that they are cursed, sinful and rejected people by God. The bad theology given to people according to Wang is the cause of bad and harsh judgements, and misguided questions given to the disabled people is not truly depicted since the Church holds much on culture of the people which is in co-operated in their theology. This is yet another obstacle to people with disability. Apart from preconceived notions, culture, and bad theology, Yea Hui-Wang also discusses on Church buildings and are not accessible since there are no ramps to access higher areas like pulpits and upstairs. Wang insists that the Church should realise that the disabled people need love, care, assurance, acceptance, hospitality, respect and understanding and finally they feel good when welcomed. In a Church or place where their presence is not recognised was always make them feel out of place.

According to Wang (ibid), a Church must provide specialised equipment's to different levels of disability like hearing aids, braille, wheel chairs, talking bibles among others. Without them it means the physically disabled care was be fully ignored. They need full service of the Church, as well as being socially entertained with recreational facilities like other normal people to keep their interest in the Church. The Church according to Wang can create boredom to the disabled people by setting funny styles of worship and procedures, which involves difficult language to be understood without interpreters. He also insists that a good Church should not set high standards of academic achievements where members expect their children to perform highly

forgetting the condition of the disabled child. This drives the disabled into a state of hopelessness, disapproval and unworthiness.

From the works of Wang, he has not categorized on the styles that can easily affect the physically disabled persons in the Church and more so charismatic Churches. That's why this study sought to fill this gap since the work of Wang is so beneficial in that it helped this research to find out whether charismatic Churches have funny procedures and styles of worship that can affect or bring boredom to the physically disabled hence creating a negative attitude in them towards the Church.

Furthermore, Wang puts it that most people in the Church do not interact with the disabled easily. They fear holding discussions with them and listening to their opinions. This is a fact that can scare them away and bring discouragement to attend Church. If the Church ensures freedom and participation of these people in Church matters as well as listening to their problems and understanding their needs, then the disabled can find the Church to be the most comfortable place to dwell since their attitude towards the Church can automatically become positive. Wang work is relevant and important since it helped the current research identify factors or barriers of inclusion that may inject the negative attitude to the people with special needs towards charismatic Churches.

Masongo (2019) wrote on "*Neglect of people with disability by the African Church*", in his research he generally analysed the treatment given to the people with disability which always he has termed to be lowering their dignity. Masongo argues that once they are objected and seen as mere objects that demands only healing, calling them names depending on their own disabilities, then we subject them to a world and space that is not their own. Masongo further argues that having our own agenda should not impose on them in the name of caring for them. This does not show the true image of

God of them. Masongo adds, that many people in the Church would like to work with normal people and associate with them other than “abnormal” people.

Masongo (2019) also views the attitude given to these disabled people to be a negative one in the Church and that is why they look isolated, rejected and stigmatised. He also adds that disability is already a sign of oppression on them and a barrier on itself.

Yet, what Masongo (ibid) has not addressed is the kind the treatment that the persons who are physically disabled should be accorded. Therefore, this study has looked forward to fill this gap by outlining this treatment that they deserve to be accorded with. However, Masongo’s work helped the current research to identify the treatment given to people with special needs in charismatic Churches and also helped reflect the attitude the people with special needs have towards these Churches, especially among the charismatic Churches in Kakamega County.

Grenz (2019) in his book, *Revisioning Evangelical Theology*, advocates for love and unity in the Church as God himself was with his son and the holy spirit. He says such love and unity is not in the Church. Therefore, to him the people who suffers most are the disabled. According to him a Church must have a task of defining clearly the relationship of people with disability and the Church. This work was helped the current research to establish the relationship of the people with special needs in charismatic Churches with other members in the entire Church. He discusses the connection between Christian doctrines and Christian living. He says the doctrines of the Church should be applied practically in our living. The Church according to him should avoid historical pride, modern presumptions and scholarly attitude when interpreting bible verses to gain true meaning of the bible, avoid memorization of the bible and academic training to understand God’s word better. This indicates that there should be no line of distinction between the able bodied and the disabled if the bible is well interpreted.

Grenz work assisted this research to interrogate the kind of theology taught in charismatic Churches and its practicality in life to the people with special needs.

In Keneth Boa's book (n.d), he impresses love and gratitude to the disabled. He says the disabled should have identity in Christ and be made to know and understand that God has compassionate love for them (Romans 5:8). Kenneth asserts that the disabled people have to overcome their misconceptions of life. Misconceptions have made them to lack real identities. The disabled must avoid self-hate, guilt and regrets, which destroys the relationship. This knowledge helped the research at hand to find out what the Church is doing to eradicate the behaviour in the people with special needs.

Furthermore, Kenneth Boa talks of discipline and simplicity. He noted that there should be no body in the Church who should view himself as superior. He says People in the Church should grow into spiritual discipline and simplicity (Matt 6:33). This was to enable the able-bodied to have an open heart for the disabled. According to him, many Churches lack the aspect of simplicity and discipline. To him many people are always superior to others and that in such a state the disabled are deemed to suffer since they are undermined. What Bota has not done is to elaborate on the strategies that the charismatic Churches are doing in order to maintain discipline in the entire Church and the society at large. Therefore, this work helped the research at hand to find out what the Church is doing to maintain discipline and simplicity in all people.

A book by Govig (1989) "*At the broken places*", Persons with disabilities and the Church, observes that created barriers limit the disabled and that they make most people in the Church not to understand the Disabled. Govig says disabled people have difficult life and do not know how to compensate for their disability, or rather deal with other people's reactions. They leave in stigma and stereotype. The disabled are always in

denial. The disabled are easily hurt with bad comments and language. If ways cannot be sought to avoid what has been sited, then Govig says that it is not easy to tame the attitude of the disabled positively towards the Church.

Govig's work helped the researcher to identify issues affecting people with special needs in charismatic Churches so that they are worked upon to enable them develop a positive attitude towards the Church. Moreover, Govig in his book, identifies three barriers that keeps people with special needs away from the Church. The barriers include theological barriers, body life barriers and leadership barriers. Theologically there is no understanding of the problem of disability. Matters concerning disability are not taught, trained and even discussed. The theology given does not display the image of God in the people with disability. This keeps them uncomfortable and rejected. He adds that when planning any programmes or activity, like baptism or lord's table the physically disabled must be considered. The baptismal tank must serve them also. The programmes should allow for their participation, or else they become passive and demotivated. He says that the pastors who considers the issues of disability cultivates their attitudes positively towards the Church. What Govig has not addressed is the common barriers that are witnessed in charismatic Churches in reference to persons with disability. Therefore, his work helped the researchers to identify barriers in charismatic Churches that brings a hindrance to people with special needs.

Foley (2015) wrote a book titled, *The basic things you need to know about the Church in Lars B, Durberg*. This book talks of the Church as the most beautiful gathering to people on earth. He said the Church certainly has and will continue to have its problems and faults but when the Church functions as it is called to function then there is nothing like it on the earth. He said Jesus was the first user of the word Church in his gospel and that he mentioned the word Church 79 times. Ben Foley describes a Church in

Greek as *ecclesia* which means calling out and assembling together. He says the people of God gather together and go forth in his name, character, authority, and power as the first starter of the Church. The Church then must proclaim and put into practice, the word of God so that they are the true salt and light of the world. Foley says the Church should help us to relate to one another well in love and honour and submit to one another in Christ both in service and leadership.

The Church according to Ben Foley demands us to love one another deeply (1 *Peter* 1:22), to be devoted to one another in brotherly love (*Romans* 12:10), Honour one another above yourself, (*Romans* 12:10). Also, to live in harmony and at peace with each other, accept one another as Christ accepted human beings, have equal concern for each other's burdens, be kind and in humility consider others burdens, be kind and compassionate to one another and in humility consider others to be better than yourself. (*Philippians* 2:3) and offer services to each other (*John* 13:14). If the bible according to Ben Foley considers the disabled in that it sees them as normal people who should be active participants, then we should not discriminate the people with special needs. What Ben Foley has not done is to explain ways in which the Church has discriminated person who are living with disability.

Therefore, Foley's work is relevant to this research since it has discussed on the role of Church to every one including people with disability. It has described the basic principles of the bible that needs us to be one, which is relevant to my work since my work seeks to examine the role charismatic Church plays, if any, towards initiating inclusivity to people with special needs. Moreover, he has not discussed on the disability as an inclusivity challenge of which my research intends to do.

Research by Enyinnaya done in Nigeria on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2020 titled; *The Church ministry to people with disability* studied on visually impaired and intellectually impaired. The

paper argued that people with disability are persons created in the image of God and that if it happens to live long, it might suffer from one disability to another. He advocates the Church to plan its life programmes and structures in ways that make for inclusion, indicating in bold statements that all God's children are welcome in the house. In his practical suggestions of his study, those architectures should know that the Church construction needs to put into consideration of people with special needs. He said ramps should be made clearly so that people using wheel chairs can access on higher floors. He added worship services should be well planned to accommodate or serve all people.

Ushers and Royal ambassadors should be advised to put into consideration people with disability. He advocates for fellowship and bonding hospitals or schools for people living with physical disabilities. He says they should be fully integrated. He adds that missions and evangelistic tasks is to be carried out holistically so that people with special needs can be led to Christ like any other normal person. John's work is relevant to this work because he has discussed on people with disability. Since John has addressed those individuals who are intellectually impaired, this work is focussed on those who are generally impaired. Therefore, his work helped this study to identify the role which the charismatic Churches play towards initiating inclusivity to people with disability, to identify people with special needs and at the same time to identify challenges these people are undergoing.

An article published in Washington Dc by Andrew Bartodatti in 2021 titled; *Disability and the Church; A vision for Diversity and inclusion* ", seeks to find out how the Church should be more inclusive of the disabled persons. He wrote on autism, he interviewed in it Lamar Hardwick of 36 age who had autism. In Hardwick speech he said disabled people are overlooked, pushed away or made to feel unwelcome. He insisted that all

people are made in the image of God and that persons with disabilities have knowledge, wisdom and gifts to offer the Church and should be allowed to contribute those gifts as much as the Church tries to address issues of racial and ethnic diversity to avoid marginalisation to these people. He advises that the Church should advocate for and champion for disabled persons and place them in leadership positions within the Churches. He said that their voices are very important for the growth of the Church. He said, including them in Church services and management attracts them to attending the Church. Since they have a role to play as far as faith in Christ is concerned. With reference to Andrew's work, all disabilities that exist in the society have not been addressed. Therefore, by using his concept, this study intended to address how the physically disabled people should be included in the leadership and management of the charismatic Churches. Moreover, he has not informed his audience if either he is referring to inclusion in Roman catholic or charismatic Churches. Thus, this study used this knowledge to address the issue in the charismatic Churches in Kakamega County.

Research by Mbao (2020) titled; *The involvement of people with physical disabilities in Church matters in relation to gender equity*; done in Tanzania seeks to allow for real involvement of people with disability in the Church. He researched on people with visual impairment, people who are dumb and deaf and people who are crippled. In his research, he appealed to government authorities to direct and monitor the constructions of Church buildings to conform to inclusive standards and that the Church should put in place policies regarding people with disabilities. Mbao observed that African Churches pose a challenge of involving people with disability in Church activities ranging from ordinary worship to resuming leadership that include pastor-ship, deacons, deaconesses Church groups like youth leaders, choir leaders among others.

Mbao considers that the Church gates, apart from Church buildings should allow for smooth flow of wheel chairs.

Altars (Church altars) according to Mbao (ibid) must be constructed to check whether it can accommodate the movement of wheel chair for people with special needs to access the pulpit. He advices for the disability tools to be provided by the Church for example hearing aids, braille's, talking bibles liturgy and hymn books. In addition, he advocates for sign language interpreters for the dump and deaf so that they can participate fully in our services. Therefore, Mbao's work has limitedly addressed the disabilities.

This study did not exhaust on the disabilities that affects individuals in the society and how they are included in the Church leadership. He has also only majored on youth and women. This research aimed at all genders at all ages in Kakamega County.

A National Foundation Research by Amanqrnor (2001) in Ghana titled inclusion of persons with disability in the Christian community (Church), assesses the accessibility of Church to persons with disability. It also seeks to enlighten the Church on barriers people with disability face. In it he quotes Young who said inaccessibility nature of some Churches prevent persons with disability from joining a Church service, and activities (Young 2010). He also said Stigma and discrimination contributes to exclusivity at large. In his research Isaac quotes that inclusion of persons with disabilities in various aspects of life is a major challenge (Owsu, 2011) – BSC 07 university of Ghana). His research is relevant to this study because it is dealing with disability as an inclusivity challenge. Furthermore, it addresses the role of the Church on people with disability. The difference is that he has dealt with disability in general while this study addresses people living with different categories of disability.

An article by Parnel, (2018), titled “*A place of all*” inclusion of people with disabilities researched on people with intellectual and emotional disabilities, he said various Churches do not allow this people with this category of disability to attend Church services. He said the Church always puts them to a separate building or room so that they don’t intermingle with others in Sunday schools and worship services. In quoting the Gospel of Mark in the bible Devita observed that the men carrying a paralytic man faced a lot of obstacles on the way which included the crowd, the roof and negative attitudes to the paralytic. He noted that the Church was always assume a child who is born with disability among them until when the disability worsens.

In his research, he advised the Church to take into consideration three main obstacles to people with disability which include language, accessibility and education. He said proper language should be applied to people with disability, (Not abusive language) which defines people with disability with what they don’t have. In Devita’s own understanding, he said the Church’s role is one of loving to embrace, and insisting that all are full of dignity and worth, and uniquely gifted for service and ministry in the body of Christ. He said this people must be involved at the Lords table, and baptism. He comments that the Church facility must have ramps and elevators, the bathrooms and classrooms must be accessible.

Parnel’s (2018) study is relevant to this research as it highlights the exclusion of people with disabilities in religious settings, aligning with the study’s focus on charismatic Churches in Kakamega County. His findings show that many Churches isolate individuals with disabilities, preventing them from fully participating in worship and sacraments. Devita’s reference to obstacles in the Gospel of Mark underscores the barriers disabled individuals face, including negative attitudes, accessibility issues, and lack of inclusion in religious practices. His emphasis on language, accessibility, and

education as key barriers resonates with this study's objectives in assessing the challenges faced by people with special needs in Churches. The study builds upon these insights by evaluating the extent to which charismatic Churches accommodate people with disabilities and identifying measures to enhance inclusion. Ultimately, Parnel's and Devita's perspectives support this study's argument that religious institutions must foster inclusivity for all individuals.

A research by Riordan and Vesa (1991) titled; *Accommodation for the participation of persons with disabilities by religious practice of University of Nebraska Lincoln*, discusses on clergy involvement with disabled persons and their families. He puts much emphasis on participation and adaptation for persons with cognitive disabilities. In his study he comments that, the clergy have little knowledge on only few members of disability in their congregations. He comments that they are not concerned with providing care and accommodation to these people and their family members. The research is relevant to this study because it is dealing with people with disability only that he has dealt on cognitive disability while I have dealt with all types of disability. His research is addressing the role of the Church on people with cognitive disability; the current study is also looking at the role of the charismatic Churches on people with special needs but in charismatic Churches. His research helped the study to identify the right people to interview while carrying out research and also identify the role of selected charismatic Churches on people with special needs in initiating inclusivity.

## **2.4 Challenges and Mitigation Measures for Persons with Special Needs Attending Charismatics Churches**

According to Tada (2013), people with special needs need the Church. Supporting those touched by disabilities involves sharing their burdens and lightening their loads. Consequently, at every stage, disability ministry must be a word and deed ministry. This means that we ought to extend compassion and care that is motivated by a desire to see all flourish, to see the weaker members honoured and included, to see every person enabled to come to faith and minister with the gifts God has given each one, to see every person mature in Christ. This is our obligation to all in this sense, people with special needs have a right to receive just, equal, fair and inclusive treatment as do all other human beings.

A Church should be judged by how it treats its weakest members we do not move forward by leaving the weakest behind. Nevertheless, we must be cautious with our use of language and how this shapes the way we view people with disabilities. We must not allow the language of ‘weakest members’ to cause us to forget the unique contribution that people with disabilities can have in our communities. According to the Gospel of Luke, Jesus said,

“When you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous” (Luke, 14:13-14).

It is on this basis that this study focused on interrogating how the charismatic Churches in Kakamega County are including the persons who are physically disabled in the activities of the Church in order to utilize on their gifts and talents in the Church and how they are interacting with their colleagues. Furthermore, Joni Eareckson Tada posits that; as much as people with disabilities need the Church, the Church too needs people who live with disability. Inclusion of people with disability in communities often means

an occasion for spiritual growth and blessing, as well as training in patience, self-control, prayer, hope, faith, and compassion. This means that people with special needs are needed in the Church as they are part of the way that God redeems and brings about his purposes for his body (the Church) and they have a responsibility to serve, care for and minister to others within the Church body. Emphasizing the unique role of people with disabilities in the life of the Church helps offset a charity/pity attitude on the part of Church members and is a key way to fostering community and the dignity of people with disabilities. What this study was interested in, is to find out how the charismatic Churches in Kakamega County are treating the physically disabled persons.

Moreover, Joni Eareckson Tada said, “God permits what he hates to accomplish what He loves.” He redeems and uses disability for His purposes as demonstrated in their verses:

Therefore, I was boasting all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong, (2 Cor 12:7b-10).

As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you!’ And the head cannot say to the feet, ‘I don’t need you!’ On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable...(1 Cor 12:20-22).

The Church cannot claim to be the image of God without including persons who are disabled. The theological task is therefore to come to a new understanding of disability in light of God’s liberating power, His radical love and His plan to redeem the whole of creation. The focus of our theology should centre on the cross. Only the suffering, crucified God, with all His pain and the pathos of suffering people, can truly understand the experiences of people with disabilities. The good news of hope for people with disabilities, and indeed for all Christians is found in the book of Revelation;

Yes, God was making his home among his people. He was wiping all tears from their eyes, and there was to be no more death, suffering, crying, or pain. These things of the past are gone forever. Then the one sitting

on the throne said: I am making everything new. Write down what I have said. My words are true and can be trusted. Everything is finished! (Rev 21:3- 6).

Therefore, in the case of charismatic Churches in Kakamega County, this study was aimed at investigating if indeed the persons who are physically disabled are shown love by those who are fit and physically abled in the Church by being attended to in their needs. Thus, this study dedicated itself on this fundamental issue on the morality of the Church towards the vulnerable members of the society at large.

According to McArdle and Mowbray (2002), every congregation should take seriously the call for the Church to be the full embodiment of the family of God for all peoples, including people with disabilities. They further gave a report that, approximately 19% of any given population have some type of disabling condition. Some persons have disabilities, but because their disability is not visible to the eye that is hearing impairment, Multiple Sclerosis, and chronic fatigue syndrome, where they may go unrecognised. Facilitating full access to Church communities is important for all people affected by disability regardless of how visible their impairment is.

Sometimes people with disabilities attend Church services regularly and yet they are not actively involved in the social networks or leadership structures of the Church; because the leaders have not yet invited them. Some persons may be hesitant to request special accommodations because they do not wish to draw attention to themselves or seem needy. It is not only people with disabilities but also their families who feel significantly marginalized by the way in which the Church treats people with disabilities. Parents of children with disabilities may be reluctant to attend Church services because they are not sure of whether or not other congregational members will welcome them. Physical barriers such as staircases or narrow corridors of doorways,

for example, often make it difficult for families of people with disabilities to participate in Church life and ultimately result in excluding people with disabilities and their families from experiencing a full life of faith. This study assessed this scenario as to why some charismatic Churches in Kakamega County may be excluding its people with special needs in the Church major activities and even the basic roles.

According to Patricke McArdle and Patricia Mowbray (2002), further posits that; the Catholic tradition understands every human life to be equal, inherently sacred and worth of dignity and respect as the bedrock of a just society. This is not a passive teaching, however, but is instead a call to create communities and social systems that reflect the underlying love and divinity of each person. It is from the perspective that the Church criticises systems, values and structures that exclude, discriminate, hide or otherwise diminish people living with disabilities. It offends their human dignity and so is also a symptom of an unjust society. On this perspective, charismatic Churches have not been mentioned by the two authors. The voice of charismatic Churches on criticizing the systems that are found to be side-lining the physically disabled persons is not addressed.

A just society stands in solidarity with people with disabilities, ensuring equal opportunities and respect. It upholds their right to make decisions about their needs, relationships, and communities without undue interference. In a just society people with disabilities are not pushed to the margins and impoverished but they are integrated and full a part of social life and so recognised as a valuable part of the human family. God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong (1 Cor 1:27). On this basis, this study examined the strength of solidarity that exists between the persons living with disability and the various charismatic Churches in Kakamega County. Thereafter, it provided recommendations on whether to strengthen it or to maintain its standards as it is, if indeed it is serving the people of Kakamega County as a whole.

According to Jean (2008), the Australian Church has an Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference Commission for Pastoral Life under which sits the Australian Catholic Disability Council. It advises the Bishops' Commission on strategies and projects it can undertake to promote the participation of people with disability in the life of the Australian Church.

The Commission is chaired by Bishop Terry Brady while the Council is chaired by Sister Myree Harris RSJ. It also has a Disability Projects Office. Together they have produced a range of resources which have been used and are available to parishes and the whole Catholic community. The Projects Officer, Patricia Mowbray co-authored an Australian Catholic Social Justice Council's 'Catholic Social Justice Series' in 2012. It is called '*Where do we stand? With whom do we stand? – People with disability and the call of Jesus*'. Such an organized structure does not exist in the charismatic Churches, and if any, then it is not vibrant. That is why this study intended to find out as to why these structures may not be vibrant in the charismatic Churches, in this case, referring to Kakamega County.

Vanier (2008), also adds that the Catholic Church in Australia supports and often celebrates International Day of People with Disability. In 2015 Bishop Terry Brady said,

'Parish communities need every person to be part of the worshipping body. A Parish is not complete or whole unless it includes, nurtures, and rejoices in each of its members. Parishes are called to be communities that gladly and authentically welcome people with disability and their families to life of the Church' (Vanier, 2008).

From Vanier, indeed social justice in the tradition of Catholic social thought is a story of relationships, of right relationships, relationships that enhance the world and society. It would seem despite our protests to the contrary that we too often choose not to stand

with those who live with disability, with their families or their careers. Only when the mutual vulnerabilities of persons are recognized can there be a solid basis for relationships and only in relationships can humanity fulfill its call to be the image and likeness of God, to be the Kingdom in the here and now. The Gospel does not ask us to do *all we can* but to do *all that is needed!* Inclusion, real inclusion, was encompass leadership roles, central roles in the life of the Church and Church organizations, and recognizing the strengths and gifts of all. In this way there is a need to witness to the Call of Jesus to respond to the vulnerable. Therefore, this study assessed the attitude that the charismatic Churches have towards the people living disability in the Church leadership and other recognitions to ensure that inclusion is exercised in these Churches, especially in Kakamega County.

Patricia Mowbray (n.d) in his works points out that Pope Francis has been a vocal advocate and example of a true culture of encounter and solidarity. He has spoken often about the inherent dignity shared by all human beings, about the need for our parishes and life in the Church to be open to all, to accept and embrace difference. In June 2016 he hosted a Jubilee for the Sick and Disabled in Rome. At the June 12 Mass at St Peter's people with disabilities, lay, religious and clergy, took lead roles in the celebration with Pope Francis. They were readers, singers, altar servers and Mass was made accessible with sign language, braille books and in other ways. During the Jubilee Francis said in his homily, 'It is thought that sick or disabled persons cannot be happy, since they cannot live the lifestyle held up by the culture of pleasure and entertainment. In an age when care for one's body has become an obsession and a big business, anything imperfect has to be hidden away, since it threatens the happiness and serenity of the privileged few and endangers the dominant model'. Throughout his papacy Francis has emphasized and demonstrated acceptance, real love, equality and the need for those

living without disabilities, and especially our parish communities, to be truly open and respecting the different ways people experience, learn and express their faith. Have the charismatic Churches through their top leadership, in the office of Bishop addressed the same theme articulated by the Papacy?

This study therefore, anticipates examining this crucial view that the Church should demonstrate towards the physically disabled members of the Church and even in the society at large. It considered the case of Kakamega County charismatic Churches leadership and its members as whole to determine the level of acceptance to the entire Church members wholly.

## **2.5 Chapter Summary**

While Kern discussed the inclusion of people with disabilities in the Roman Catholic Church, he did not specify the roles they should undertake in religious activities. Additionally, he did not explore how other Church denominations, particularly charismatic Churches, engaged people with disabilities in ministry and leadership.

Rohwerder identified various barriers to the inclusion of people with disabilities, such as attitudinal, social, and institutional challenges. However, he did not provide concrete solutions or strategies for overcoming these barriers, particularly within charismatic Churches. This gap necessitated an investigation into how these Churches in Kakamega County could remove these obstacles to foster inclusivity.

Wang explored the challenges that disabled individuals faced in Churches, including attitudinal barriers, cultural biases, bad theology, and structural inaccessibility. However, Wang did not categorize the specific worship styles that might negatively impact physically disabled persons, particularly in charismatic Churches. This study sought to fill this gap by investigating whether charismatic Churches had worship

procedures and styles that created discomfort or boredom for disabled congregants, thereby influencing their attitudes toward Church participation.

Masongo critiqued the way disabled individuals were treated in African Churches, emphasizing their objectification and the negative attitudes they faced. However, he did not specify the kind of treatment that physically disabled persons should receive to foster inclusion. This study aimed to address this gap by outlining the appropriate treatment and support that should be provided to disabled individuals in charismatic Churches in Kakamega County.

Vannier (2008) focused on the Catholic Church's structural commitment to disability inclusion, referencing the Australian Catholic Disability Council as a model of organized efforts to ensure people with disabilities fully participated in the Church community. These structures helped facilitate inclusion, creating an environment where disabled individuals were integrated and valued. In contrast to the Catholic Church, charismatic Churches in Kakamega County lacked structured frameworks aimed at disability inclusion. There were no formal councils, commissions, or dedicated systems in place to ensure the full integration of people with disabilities into leadership, ministry, or other significant Church activities.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Research methodology is a systematic way to solve the research problem. It is a science of studying how research is done scientifically. A researcher applies various steps in studying his research (Kothari *et.al*, 2004). In this case, the chapter presents the research methodology that was used to conduct the research. The chapter has discussed research method, research design, and location of the study, target population, study population, sample size and sampling procedure, data collection procedure, data collection tools, data analysis and finally, ethical consideration. Any method or technique chosen has been explained why they have been chosen.

#### **3.2 Research Method**

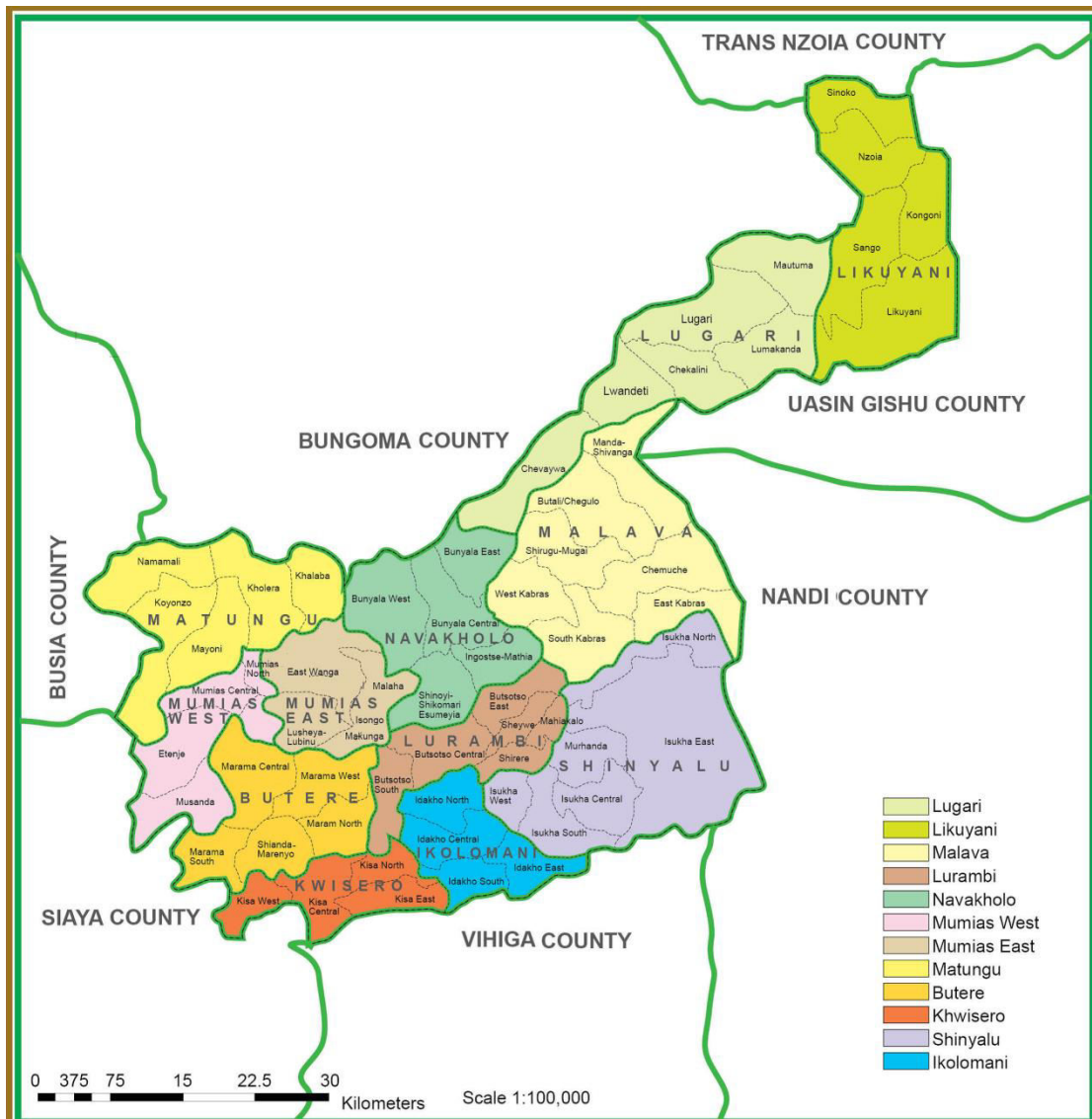
The study employed the qualitative research approach because qualitative research methods are valuable in providing rich descriptions of complex phenomena, tracking unique or unexpected events, illuminating the experience and interpretation of events by actors with widely differing stakes and roles, and giving voice to those whose views are rarely heard (Patton, 2002).

#### **3.3 Research Design**

Research design is a conceptual structure within which research is conducted (Kothari, 2004). This study adopted descriptive survey design because it is concerned with description of characteristics of certain individual or a group. The descriptive survey design was flexible to consider various aspects of the phenomena among charismatic Churches in Kakamega County. It also offered a rich explanation in our understanding of complex human experience in a manner that it offers holistic forms of analysis and explanation (Polit and Beck, 2004).

### 3.4 Location of the Study

The study was conducted in the 12 sub counties of Kakamega County, namely: Butere, Mumias, Matungu, Likuyani, Mumias East, Khwisero, Shinyalu, Lurambi, Ikolomani, Lugari, Malava and Navakholo.



**Fig. 1: A Map of Sub counties where the study was conducted.**  
Source: GIS Expert, Moi University, Department of Geography

### 3.5 Target Population

The target population is the group of individuals that the intervention intended to conduct research in and draw conclusions from (Kothari *et.al*, 2004). In this study, the target population was 175 charismatic Churches which were registered by the time

research was being conducted in Kakamega County (EAK, 2024). The researchers' choice of conducting the study in Kakamega was because of large population/numbers of charismatic Churches in Kakamega County compared to other counties in the regions. They are provided in the table below:

**Table 3: List of Target Churches for the Research**

<b>S/NO.</b>	<b>SUBCOUNTY</b>	<b>NO. OF CHURCHES</b>
1	Butere	12
2	Mumias	20
3	Matungu	11
4	Likuyani	15
5	Mumias East	12
6	Khwisero	9
7	Shinyalu	13
8	Lurambi	33
9	Ikolomani	11
10	Lugari	12
11	Malava	14
12	Navakholo	13
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>175</b>

### **3.6 Sample size and Sampling Procedure**

The sample size of this study involved was 78 respondents who were interviewed orally. From the 78 respondents drawn from the 42 Churches by use of Purposive and snowballing technique, there were 20 people with special needs, who were reached through purposive sampling and 58 respondents reached through purposive and snowballing technique, who were not affected by disability. From the two categories, there were 12 Key informant interviews who were reached by use of purposive sampling, whereby, the PLWDs were 3 and 9 from those not affected by any form of disability. Therefore, the study used purposive sampling to ensure that the people with

special needs, the clergy, ushers and Church elders to participate in the study in order to give handy and specific information required by the research. This is because Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, is a form of non-probability sampling in which researchers relied on their own judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in their surveys (Kothari, 2004). In order to ensure the success of data collection, the study embraced snowballing to reach Church members that saw purposive sampling enrich the report of this study during data collection and analysis. Additionally, there were 4 FGDs that informed the findings of the study.

**Table 1: List of Key Respondents**

<b>S/NO.</b>	<b>Category of Respondents</b>	<b>Number of Respondents Interviewed</b>	<b>Sampling Technique</b>
1	Clergy	15	Purposive
2	Ushers	24	Snowballing and purposive
3	Church leaders	14	Purposive
4	Church elder	8	Snowballing
5	PLWDs	17	Snowballing and purposive
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>78</b>	

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher surveyed various charismatic Churches to familiarize with them, as well as booking appointments for data collections. The researcher distributed open ended questionnaires to people with special needs, Church leaders and Church members who ensured that they were completed. Interviews guides for the clergy were booked for

Sundays after service. It was also researcher's duty to ensure that data from checklists is well consolidated.

### **3.8 Data Collection Tools**

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2011), data cannot be collected without the use of data collection tools that represents the variables in the study. The study employed both primary and secondary methods to collect data. It appropriately used oral interview guides, to collect primary data. The open-ended questionnaires were filled by the Church clergy/pastors and some ushers selected through purposive and snowballing technique. Four (4) FGDs were conducted during the data collection period. They included; clerics/pastors, ushers, PLWDs and the Church members FGDs. The researcher orally interviewed PLWDs, Church elders, some clerics, praise and worship team leaders and deacons. The researcher also made use of books, conference papers, and journal articles related to the study and websites related to the study to collect secondary data which was indeed supplementing the primary collected data.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

Due to the nature of this research, the study adopted content analysis to analyse the data collected from the respondents. This is because content analysis determines the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within some given qualitative data, for instance text and themes (Kothari, 2004). Using content analysis, researchers can quantify and analyse the presence, meanings, and relationships of such certain words, themes, or concepts. Additionally, thematic analysis was used to supplement content analysis. This took care of the themes that emerged during data collection period.

### **3.10. Ethical Consideration**

This study was guided by research ethics. This is because, research ethics involved protecting the rights of the respondents and the community in which the research was conducted, as well as maintaining scientific integrity (Pilot & Beck, 2004). Therefore, to ensure research ethics were adhered to, the researcher sought permissions from formal organization or offices especially where there was a possibility of seeking information or data collection. In this case permission was sought from MMUST Directorate of postgraduate Studies (DPS) and National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Also, informant consent of the respondent was observed. This is because, in research, participation must be voluntary, without any intimidation or victimization. Based on this principle, the purpose of the study, data collection method and participation criteria were made clear to the participants. This was done both verbally and in writing. The respondents were expected to show their understanding of this information by signing an individual consent form where possible. Additionally, confidentiality of respondents where necessary was adhered to. In my questionnaires, they chose either to indicate their names and the Church they worship or avoid it. This was to ensure that their identity remains un disclosed.

Finally, apart from the study being for academic and awarding achievements, it was also meant to benefit the Christian community of the charismatic society to identify and adopt ways of ensuring inclusivity of persons living with disability. Also, it was to provide an avenue of the disabled persons to be fully recognized in the Church and was to bring to an end on the issues of segregation, discrimination and stigmatization in the charismatic Church in Kakamega County and even beyond the borders.

### **3.11 Chapter Summary**

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed in the study. It presents the research method, research design, and justification for their selection. The chapter also details the location of the study, providing context for the research setting. The target population and study population are identified, followed by an explanation of the sample size determination and the sampling procedures used to ensure representation.

The data collection process is described, specifying the tools utilized for gathering information, including their appropriateness for the study objectives. The procedures followed during data collection are also outlined. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the methods applied in data analysis, explaining how the collected data were processed to generate meaningful findings.

Lastly, ethical considerations adhered to during the research are presented, including measures taken to ensure confidentiality, informed consent, and adherence to academic and professional research standards. The selection of each method and technique is justified, demonstrating its relevance in addressing the research problem effectively. The next chapter underscores the characteristics of people with special needs in charismatic Churches.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN CHARISMATIC CHURCHES**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter underscored the research methodology that guided this study. This chapter addresses the characteristics of people with special needs in charismatic Churches. The following themes emerged: Diversity of Disabilities, Visible and Invisible Disabilities, Inclusion Challenges, Different Needs and Preferences, Involvement in Worship, Supportive Community, Spiritual Needs and Beliefs, Empowerment and Leadership, Awareness and Education, and finally, advocacy and Activism. They were discussed as follows;

#### **4.2 Diversity of Disabilities**

The research revealed a broad diversity of disabilities among members of charismatic Churches in Kakamega County, encompassing various conditions, including physical, sensory, cognitive, and mental health disabilities. Respondents in the oral interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) expressed those disabilities in their communities vary greatly in nature and severity, each requiring unique forms of support. One respondent shared,

In our Church, we have members with different types of disabilities, from those who are physically disabled to those with mental health challenges. The challenge is not only recognizing their disabilities but also providing the right kind of support, (O.I, 1/9/2023).

This narrative was echoed by other interviewees, who confirmed that disabilities within the Church span across a spectrum of conditions. Kern (1985) also noted that disabilities can affect physical mobility, sensory abilities, cognitive functions, and emotional well-being, a point affirmed by several respondents.

Some disabilities are immediately apparent, such as those involving mobility aids like wheelchairs or crutches. One participant shared, *I have a cousin who uses a wheelchair, and it's very clear that she needs extra assistance, especially during services where there is no accessible seating or spaces for her* (O.I, 1/9/2023). This aligns with Werner's (1988) observation that some disabilities are visible and easier to accommodate. However, a significant number of disabilities, like chronic pain, mental health disorders, and cognitive impairments, remain invisible. As one participant in the FGD put it,

We tend to forget that not all disabilities are visible. People with depression, anxiety, or learning difficulties often go unnoticed, (FGD, 2/9/2023).

The FGDs also emphasized that disabilities affect individuals across all age groups, including children, adults, and seniors, with each requiring tailored support. One participant observed,

We have children with disabilities who require different accommodations compared to the elderly members. The level of support they need varies, and that's something we're still trying to navigate, (O.I, 1/9/2023).

This sentiment was widely shared, suggesting that the Church community needs to diversify its support structures to address these varying needs effectively. The research also revealed that disabilities influence how people engage with their faith and spirituality.

One respondent shared,

My brother has autism, and though he sometimes struggles with socializing, Church services give him a sense of peace. We've learned to integrate his specific needs with the community's support (O.I, 1/9/2023).

This highlights how spiritual engagement can be both a source of strength and a challenge, as people with disabilities have varying ways of connecting with their faith.

In addition, respondents discussed how cultural and linguistic factors influence disability experiences. One FGD participant commented,

Some of us come from cultures where disabilities are seen as a curse or a punishment. It's hard to change that mindset, but the Church has played a huge role in helping shift these attitudes (FGD, 1/9/2023).

This reflects the findings of Macquarie and Childress (1998), who noted that cultural backgrounds can shape how disabilities are perceived and how support is provided.

Communication challenges were another focal point. One participant explained,

Some of our members have speech or hearing impairments, and they've had to use sign language or communication devices to participate in services. We need more training for our members to better understand these methods, (O.I, 1/9/2023).

This points to the need for more inclusive communication strategies in the Church setting. Further discussions in the FGDs brought to light the significant role of family members in supporting individuals with disabilities. One respondent shared,

My son has cerebral palsy, and attending Church together is a family affair. We need to have a family-oriented support system that acknowledges our needs as caregivers, (O.I, 1/9/2023).

This perspective reinforces Harrison's (1995) view that disability affects not only the individual but also their families. The research also underscored that families need to

be part of the Church's support system to create a comprehensive care network. Lastly, the stigma surrounding disabilities was raised as a critical issue. One participant emphasized,

There's always this notion that people with disabilities are less capable or need pity. We need to challenge that by creating a welcoming environment where people with disabilities can contribute meaningfully, (FGD, 1/9/2023).

This aligns with the work of Macquarie and Childress (1998), who argued that breaking down societal barriers and stigma is key to fostering an inclusive environment in religious communities.

The findings, supported by oral narratives and FGDs, align with the Functionalist Theory, which posits that social institutions, such as religion, play a crucial role in maintaining social cohesion and stability. Functionalism views religious institutions as systems that contribute to the integration of individuals into the broader society by providing a sense of purpose, norms, and values (Giddens et al., 2017). By embracing inclusivity and addressing the diverse needs of people with disabilities, charismatic Churches in Kakamega County can strengthen their social function and contribute to a more unified, supportive community. This is reflected in the sentiment of one respondent who stated, *Our Church can be a place of healing and support for all, but we must ensure that no one is left behind, especially those with disabilities*, (FGD, 1/9/2023).

According to Giddens *et al.* (2017), functionalism emphasizes the importance of social cohesion in achieving harmony within a community. In the context of this study, the inclusion of people with disabilities can enhance the sense of belonging and collective solidarity within the Church community, fostering unity and mutual support among

members. Furthermore, by addressing the specific needs of people with disabilities, the Church can contribute to social integration, helping reduce stigma and promoting a more equitable society.

Overall, the ideas of functionalism provide a valuable framework for understanding the role of religious institutions in shaping inclusive practices and fostering community cohesion. By adopting an inclusive approach, charismatic Churches in Kakamega County can fulfill their social function by supporting all members, regardless of their abilities, and creating an environment where everyone can participate meaningfully in Church life.

#### **4.3 Visible and Invisible Disabilities**

The research found that within charismatic Churches in Kakamega County, disabilities could either be visible or invisible, and both require distinct approaches to accommodation. Visible disabilities are those whose effects are immediately observable, such as mobility impairments or limb differences, whereas invisible disabilities may include conditions that are not readily apparent, such as chronic pain, mental health disorders, or cognitive challenges. The importance of recognizing and addressing both visible and invisible disabilities emerged strongly during the interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). One participant shared,

We have people in our congregation who use wheelchairs, and it's easy to see their need for support, like accessible seating and ramps. But we also have individuals who may look fine but suffer from depression, which is not immediately visible to others, (O.I, 1/9/2023).

This narrative highlights the dual nature of disabilities in the Church context, underscoring that some are immediately observable, while others remain hidden and may be overlooked or misunderstood.

Vanier (1995) noted that visible disabilities often involve a physical component that is noticeable, such as the use of a wheelchair, crutches, or the presence of a limb difference. These disabilities are often easier to accommodate in Church settings, where the physical environment can be adapted with ramps, accessible seating, or assistive technology. As one respondent explained,

It's easier to spot a person using a wheelchair, and most of the time, the Church is ready to help them with physical barriers. But when someone has a mental health condition, like anxiety, it's not as easy to see, and they may not ask for help, (O.I, 1/9/2023).

However, invisible disabilities pose a greater challenge. Woley and Wilber (1994) pointed out that these conditions, which can include mental health disorders, chronic pain, epilepsy, and other internal or psychological conditions, often go unnoticed because there are no clear external signs. One participant reflected on this, saying, *we have members who struggle with depression or stress, but because you can't see it, people sometimes think they're just lazy or not interested in participating in Church activities*, (FGD, 1/9/2023). This illustrates the difficulty in providing appropriate support to individuals with invisible disabilities, as their needs are not immediately recognized.

The FGDs also highlighted the importance of creating awareness around invisible disabilities, as individuals with these conditions often face unique challenges. One respondent shared,

People who suffer from anxiety or PTSD are sometimes misunderstood in the Church. They might find it difficult to be in large crowds, or the Church environment may feel overwhelming, but others might think they're being rude or unwelcoming, (FGD, 1/9/2023).

This aligns with Vanier's (1995) assertion that invisible disabilities can lead to stigma or misinterpretation due to the lack of visible signs.

Both types of disabilities—visible and invisible—require tailored approaches for accommodation. A respondent emphasized the need for a more inclusive approach, saying,

Whether someone uses a wheelchair or has a mental health issue, we must ensure our Church is supportive. For example, we could provide prayer partners or a quiet space for those who may need a break from the service, (O.I, 1/9/2023).

This suggestion reflects the Church's role in addressing the unique needs of individuals, regardless of whether their disabilities are visible or invisible. The research findings underscore the need for awareness, education, and sensitivity in addressing both visible and invisible disabilities within charismatic Churches. The Church environment should be one where all members, regardless of the nature of their disabilities, feel welcome, supported, and included in worship and community activities.

From a Functionalist Theory perspective, the inclusion of both visible and invisible disabilities within the Church supports social integration and cohesion. Giddens *et al.* (2017) argue that social institutions like religion provide the structures necessary for individuals to experience a sense of belonging and participate meaningfully in society. By addressing both visible and invisible disabilities, the Church fulfills its role in promoting inclusivity, reducing stigma, and creating a supportive environment that strengthens the social fabric of the community. One respondent emphasized the inclusive potential of the Church:

If the Church can create spaces that cater to both visible and invisible disabilities, it will be a model for inclusivity. Everyone should feel like they are part of the body of Christ, no matter what challenges they face, (FGD, 1/9/2023).

This aligns with the functionalist view, which sees religious institutions as crucial for fostering social solidarity and ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their circumstances, can participate in and benefit from the community. Thus, the Church's role in addressing the needs of both visible and invisible disabilities is essential to maintaining harmony, unity, and cohesion within the congregation.

#### **4.4 Inclusion Challenges**

The research revealed several significant challenges that individuals with disabilities faced in charismatic Churches in Kakamega County, particularly in relation to physical access, communication barriers, and attitudinal biases. These barriers impeded their full participation in Church activities, despite the Church's potential role as an inclusive space for all. Respondents discussed their experiences, providing valuable insights into the various obstacles individuals with disabilities encountered in the Church environment.

One of the primary challenges identified was the negative attitudes and stereotypes surrounding disabilities, which contributed to discrimination and exclusion. According to one respondent,

Some Church members have a misconception that people with disabilities are incapable of contributing to Church activities. This leads to exclusion and lack of involvement, (O.I, 12/9/2023).

This finding aligns with Mukala's (2023) observation that misconceptions about disabilities often led to marginalization within the Church community. From a functionalist perspective, these negative attitudes disrupted the Church's ability to

function cohesively as an inclusive social institution. Durkheim (1912) emphasized that social institutions, including religion, play a crucial role in maintaining social cohesion and stability. When people with disabilities are excluded due to negative stereotypes, it undermines the Church's role in fostering social support and unity.

Additionally, many Church buildings were found to be physically inaccessible to individuals with disabilities. Respondents noted the absence of ramps, elevators, or accessible restroom facilities, which made it difficult for people using mobility aids, such as wheelchairs or crutches, to access Church spaces. One participant shared,

There are Churches where the entrance is not wheelchair-friendly. My sister, who uses a wheelchair, often has to be carried up the stairs, (O.I, 12/9/2023).

This issue mirrored Njogu (2008) finding that inaccessible physical environments, such as buildings without ramps or elevators, were a significant challenge. From a functionalist standpoint, the inability to provide accessible physical environments undermines the Church's social role in providing an inclusive space where all members can participate equally. Giddens et al. (2017) argue that for a social institution like the Church to function effectively, it must be accessible to all members of society, ensuring that no group is marginalized.

Communication barriers also emerged as a significant challenge for individuals with hearing, speech, or cognitive disabilities. Respondents reported that Church members with communication disabilities struggled to engage in conversations or access information due to the lack of appropriate communication tools and technologies. One respondent noted, *we have some deaf members in our Church, but we don't have anyone who can sign language, which makes it difficult for them to follow the sermon or participate in discussions*, (O.I, 12/9/2023).

This issue aligns with Woley and Wilber's (1994) research, which identified that the lack of accessible communication methods, such as sign language interpretation or captioning, created significant barriers for individuals with communication disabilities. In the context of functionalism, Durkheim (1912) suggests that effective communication is essential for social cohesion within a group. If individuals with disabilities cannot communicate effectively within the Church community, it disrupts the Church's function as a cohesive social unit. Inclusive communication strategies are essential for fostering social integration and ensuring that all members can actively participate in Church life.

The research also revealed that people with disabilities faced social and economic disadvantages, which further marginalized them within the Church community. Several respondents expressed that people with disabilities often experienced social isolation due to societal discrimination. One participant shared,

People with disabilities sometimes feel like outsiders in Church. They don't always have the opportunity to connect with others, which leads to feelings of loneliness, (O.I, 12/9/2023).

This reflected the findings of Kathleen (2021) observation that discrimination and lack of accessible social spaces could result in the social isolation of individuals with disabilities. According to Giddens *et al.* (2017), social integration is a key element for maintaining social stability. If individuals with disabilities are socially isolated or excluded, it disrupts the overall functioning of social systems. Ensuring that people with disabilities have equal access to employment, education, and social services is essential for maintaining a balanced and functional society.

Economic challenges, such as higher unemployment rates and limited access to education, were also identified as significant barriers for people with disabilities. One respondent remarked; *Many of our members with disabilities struggle to find jobs, and those who are employed often do not have the necessary workplace accommodations,* (O.I, 12/9/2023). This is echoed Kathleen (2021) observation that people with disabilities often face economic disparities due to limited opportunities and societal barriers. From a functionalist perspective, Durkheim (1912) argued that the inability of individuals with disabilities to fully participate in the economy and society can disrupt the overall functioning of social systems. Ensuring that people with disabilities have equal access to employment, education, and social services is essential for maintaining social stability and promoting a more inclusive social order.

Finally, respondents discussed the impact of cultural beliefs and societal norms, which often contributed to the marginalization of people with disabilities. Several participants pointed out that in some communities, disabilities were viewed as a stigma or punishment. One respondent shared,

In some places, people believe that disabilities are a curse or punishment from God. Changing that mindset is still a struggle, (O.I, 12/9/2023).

This view was consistent with Kathleen (2021) assertion that cultural and societal norms could lead to the exclusion of people with disabilities. In the framework of functionalism, Durkheim (1912) emphasized that cultural beliefs that perpetuate disability stigma act as a barrier to social integration and cohesion. To promote social stability, it is crucial for the Church to address these cultural biases and work towards creating an inclusive environment that values diversity.

The research highlighted a range of inclusion challenges faced by people with disabilities in charismatic Churches in Kakamega County. These challenges, including physical access barriers, communication difficulties, social isolation, and cultural stigmas, hindered the full participation of people with disabilities in Church activities. Incorporating inclusive practices, such as improving accessibility, addressing attitudinal biases, and providing communication support, is crucial for the Church to fulfill its social role as an inclusive and cohesive institution. By addressing these challenges, charismatic Churches can strengthen their social function, promoting greater unity and inclusivity within the Church community and society as a whole.

#### **4.5 Different Needs and Preferences**

The research highlighted that individual with disabilities possess distinct needs and preferences, which must be recognized and addressed to ensure their full participation in charismatic Churches. Each type of disability presents its own set of requirements, and the Church's role in accommodating these needs is integral to fostering an inclusive environment. The findings emphasize that accessibility is not limited to physical spaces but extends to communication, emotional support, and spiritual engagement.

People with mobility impairments require various forms of support to navigate Church spaces. The study revealed that ramps, elevators, and accessible seating were essential for ensuring that all areas, including stages and altars, were accessible. One respondent shared; *Our Church has no ramp for wheelchairs, and those with mobility aids find it difficult to participate fully in the service*, (O.I, 12/9/2023). This aligns with Rohwerder's (2015) assertion that individuals with mobility challenges need adequate physical provisions to access spaces comfortably. From a functionalist perspective, Durkheim (1912) argued that social institutions like the Church must ensure that all members can fully participate in activities, thereby contributing to social stability and

cohesion. When Churches fail to accommodate mobility needs, it disrupts the Church's ability to function as an inclusive space for all individuals.

The research also highlighted that people with hearing impairments benefit from specific accommodations, such as sign language interpretation, closed captioning, or assistive listening devices. One respondent mentioned, *We have a few members who are deaf, but we don't have sign language interpreters, and that makes it hard for them to follow the sermon*, (O.I, 12/9/2023). This observation echoes the findings of Wang (2013), who emphasized that individuals with hearing impairments require accessible communication methods to engage fully in Church activities. According to Giddens *et al.* (2017), inclusive communication is crucial for social cohesion. Without such provisions, the Church's social function as a cohesive unit is compromised.

Individuals with visual impairments also face barriers in Church environments. The research indicated that offering materials in alternative formats, such as Braille or large print, would greatly enhance accessibility. Additionally, providing detailed verbal descriptions of visual elements during services could improve understanding for those with visual impairments. One participant noted, *During the service, we often don't have any verbal descriptions of visual aids, which makes it hard for some of our blind members to follow*, (O.I, 12/9/2023). This aligns with Rohwerder's (2015) suggestion that providing accessible formats and descriptions is essential for ensuring equal participation for people with visual impairments. Durkheim (1912) argued that for social institutions to maintain stability, they must offer equitable opportunities for all members, which includes adapting to the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities.

People with speech impairments may also face difficulties in communication during Church activities. The research suggested that augmentative and alternative

communication (AAC) devices could be useful in facilitating communication. One respondent noted; *There are a few members with speech impairments who use communication devices, but we haven't fully embraced this tool*, (O.I, 12/9/2023). As Wang (2013) highlighted, creating an environment that accepts various communication methods is vital for inclusion. Functionalist theory, as proposed by Durkheim (1912), suggests that for the Church to function effectively, it must accommodate all forms of communication, allowing everyone to participate and contribute to the group.

The study also identified that some individuals with disabilities require additional space for mobility aids, service animals, or personal assistants. Providing flexible seating arrangements and space for these needs is necessary for inclusion. One participant mentioned, *Sometimes, people with service animals find it hard to get enough space to sit during the service*, (O.I, 12/9/2023). This aligns with the findings of Yea Hui W. (2013), who noted that accommodating physical space needs is an essential aspect of accessibility in Church settings. Durkheim (1912) emphasized that when social institutions fail to meet the needs of diverse members, it hinders their ability to function as unified entities.

Moreover, the research highlighted the importance of offering online streaming options with closed captions, sign language interpretation, or audio descriptions for individuals who cannot attend in person. This would help bridge the gap for those unable to be physically present. One respondent shared, *I think if our Church offered online services with captions, it would be a lot easier for people with disabilities to participate*, (O.I, 12/9/2023). This reflects Rohwerder's (2015) view that using technology to enhance accessibility is crucial for broadening the reach of Church services. The research also emphasized the importance of using respectful language and fostering an inclusive

atmosphere. By educating Church members on disabilities, inclusion, and appropriate interactions, the Church can prevent unintentional exclusion and discomfort.

The research further revealed that providing opportunities for individuals with disabilities to connect with others in the congregation fosters a sense of community. One respondent stated; *When people with disabilities are given the chance to engage in group activities, they feel more included and valued*, (O.I, 12/9/2023). This aligns with Yea Hui W.'s (2013) findings, which suggest that social connections within the Church can help individuals with disabilities feel integrated. According to Giddens *et al.* (2017), social integration is key for maintaining social stability, and when people with disabilities are included in social activities, it strengthens the Church's role as an inclusive social institution.

Finally, the research emphasized the importance of personalized prayer or ministry for individuals with disabilities. Some respondents suggested that acknowledging specific needs in prayer or spiritual care could have a significant emotional impact. One respondent mentioned; *Some people with disabilities find comfort in receiving prayer that acknowledges their specific struggles and needs*, (O.I, 12/9/2023). This idea aligns with the findings of Wang (2013), who emphasized that meeting the emotional and spiritual needs of individuals with disabilities is essential for their holistic inclusion. From a functionalist perspective, Durkheim (1912) argued that the emotional and spiritual well-being of individuals is integral to maintaining social cohesion and stability within social institutions.

The research underscored that people with disabilities have varied needs and preferences that must be addressed for them to fully participate in charismatic Church activities.

These include physical accessibility, communication accommodations, flexible seating arrangements, and emotional support. By making these adjustments, Churches can foster a more inclusive and cohesive environment that strengthens their social role and promotes greater unity within the Church community.

#### **4.6 Involvement in Worship**

Charismatic Churches are known for their dynamic and energetic worship styles, which often include music, dance, and fervent prayer. It is essential to ensure that individuals with disabilities can participate meaningfully in these worship activities. The research emphasized that the physical environment of the Church must be accessible to everyone, ensuring that no one is excluded from engaging in the worship experience. As one participant shared, *In our Church, we need to ensure that everyone, regardless of their mobility or ability, can join in worship activities*, (O.I, 1/9/2023). This aligns with Grenz's (2019) suggestion that worship spaces should accommodate various disabilities, allowing everyone to engage fully in the spiritual experience.

Accessibility starts with the physical environment. The research found that providing ramps, accessible seating, and clear pathways was essential for people with mobility challenges. One respondent stated; *Our Church has a ramp, but some of the seating areas are still difficult to access for people in wheelchairs* (O.I, 1/9/2023). This reflects the need to ensure that worship spaces are physically accessible to all individuals. Additionally, providing sensory accommodations, such as quieter spaces for individuals sensitive to noise, is crucial. This aligns with the findings of Patrick Ogolla (2023), who stressed the importance of creating a comfortable environment for people with sensory sensitivities.

Communication methods also need to be inclusive. The research highlighted that sign language interpreters, captions, and assistive listening devices are essential for individuals with hearing impairments. One respondent noted; *We need more sign language interpreters in our services to ensure that deaf individuals can fully participate*, (O.I, 1/9/2023). Similarly, providing alternative communication methods for individuals with speech or communication disabilities can help them engage with the service. This aligns with Grenz's (2019) emphasis on incorporating accessible communication tools into worship, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to participate.

Incorporating inclusive worship songs and providing worship materials in accessible formats, such as large print, Braille, and digital versions, is also important. This ensures that individuals with visual impairments can actively engage in worship. As one participant shared; *Having worship lyrics in large print helps people with visual impairments engage better with the service*, (O.I, 1/9/2023). This finding reflects the need for creative solutions in worship activities to ensure that everyone can participate, as emphasized by Grenz (2019).

Charismatic worship often involves physical expressions such as clapping, dancing, and raising hands. The research suggested adapting these practices to ensure that individuals with physical disabilities can participate without feeling excluded. One participant noted: .... *We need to find ways for everyone to join in the worship, even those who cannot physically clap or raise their hands*, (O.I, 1/9/2023). This idea resonates with Keneth Boa's (1998) observation that worship practices should be inclusive, allowing individuals with varying physical abilities to express their spirituality in ways that are meaningful to them.

The study also highlighted the importance of sensitivity in prayer and prophetic ministry. It is essential to ask individuals about their comfort levels regarding physical contact or personal sharing. Providing a platform for people with disabilities to share their testimonies can inspire others and demonstrate that everyone's spiritual journey is valued. One respondent shared, *sometimes people with disabilities feel hesitant to share their testimony, but when they do, it can be very encouraging*, (O.I, 1/9/2023). This aligns with the findings of Govig (1989), who suggested that creating opportunities for individuals to share their experiences fosters a sense of belonging and community.

Adaptive worship activities that cater to various abilities are also critical. The research found that incorporating art, movement, or tactile exploration into worship could engage individuals in different ways. As one participant explained, *Art and tactile activities give people with disabilities a chance to engage in worship differently*, (O.I, 1/9/2023). This idea supports Govig's (1989) view that worship can be inclusive when it offers different avenues for engagement, allowing people with disabilities to connect with their faith through diverse forms of expression.

Educating the congregation about disabilities and inclusion is essential to dispelling misconceptions and creating a welcoming environment. One respondent stated; *When people in the congregation are educated about disabilities, they become more understanding and inclusive*, (O.I, 1/9/2023). This aligns with Ben Foley's (2015) call for awareness campaigns that foster a culture of acceptance and support. Educating Church members on appropriate interactions with individuals with disabilities can prevent exclusion and create an environment that values diversity.

Encouraging individuals with disabilities to serve in leadership roles or actively participate in ministry is also important. The research suggested that empowering individuals with disabilities to contribute their gifts and talents enhances their sense of belonging. As one respondent shared, ' *When someone with a disability serves in leadership, it shows that everyone is valued and capable of contributing,* (O.I, 1/9/2023). This finding resonates with the idea that providing opportunities for leadership fosters inclusivity and belonging within the Church community.

Lastly, the research emphasized the importance of establishing feedback channels to collaborate with individuals with disabilities. One participant remarked; *Having a platform where we can give feedback helps the Church improve its inclusivity over time,* (O.I, 1/9/2023). This aligns with the view that ongoing collaboration with disability advocates and individuals with disabilities is key to creating an inclusive worship environment. As Ben Foley (2015) suggests, regular feedback and collaboration can guide continuous improvements in accessibility and inclusivity.

The research underscores the importance of adapting worship activities and Church practices to ensure that individuals with disabilities can actively participate. By providing physical accessibility, inclusive communication, and adaptive worship activities, Churches can foster a more inclusive environment. Additionally, encouraging individuals with disabilities to engage in leadership roles and ministry can enhance their sense of belonging and contribute to a cohesive and supportive Church community.

#### 4.7 Supportive Community

A supportive community is central to fostering an inclusive environment, especially in charismatic Churches, where a sense of belonging and connection is paramount (Bartodatti, 2021; Mbao, 2020; Parnel, 2018).

The research involved engaging with several respondents to understand their experiences and perspectives on how a supportive community could be fostered. Through these interviews and observations, it became clear that a supportive community goes beyond just physical accessibility—it encompasses various aspects of life that ensure individuals with disabilities are truly integrated and valued members of the congregation and society at large.

One of the most fundamental aspects of a supportive community is ensuring physical accessibility. Public spaces, buildings, transportation, and communication channels must be designed to accommodate individuals with mobility, sensory, or communication impairments. For example, the provision of ramps, elevators, tactile signage, and accessible pathways is essential. A Church that prioritizes these accommodations ensures that people with disabilities can navigate their environment independently. This not only improves their physical access but also contributes to their emotional well-being, helping them feel welcomed and included. As one interviewee shared, *When I can move around the Church freely without needing assistance, I feel like I belong*, (O.I, 1/9/2023). This quote, derived from a respondent during the research interviews, highlights the profound impact that accessibility has on a person's sense of community and inclusion.

In addition to physical accommodations, a supportive community actively works toward inclusive education. Schools play a critical role in this by providing appropriate

accommodations to students with disabilities. As Bartodatti (2021) emphasizes, inclusive education ensures that individuals with disabilities receive quality education alongside their peers, promoting social integration from an early age. The Church can support this by advocating for accessible education and offering resources for families and caregivers of children with disabilities.

A participant reflected; *We need more support for families with children who have disabilities, especially in helping them access quality education, (O.I, 1/9/2023)*, indicating the Church's potential to serve as an advocate for educational inclusivity.

Equally important is fostering an inclusive job market. A supportive community goes beyond just providing accessible physical spaces; it also works to ensure that individuals with disabilities have equal access to employment opportunities. This could involve advocating for accessible workplaces, reasonable accommodations, and diversity policies within local businesses. As Mbao (2020) points out, inclusive communities encourage individuals with disabilities to participate in the workforce, promoting economic independence and social integration. When the Church encourages businesses and community leaders to implement such policies, it helps create a more equitable society. A respondent mentioned; *We should push for more companies to employ people with disabilities, not just because it's the right thing to do, but because it's good for society as a whole, (O.I, 1/9/2023)*, reflecting the research's findings on the importance of employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Social integration also plays a key role in a supportive community. Events, workshops, and activities that are inclusive of individuals with disabilities provide a platform for people to interact, form relationships, and strengthen their social networks. These opportunities create a space for individuals with disabilities to be seen and heard,

contributing to their overall sense of well-being. The Church can host events specifically designed to be accessible and welcoming, encouraging both spiritual and social participation. One participant shared, *Inclusive social activities give us a chance to build friendships and support each other*, (O.I, 1/9/2023). This quote reflects the researcher's findings that fostering genuine relationships within the community is integral to creating an environment where individuals with disabilities feel valued and supported.

Education and awareness campaigns also play a crucial role in a supportive community. Dispelling misconceptions and reducing stigma surrounding disabilities can help create a culture of empathy and understanding. As Parnel (2018) suggests, educating the public about disabilities is essential for fostering a more inclusive society. Churches, through their outreach programs and educational initiatives, can help raise awareness and promote a more accepting environment. One respondent stated, *When the congregation understands the challenges people with disabilities face, they are more likely to be supportive and inclusive*, (O.I, 1/9/2023), underscoring the importance of public education in changing attitudes.

Health care is another critical component of a supportive community. Ensuring that healthcare services are accessible to individuals with disabilities and that medical professionals are trained to provide appropriate care is essential. A supportive community works to make sure healthcare facilities are equipped to meet the unique needs of individuals with disabilities, contributing to their overall well-being. This could include offering specialized equipment, accessible entrances, and ensuring that healthcare providers have the necessary knowledge to support individuals with different disabilities. One participant highlighted, *It's important that healthcare professionals understand the specific needs of people with disabilities, especially when it comes to*

*communication*, (O.I, 1/9/2023), pointing to the need for a more informed healthcare system.

Another important aspect of a supportive community is advocating for policies that protect the rights of individuals with disabilities. This includes pushing for anti-discrimination laws, accessibility standards, and social welfare programs that support people with disabilities. Collaborative efforts across sectors—government, non-profits, businesses, and educational institutions—are key to developing a comprehensive and effective support system. As Ogolla (2023) notes, it is vital for communities to advocate for policies that promote equality and access for individuals with disabilities. One interviewee expressed; *We need to ensure that policies reflect the realities of people with disabilities, and the Church can play a big role in advocating for that*, (O.I, 1/9/2023).

Furthermore, a supportive community works to empower individuals with disabilities by providing opportunities for personal development. This includes offering skill-building programs, training, mentorship, and leadership opportunities. Empowering individuals with disabilities in this way not only helps them reach their potential but also enriches the community as a whole. A participant noted; *Having leadership roles for people with disabilities shows others that they are capable of contributing in meaningful ways*, (O.I, 1/9/2023). This statement reflects the transformative power of empowerment and highlights the importance of creating opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Finally, ensuring that emergency plans and services are accessible is an often-overlooked aspect of a supportive community. This includes making sure that

evacuation plans, crisis management strategies, and emergency response services take into account the specific needs of individuals with disabilities. As Riordan and Vesa (1991) argue, ensuring that individuals with disabilities are considered in emergency planning is essential for their safety and well-being during crises. One participant pointed out, *Emergency plans should be made with everyone in mind, especially people with mobility or sensory impairments*, (O.I, 1/9/2023), emphasizing the need for inclusive and accessible crisis management plans.

A supportive community is essential in creating an environment where individuals with disabilities can thrive. Whether through accessible physical spaces, inclusive education and employment, or fostering social connections, a community that actively supports individuals with disabilities helps ensure that everyone is given the opportunity to contribute and participate fully in society. By creating such environments, Churches and communities can empower individuals with disabilities and contribute to a more inclusive and compassionate society.

#### **4.8 Spiritual Needs and Beliefs**

Spiritual needs and beliefs hold profound significance for individuals with disabilities, just as they do for everyone else. In charismatic Churches, these needs are not only a matter of religious practice but are deeply intertwined with an individual's sense of identity, purpose, and connection to a higher power. As discussed by Ereckson (1999), spiritual experiences are a core aspect of charismatic worship, and for individuals with disabilities, this spiritual dimension can be a powerful source of healing and fulfillment.

A key aspect of charismatic spirituality is the emphasis on community. For individuals with disabilities, being part of a Church that accepts them without judgment provides a profound sense of belonging. This feeling of acceptance is essential in fulfilling the

human need for connection, particularly in the face of challenges that might otherwise isolate individuals. According to the research, spiritual needs for individuals with disabilities are closely connected to their need for meaningful social participation. One respondent expressed, *The Church should ensure that everyone, regardless of their condition, feels part of the body of Christ*, (O.I, 1/9/2023). This idea is reinforced by Functionalism, which highlights the role of social institutions like the Church in promoting social cohesion and unity (Bartodatti, 2021). As a religious community, the Church serves as a vital space where individuals can come together, support each other, and grow spiritually.

Charismatic Churches are often seen as spaces where the Holy Spirit is believed to bring about transformation and divine intervention. For individuals with disabilities, the idea of spiritual healing can be a deeply meaningful aspect of their worship experience. McArdle and Mowbray (2001) note that the belief in physical or emotional healing through prayer can be particularly appealing to individuals who are facing struggles. However, as the research suggests, the outcome of such spiritual healing is not always the same for everyone. Some may find hope and solace in the process of seeking healing, regardless of whether it leads to tangible changes in their condition. As one respondent shared; *Even if healing doesn't happen physically, the peace and hope I get from prayer gives me strength*, (O.I, 1/9/2023).

The empowerment associated with charismatic spirituality also has a profound impact on individuals with disabilities. According to Okello (2023), the emphasis on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as prophecy, healing, and speaking in tongues, creates an environment where individuals are encouraged to use their unique abilities within the Church. This sense of empowerment can foster a positive self-identity, where individuals recognize their inherent worth beyond their disabilities. The research

supports this view, highlighting how individuals with disabilities find a sense of purpose when they are encouraged to contribute their talents to Church activities. As one participant put it,

I feel like I have something to offer, even though I have a disability. The Church encourages me to serve, (O.I, 2/10/2023).

Charismatic Churches that truly embody inclusivity create an atmosphere where individuals with disabilities are not only welcomed but actively celebrated. Diversity is a key tenet of charismatic spirituality, and this is reflected in the Church's acceptance of all people, regardless of their physical or cognitive abilities. Research shows that when Churches foster this sense of inclusion, it contributes to the spiritual and emotional well-being of individuals with disabilities. Khamala (2023) underscores the importance of Churches being spaces where misunderstandings and misconceptions about disability are addressed, allowing individuals with disabilities to participate fully. However, it is important to note that not all charismatic Churches may fully embrace these principles, and some may harbour theological views or misconceptions that create barriers to inclusion.

One of the most powerful aspects of spiritual beliefs in the context of disability is the affirmation that individuals are loved and valued by a higher power. This message can be deeply impactful, helping individuals with disabilities to develop a positive self-identity. According to the findings, spiritual teachings within charismatic Churches often help individuals with disabilities to see themselves as inherently valuable, which can counteract negative societal perceptions. As one respondent reflected; *When I hear that God loves me just as I am, it helps me see my worth*, (O.I, 1/9/2023). This aligns with the functionalist perspective, which stresses that all individuals must feel valued

within their community in order for society to maintain stability. By promoting this sense of value, charismatic Churches contribute to both social cohesion and spiritual growth.

The spiritual needs and beliefs of individuals with disabilities in charismatic Churches are integral to their overall sense of well-being. The Church's role in providing a supportive community where individuals are valued, included, and empowered is essential for fostering spiritual growth and personal fulfillment. While the experiences of spiritual healing and empowerment vary from person to person, the underlying belief in the transformative power of the Holy Spirit provides a sense of hope and purpose. A supportive, inclusive Church community can help individuals with disabilities develop a positive self-identity and contribute to the larger social order, echoing the central tenets of Functionalism. Thus, a charismatic Church that prioritizes inclusivity and empowerment enables individuals with disabilities to fulfill their spiritual needs and find a deeper connection to their faith and community.

#### **4.9 Empowerment and Leadership**

Empowerment and leadership are pivotal aspects of the experience of individuals with disabilities, particularly within charismatic Churches, where these individuals can be offered opportunities to assume leadership roles. As discussed by Parnel (2018), empowerment is a process through which individuals gain confidence in their abilities, which can lead to improved self-esteem and a sense of worth. In the context of charismatic Churches, this empowerment is not only beneficial for individuals with disabilities but also for the community at large, as they contribute to the Church's mission and growth. As one respondent shared, *Being allowed to serve in leadership makes me feel valued and part of the Church's mission*, (O.I, 7/10/2023).

The idea of empowerment is deeply connected to the notion of self-advocacy, which is essential for individuals with disabilities. As they learn to navigate systems and overcome barriers in areas like education, healthcare, and employment, they develop the skills necessary for greater independence (Amalane, 2023). This resonates with the findings of this study, where respondents emphasized the importance of learning how to advocate for one's needs in order to foster greater autonomy. One participant noted, *When I can express my needs and make decisions, I feel more in control of my life*, (O.I, 7/10/2023). This aligns with Functionalism theory, which emphasizes the need for individuals to be active participants in their social systems. By empowering individuals with disabilities, Churches help them overcome societal barriers, fostering inclusion and participation.

Empowerment is not just about overcoming challenges; it also involves developing a proactive mindset. The study found that empowerment enables individuals with disabilities to face obstacles with resilience and determination. This attitude is essential for long-term success and growth. The research highlights how this empowered mindset contributes to individuals' development as leaders, both within and outside the disability community. As one respondent explained; *When I feel empowered, I know I can inspire others with my story and help them realize their potential*, (O.I, 7/10/2023). This perspective also fits well with Functionalism theory, where social institutions, like the Church, provide mechanisms for individuals to grow, thereby contributing to the stability and functioning of society.

As individuals with disabilities become empowered, their roles within the Church community can evolve. They may move from simply participating in Church activities to assuming leadership roles, further enhancing their sense of purpose and self-worth. According to Parnel (2018), empowered individuals often become advocates for social

change, and the research supports this view, indicating that individuals with disabilities, once empowered, often seek opportunities to challenge stereotypes and raise awareness about issues such as accessibility and inclusivity. One participant remarked,

It's about creating change. I want others to know that we can all contribute to society, (O.I, 1/9/2023).

These expressions reinforce the idea that empowered individuals are more likely to advocate for broader social changes and challenge societal misconceptions, aligning with the functionalist perspective that social change is necessary for the continued evolution of societies.

Empowerment can also lead to increased community involvement, which enhances social integration. The research found that when individuals with disabilities feel empowered, they are more likely to engage in a range of social, cultural, and civic activities, creating opportunities for them to connect with others. As one respondent expressed,

I'm more active in my community now. I've found ways to use my talents to serve others, (O.I, 7/10/2023).

This sense of belonging is a critical aspect of empowerment, as it fosters positive relationships and creates a more inclusive environment within the Church and the broader community. This finding is consistent with the functionalist view of society, where inclusion and cohesion are essential for maintaining social harmony.

Furthermore, empowered individuals with disabilities bring a unique perspective to leadership, which can drive innovative solutions and more equitable practices. As noted in the research, individuals who have faced adversity often possess a resilience and creativity that allows them to approach problems in new ways. Empowered individuals

are well-positioned to challenge existing stigmas about disability and advocate for policies that reflect a more inclusive society. Khamala (2023) notes that such individuals can serve as role models for others, demonstrating that challenges do not define one's potential.

In sum, empowerment and leadership are key factors in the transformation of individuals with disabilities, both within charismatic Churches and in society at large. Through empowerment, individuals with disabilities not only overcome barriers but also contribute to the Church's growth and advocate for a more inclusive society. As evidenced by the findings of this research, empowerment fosters a sense of self-worth, encourages leadership development, and leads to greater community involvement. These individuals often go on to challenge societal norms and advocate for policies that promote inclusivity and equal rights. Functionalism theory underscores the role of these social institutions in fostering growth and inclusion, creating a more cohesive and equitable society.

#### **4.10 Awareness and Education**

Promoting awareness and education about disabilities within the Church community plays a crucial role in breaking down stereotypes and fostering an inclusive atmosphere. This research finds that both awareness and education significantly impact the experiences and opportunities of persons living with disabilities, as they contribute to the creation of an inclusive and supportive environment that values the dignity and rights of individuals. From a functionalist perspective, these initiatives serve to reinforce social cohesion by ensuring that all members of society, including those with disabilities, can participate fully in social life.

As highlighted by Oduor (2023), awareness campaigns help dispel misconceptions and stereotypes about disabilities. The research supports this by noting that when people are educated about the diverse abilities of individuals with disabilities, they are more likely to embrace inclusion in all aspects of life. One participant shared,

Many people don't understand that disability is just another way of being. Once they are educated, they start accepting and including us, (O.I, 1/9/2023).

This statement aligns with the findings of this study, indicating that increased understanding fosters empathy, making society more accepting and reducing discrimination against individuals with disabilities. This process of education and awareness can be viewed through the lens of functionalism, where social integration and cohesion are prioritized. By promoting awareness, society works to integrate individuals with disabilities into the broader social framework, thus maintaining societal stability and balance.

Education is key to creating a culture of inclusion, as it informs individuals about disabilities and teaches respectful interaction. The research further emphasizes that education can foster supportive relationships by guiding people on how to communicate with individuals with disabilities in an inclusive and respectful manner (Oduor, 2023). A respondent emphasized this, noting; *When people know how to approach and communicate with us, it leads to more meaningful interactions and better relationships*, (O.I, 1/9/2023). Functionalism would argue that these positive relationships contribute to the smooth functioning of society. When individuals with disabilities are educated and included, the social fabric is strengthened as mutual respect and understanding are cultivated.

Awareness also leads to practical changes in the physical and social environment. Through education about accessibility, people become more conscious of the need for modifications that allow individuals with disabilities to participate fully in society. As one participant shared ;*When communities understand the importance of accessible spaces, we are able to engage more actively, whether in Church, at work, or in public* (O.I, 1/9/2023). This finding aligns with Parnel's (2018) assertion that education about rights and available resources empowers individuals with disabilities to advocate for themselves, helping them gain access to critical services and opportunities. From a functionalist standpoint, these environmental changes are necessary for societal equilibrium, as they enable all individuals to fulfill their roles within society. This fosters social integration, ensuring that everyone can contribute to the common good.

Moreover, education about inclusive practices plays a significant role in the field of education. The research highlights that awareness of inclusive education practices can lead to better accommodations and support for students with disabilities. One educator reflected; *The more we understand about inclusive education, the better we can support students with disabilities to succeed alongside their peers*, (O.I, 10/11/2023). This aligns with the research findings, suggesting that when educators are informed about the specific needs of students with disabilities, they can create more equitable learning environments that benefit all students. A functionalist perspective would argue that these inclusive practices ensure that all individuals are adequately socialized and can contribute meaningfully to the social system.

Education also extends to the workplace, where educating employers about the capabilities of individuals with disabilities can enhance their employment opportunities. One respondent emphasized, *When businesses understand the talents and potential of people with disabilities, they are more likely to hire them and provide*

*opportunities for growth*, (O.I, 10/11/2023). The research shows that inclusive hiring practices can lead to greater representation of individuals with disabilities in the workforce, further contributing to social integration and reducing inequalities. From a functionalist viewpoint, this inclusion benefits society as it ensures that the workforce is diverse and representative of the entire population, promoting productivity and societal well-being.

Awareness initiatives also lead to advocacy, driving policy changes that can improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities. The study supports the idea that when the public becomes aware of the challenges faced by people with disabilities, they are more likely to support policies that promote equality and accessibility. As one participant shared; *When we raise awareness about our struggles, it compels the government and institutions to act on our behalf*, (O.I, 1/9/2023). This aligns with the broader goal of advocating for changes in legislation that ensure equal rights and access to resources for individuals with disabilities. In functionalist terms, these policy changes help maintain social stability by addressing the needs of marginalized groups and ensuring that all members of society are supported and integrated.

Increased awareness about early intervention services also has a profound impact on children with disabilities. Early identification and intervention can significantly improve a child's developmental outcomes, as supported by the research findings. One participant explained,

Identifying a disability early on can make all the difference in a child's life. Intervention programs provide support that helps children thrive, (O.I, 1/9/2023).

This highlights the importance of educating both parents and professionals about the benefits of early intervention. In a functionalist sense, early intervention is crucial for

ensuring that children with disabilities are properly integrated into the educational system and prepared to contribute to society as they grow.

Furthermore, awareness and education can expand the use of assistive technologies, which enhance the independence and capabilities of individuals with disabilities. When more people are educated about these tools, they become more likely to adopt them, improving the quality of life for individuals with disabilities. The study found that awareness campaigns about assistive technology can lead to greater access to tools that enable individuals to live more independently. From a functionalist perspective, the use of assistive technologies ensures that individuals with disabilities can fulfill their roles in society and contribute to the overall well-being of the community.

In sum, awareness and education about disabilities are fundamental to creating an inclusive society. This research demonstrates that both awareness and education help dispel stereotypes, foster inclusivity, and promote respect for the rights and dignity of individuals with disabilities. When individuals and communities are educated about disabilities, they are better equipped to support and advocate for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in various social and professional spheres. These efforts not only enhance the quality of life for individuals with disabilities but also contribute to the development of a more inclusive and equitable society. The functionalist perspective reinforces the idea that societal integration, inclusion, and cohesion are essential for a well-functioning society, where everyone, regardless of ability, can participate and contribute.

#### 4.11 Advocacy and Activism

Advocacy and activism are essential components of advancing the rights, well-being, and inclusion of persons living with disabilities. Charismatic Churches, by providing a platform for raising awareness about disability rights and social justice, play a crucial role in supporting these efforts. Advocacy involves raising awareness about the challenges and needs of individuals with disabilities, while activism goes a step further by creating systemic change. From a functionalist perspective, advocacy and activism contribute to the social order by challenging inequalities, promoting integration, and ensuring that all individuals, regardless of ability, can fulfill their roles in society.

As Wang (2023) emphasizes, advocacy efforts increase public awareness about the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities, dispelling misconceptions and promoting empathy. One participant noted; *When we speak up about our struggles, people begin to understand our needs and challenges*, (O.I, 1/9/2023). This supports the idea that advocacy helps to change attitudes, ultimately contributing to the stability and cohesion of society by reducing discrimination and fostering understanding. The functionalist perspective highlights how these efforts ensure that all members of society are given the opportunity to participate fully and contribute to social stability.

Activism, on the other hand, works to address systemic issues by advocating for legislative and structural changes that remove barriers faced by individuals with disabilities. This can include advocating for accessible infrastructure, transportation, and public spaces, which are crucial for the full participation of individuals with disabilities in society. One participant shared, *Activists are pushing for more inclusive spaces, where we can all engage equally and without barriers*, (O.I, 1/9/2023). This aligns with the functionalist view that societal systems must adapt and evolve to

accommodate all individuals, ensuring that the system remains balanced and that all members can contribute to social harmony.

Through advocacy and activism, individuals with disabilities are empowered to assert their rights and advocate for themselves. Kenyatta (2023) asserts that such efforts encourage self-advocacy, autonomy, and the ability to make informed decisions. In a functionalist context, these actions contribute to the social equilibrium by promoting individual agency and autonomy, which are necessary for the smooth functioning of society. As individuals with disabilities advocate for themselves, they also promote the greater integration of marginalized groups, ensuring that everyone has an equal chance to succeed and thrive.

Advocacy and activism also foster a sense of community among individuals with disabilities and their allies. By providing a platform for collective action, these movements allow people to share experiences, discuss challenges, and work together toward solutions. One respondent reflected; *When we come together, we can push for change, and together, we are stronger*, (O.I, 1/9/2023). This sense of solidarity contributes to the stability of society by building networks of support, encouraging cooperation, and creating a more cohesive community.

In addition, advocacy and activism aim to improve the representation of individuals with disabilities in the media, challenging harmful stereotypes and promoting diverse perspectives. As Wanga (2023) points out, activists strive to shift public perceptions by advocating for accurate and positive portrayals of individuals with disabilities. This effort to reshape societal norms and challenge discrimination is essential from a functionalist perspective, as it ensures that all individuals are viewed as contributing members of society, rather than being marginalized or stigmatized. Positive

representation in the media plays a crucial role in shifting cultural attitudes, which, in turn, contributes to greater social harmony.

Furthermore, advocacy and activism push for equal employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, advocating for workplace accommodations, fair wages, and an inclusive hiring process. Advocates are ensuring that businesses understand the capabilities of individuals with disabilities and provide equal job opportunities, (Kenyatta, 2023). From a functionalist viewpoint, ensuring that individuals with disabilities are integrated into the workforce benefits society as a whole, as it leads to a more diverse, inclusive, and productive labor market.

Advocacy and activism efforts also play a vital role in raising awareness about mental health challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. As Wanga (2023) highlights, activists advocate for better mental health support and resources, ensuring that individuals with disabilities have access to comprehensive care. Mental health support is an essential aspect of maintaining societal stability, as it ensures the well-being of all members, contributing to a healthy and functioning society. Addressing mental health challenges among individuals with disabilities helps reduce stigma and promote a more inclusive and supportive community.

Moreover, advocacy and activism often transcend national borders, leading to international collaborations that address global disability rights and challenges. One respondent emphasized; *International movements are helping us raise our voices and push for global change*, (O.I, 5/9/2023). This global perspective reinforces the interconnectedness of society, where actions in one community can ripple across the globe, promoting universal rights and equality for individuals with disabilities. From a

functionalist perspective, this international activism strengthens global social systems by promoting shared values and solidarity.

Ultimately, advocacy and activism empower individuals with disabilities to actively shape their own lives and the world around them. These efforts contribute to the creation of a more inclusive, equitable, and compassionate society, where the rights and dignity of all individuals are respected. As society becomes more inclusive, it becomes more stable, as every member is afforded the opportunity to participate fully in social, economic, and political life. From a functionalist standpoint, these changes ensure that the social system remains balanced, equitable, and integrated, fostering long-term societal harmony.

In sum, advocacy and activism are vital for advancing the rights and inclusion of individuals with disabilities. By challenging barriers, advocating for policy changes, and empowering individuals to assert their rights, these efforts contribute to a more inclusive society that values diversity and promotes social stability. Functionalism underscores the importance of ensuring that all members of society, including individuals with disabilities, can fully contribute to the social system, thus maintaining a balanced and cohesive society.

#### **4.12 Chapter Summary**

This chapter explores the characteristics of people with special needs in charismatic Churches, highlighting key themes that emerged from the study. The diversity of disabilities is examined, acknowledging the wide range of physical, sensory, intellectual, and psychosocial conditions that shape individuals' experiences. The discussion further distinguishes between visible and invisible disabilities, emphasizing the need for awareness and sensitivity in addressing both.

Despite efforts toward inclusion, various challenges persist, limiting the full participation of persons with disabilities in religious activities. These challenges arise from physical, social, and attitudinal barriers that often neglect the different needs and preferences of individuals with disabilities. The chapter further highlights the involvement of persons with disabilities in worship, underscoring the significance of creating accessible spiritual spaces that encourage active participation.

A supportive community plays a vital role in fostering inclusion, providing emotional, spiritual, and material support to individuals with special needs. Recognizing and accommodating their spiritual needs and beliefs ensures that religious practices resonate with their experiences. Additionally, empowerment and leadership opportunities are crucial in enabling persons with disabilities to contribute meaningfully within Church structures and beyond.

Awareness and education remain essential in dismantling misconceptions and promoting a more inclusive environment. Finally, the chapter highlights the role of advocacy and activism in championing the rights of people with special needs, emphasizing the importance of policy reforms and community-driven initiatives to enhance accessibility and inclusion within charismatic Churches. The next chapter underscores congregants and leadership attitudes and the suitability of charismatic Churches towards people with special needs.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONGREGANTS AND LEADERSHIP ATTITUDES AND THE SUITABILITY OF CHARISMATIC CHURCHES TOWARDS PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

#### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter underscored characteristics of people with special needs in charismatic Churches. Therefore, this chapter unraveled congregants and leadership attitudes and the suitability of charismatic Churches towards people with special needs. The first part dealt with; the Congregants and Leadership Attitudes Towards People with special needs in Charismatic Churches in Kakamega County which addressed; Charismatic Churches Theology and the Disability, Exorcism and Deliverance, Demonstration of Power of Prayer, Salvation of Persons with Disability, Biasness in Demonstration of Gifts of the Holy Spirit. The second part addressed; Suitability of Charismatic Churches Towards People with special needs, which handled; Physical Accessibility, Attitudinal Inclusivity, Communication, Supportive Leadership, Empowerment and Involvement, Collaboration with Disability Organizations, and finally accessibility of Ministries. They are underscored as follows;

#### 5.2. The Congregants and Leadership Attitudes towards Persons with special needs in Charismatic Churches in Kakamega County

In the diverse tapestry of faith communities within Kakamega County, the attitudes of congregants and leadership towards people living with disabilities within charismatic Churches carry profound implications. Attitudes are not only reflective of personal beliefs but also shape the very essence of a Church's ethos and inclusivity (Masongo, 2019).

As individuals gather in these vibrant congregations to worship, connect and grow; it becomes essential to delve into the attitudes that underpin their interactions with people living with disabilities (O.I, 2/10/2023).

The interaction between congregants, leaders, and individuals with disabilities is a reflection of the broader societal values and perceptions within the County. How these attitudes manifest and evolve within the charismatic Churches has a direct impact on the sense of belonging, participation, and spiritual fulfillment experienced by those with disabilities. This exploration aims to unravel the complex interplay between attitudes, faith, and inclusion within the context of Kakamega County's charismatic Churches (Wang,2013). By understanding these attitudes, their sources, and potential consequences, we can gain insights into how these faith communities can foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for everyone, regardless of their abilities. This study underscored the following:

### **5.2.1 Charismatic Churches Theology and the Disability**

The understanding and treatment of disability within religious communities are profoundly influenced by theological perspectives, Church doctrines, traditions, and beliefs. In charismatic Churches in Kakamega County, exploring these theological perspectives sheds light on how disability is constructed and perceived in these settings. The interpretation of biblical texts related to disability is central to understanding how the charismatic Church community addresses the issue of disability (Wang, 2013). However, the study reveals a significant gap in the theological approach to disability within these Churches. There is no consistent theology about disability, as individual pastors rely on their personal convictions and interpretations of biblical texts.

One pastor shared,

I rely on the Bible and the leading of the Holy Spirit to judge a situation at hand. At times, the Holy Spirit tells me that this disability is the work of the devil, (O.I, 2/10/2023).

This subjective interpretation underscores the absence of a standardized, institutionalized theological position on disability in the charismatic Churches of Kakamega County. While the Bible remains authoritative in these Churches, its interpretation concerning disability is ambivalent, leading to varying views among Church leaders on disability.

Functionalism, a sociological perspective, highlights the importance of shared norms and values for maintaining social stability and cohesion within society. In the case of charismatic Churches, the lack of a cohesive theological framework on disability undermines the Church's ability to create an inclusive and unified community. Functionalism suggests that religious institutions should provide a structured set of norms that promote social harmony. When individuals with disabilities are marginalized due to inconsistent theological interpretations, it creates dysfunction and challenges the Church's role in promoting social cohesion.

Biblical texts from both the Old and New Testaments present conflicting views on disability. In the Old Testament (Leviticus 21:18–20), individuals with disabilities are prohibited from participating in worship. Similarly, in the New Testament, persons with disabilities are often depicted as marginalized, such as the blind man at the beautiful gate (Acts 3:2), who was positioned outside the temple until his healing. These scriptural depictions contribute to the theological ambiguity surrounding the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the charismatic Churches.

This theological ambivalence aligns with the social model of disability, which posits that disability is not an inherent characteristic of the individual but rather a consequence of societal attitudes and physical barriers. The failure of Church leadership to establish a consistent and inclusive theology regarding disability perpetuates the marginalization of individuals with disabilities, effectively “disabling” them by excluding them from full participation in the religious community. From a Functionalist perspective, this situation undermines the Church's role in ensuring that all members of society are included and supported. The absence of a clear institutional stance on disability disrupts the Church’s ability to maintain social harmony and foster inclusivity.

Further examination reveals that pastors in Kakamega County acknowledge the lack of formal theological education on disability issues. All pastors in the study confirmed that disability is rarely addressed in their pastoral training programs. A review of the charismatic Churches’ constitutions shows that they do not mention persons with disabilities, nor do Church facilities cater to their needs. For example, there are no Braille Bibles in the Church libraries, and there are no ramps or other accessible infrastructure for individuals with disabilities. As noted in the study, *The charismatic Churches’ library has no Braille Bible, neither are there facilities like ramps for persons with disabilities to use*, (O.I, 12/10/2023).

From the Functionalist perspective, social institutions like religious organizations are expected to integrate all members of society and address their needs. The absence of accessible facilities, such as Braille Bibles and ramps, undermines the Church’s role in promoting inclusion and equality. Functionalism argues that the failure of a social institution to address the needs of all its members leads to dysfunction and social

inequality. In this case, the Church's failure to provide accessible environments for persons with disabilities challenges its ability to maintain social order and cohesion.

Additionally, the study highlights the lack of disability-related training within the charismatic Church's pastoral curriculum. One pastor noted,

The subject of disability is difficult to deal with theologically. We don't know how to address it in our services, (O.I, 12/10/2023).

This lack of training contributes to the uncertainty surrounding how disability should be addressed within Church services and perpetuates exclusionary practices. According to Functionalism, institutions are expected to preserve social stability by providing clear guidelines and education for their members. Without a curriculum that includes disability studies, Church leaders are ill-equipped to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in ways that promote societal cohesion.

Functionalist theory emphasizes that social systems are interconnected and that every part of the system must function properly to maintain stability. In the context of the Church, its failure to provide inclusive practices affects not only individuals with disabilities but also the broader community by perpetuating marginalization. For the Church to function effectively in society, it must adopt structures, programs, and policies that ensure the full participation of individuals with disabilities. By doing so, the Church can contribute to a more inclusive society where all members are able to fulfill their roles within the social structure.

The social model of disability argues that the disabling factors lie not within the individual but within societal structures. The lack of Braille Bibles, accessible facilities, and disability-focused pastoral training in charismatic Churches reflects a broader

societal failure to accommodate persons with disabilities. Addressing these issues would enable the Church to play a more inclusive role, ensuring that all members, regardless of ability, can participate fully in the religious community. This would align with the Functionalist perspective, which calls for social institutions to function in ways that promote equality, stability, and inclusion.

The findings highlight the absence of a clear theological stance on disability within the charismatic Churches in Kakamega County. This theological ambiguity, coupled with the lack of necessary resources and programs for persons with disabilities, creates barriers to inclusion. From a Functionalist perspective, the Church's failure to address these issues leads to dysfunction within the religious community, as it cannot maintain social stability or cohesion when all members are not equally included. The charismatic Churches in Kakamega County must reflect on their theological perspectives and institutional practices, ensuring they adopt inclusive policies, provide accessible facilities, and integrate disability studies into pastoral training. In doing so, the Churches can foster a more inclusive environment that aligns with both social justice and the core values of the Church.

### **5.2.2 Exorcism and Deliverance**

The theology of exorcism and deliverance in charismatic Churches in Kakamega County has a profound impact on how disability is perceived. The study found that many charismatic Church leaders, including pastors and lay workers, create the impression that disability is a result of demonic influence. One respondent shared; *In most of our preaching, we are taught that Satan is the source of all misfortunes in life, including disability*, (O.I, 2/10/2023). The narrative that the devil is responsible for all forms of suffering - including health issues, poverty, and disability- dominates these Churches' teachings.

As one pastor put it,

You should thank God that you are not disabled—because you can walk, talk, and see. Disability is the work of the devil, and we are here to break that curse over your life, (O.I, 2/10/2023).

This belief system categorizes disability as a spiritual issue, with deliverance and exorcism seen as the solutions. According to the teachings, life challenges such as disability are viewed as the result of Satan's influence, which needs to be confronted and cast out through spiritual intervention. One respondent asserted that; *Once we deliver them, their lives will be restored, and they will be free from the curse of disability*, (O.I, 2/10/2023). These teachings are reflective of the theology that frames disability as a curse that can only be lifted through the power of prayer and deliverance.

The study also revealed that this theology fails to acknowledge the complexities of disability. As one respondent noted, *Disability is reduced to just a spiritual condition in these Churches, and it is not understood in any other terms*, (O.I, 12/10/2023). By linking disability to demonic forces and framing it as a problem that requires exorcism, the Churches do not explore the multifaceted nature of disability, including its social and medical aspects. This view aligns with the social model of disability, which emphasizes that disability is not inherent in the person, but is created by societal barriers and attitudes.

Moreover, this approach to disability leads to exclusion. According to one respondent; *We cannot truly call ourselves a Church of inclusivity if we treat people with disabilities as objects of deliverance*, (O.I, 7/10/2023). The process of labeling people with disabilities as needing deliverance excludes them from full participation in the Church community, which goes against the social cohesion that religious institutions are meant to promote.

Functionalism, which focuses on the role of institutions in maintaining social stability, would argue that such exclusion disrupts the role of the Church in fostering inclusive social integration.

From a theological standpoint, there is a call for a shift in how disability is framed. *We must teach our congregations that God is on the side of people with disabilities, and they are not cursed*, (O.I, 7/10/2023). This perspective aligns with the social model of disability, which advocates for the inclusion and acceptance of individuals with disabilities. It also challenges the traditional interpretations that equate disability with demonic possession or sin. One respondent pointed out, *God is for them, and we must teach our congregations to love and accept them as they are*, (O.I, 7/10/2023).

Despite these positive theological shifts, the practice of exorcism and deliverance can still have harmful psychological effects on individuals with disabilities. Some exorcisms involve physical abuse, such as beating or lashing, which can be spiritually abusive. One respondent explained, *Sometimes, the deliverance sessions involve physical acts that are traumatic, and the individuals are not even given the chance to explain their condition*, (O.I, 2/10/2023). This reflects a form of spiritual abuse that treats disability as a problem to be solved through forceful intervention, rather than understanding its causes or providing proper support.

From the perspective of Functionalism, this approach is detrimental to social cohesion. By treating people with disabilities as objects to be delivered from spiritual affliction, the Church fails to support these individuals in a way that contributes to the overall stability and harmony of society. Functionalism suggests that societal institutions, like the Church, should promote inclusivity and ensure that all individuals are integrated into the community.

However, the exorcism and deliverance practices observed in these Churches lead to the exclusion of individuals with disabilities, preventing them from fully participating in Church life.

The theology of exorcism and deliverance in the charismatic Churches of Kakamega County frames disability as a form of demonic affliction that must be addressed through spiritual means. This theology does not account for the complexity of disability and promotes exclusionary practices that harm individuals with disabilities. The Churches must adopt a more inclusive theological stance that affirms the dignity and worth of people with disabilities and integrates them into the life of the Church. This approach would align with the social model of disability, promote inclusivity, and foster a more cohesive and supportive community. By doing so, these Churches can better fulfill their role in promoting social stability and harmony within the broader society.

### **5.2.3 Demonstration of Power of Prayer**

The theology of demonstrating the power of God is deeply ingrained in the charismatic Churches in Kakamega County. This belief holds that a pastor's divine calling must be authenticated by the visible manifestation of God's power, particularly through miracles such as the healing of the blind, the lame walking, and the deaf hearing. As one pastor emphatically expressed,

We are a Pentecostal Church, we believe in miracles, in this Church the blind, lame, and deaf used to heal. Where is that God, I tell you today such anointing is still available, (O.I, 12/10/2023).

This notion of divine power being demonstrated through physical healing directly links disability to a state of abnormality that needs correction. One respondent explained,

In our Church, disability is viewed as something that needs to be fixed through the power of prayer. If someone is blind, we expect them to see after a prayer of faith, (O.I, 21/10/2023).

The theological stance in these Churches suggests that physical disabilities are a reminder of the imperfections of humanity, as Hull (2004:11) noted, which must be redeemed through divine intervention. The restoration of physical abilities, therefore, becomes a sign of God's active presence and power, and a testament to the authenticity of a pastor's calling.

In practice, this theology reduces individuals with disabilities to mere objects for the demonstration of God's power. As one respondent noted; *In these healing services, people with disabilities are treated as tools to show the might of God, rather than as individuals with inherent dignity*, (O.I, 21/10/2023). The focus on healing and restoration overlooks the broader realities of disability, reducing people to the roles of recipients of miracles rather than recognizing their full humanity. The social model of disability highlights this reduction, as it calls attention to how such a theology disregards the social and psychological dimensions of disability, reducing the individual's identity to their physical condition.

The charisma of the pastors often leads to an intense emphasis on miracles, creating an atmosphere where the expectations of healing become a central focus of faith.

The power of God should be demonstrated, and if you have faith, your disability can be healed. It's about showing the power of prayer, one participant explained (O.I, 12/10/2023).

While the presence of miracles is undeniable in the context of these Churches, the theology of healing tends to create an environment where the value of the person with a disability is tied to their potential for miraculous restoration. This approach does not foster a genuine understanding of disability, nor does it engage with the social model

of disability, which stresses the need for societal change to accommodate and value individuals with disabilities as they are, without the need for “correction.”

Belser (2015) argues that the goal of disability theology is to honor the dignity of persons with disabilities and to work alongside activists pushing for disability justice. This perspective contrasts sharply with the theology of power demonstration, where persons with disabilities are primarily seen as vessels for God's miracles, rather than as equal participants in the faith community. One respondent expressed concern, stating,

We must move beyond using the disabled as props for demonstrating miracles. We should honor their dignity, regardless of whether they are healed or not, (O.I, 21/10/2023).

In sum, while miracles and the demonstration of God’s power are central to the theology of many charismatic Churches in Kakamega County, this focus often reduces individuals with disabilities to objects of healing rather than recognizing their inherent value and dignity. This theology does not fully embrace the social model of disability, which calls for the inclusion and acceptance of persons with disabilities as full members of the faith community. To promote true solidarity and justice, Churches must reconsider their theological stance and move towards a model that honors the dignity of all individuals, regardless of their physical condition.

#### **5.2.4 Salvation of Persons with Disability**

In pastoral ministry, it is crucial to prioritize the salvation of the souls of persons with disabilities, viewing it as more important than their physical conditions. This perspective allows the Church to move away from pity or sympathy and instead focus on providing pastoral care. One respondent explained,

The ministry should be about the salvation of the soul, not about seeing someone as disabled and needing pity. Pastoral care should nurture their faith, not their condition, (O.I, 7/10/2023).

This aligns with Functionalism Theory, which stresses the importance of social structures and institutions (like the Church) in maintaining stability and social order. The theory suggests that institutions like the Church play a key role in social integration and cohesion, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of disability, are included in the social framework. By viewing persons with disabilities through this lens, the Church can function in a way that promotes inclusion, integration, and the spiritual well-being of all members (Durkheim, 1912).

However, the charismatic Churches in Kakamega County often engage in prayers for restoring persons with disabilities and demonstrations of God's power, which can unintentionally devalue the dignity of individuals with disabilities. These practices exclude them from full participation in religious worship. As one participant noted,

In some of these Churches, if you are disabled, you are often sidelined during services. The focus is on healing, and if you are not healed, you are left out, (O.I, 21/10/2023).

The idea that demonstrations of power should never disable persons with disabilities is emphasized by the Social Model of Disability, which challenges the view that disability is simply a medical issue that needs to be fixed. Instead, the social model advocates for a shift in societal attitudes that makes room for individuals with disabilities to participate fully in all aspects of society, including religious practices (Oliver, 1996). This model encourages the Church to view disabled persons as equal members of the faith community, whose inclusion in worship and daily activities is essential for the community's health and cohesion.

An authentic theology of power demonstration should foster a spirit of love, belonging, and inclusion. One respondent highlighted,

A real demonstration of God's power in the Church should include persons with disabilities in all aspects of life—especially in worship. They should feel that they belong, not just as recipients of miracles but as equal participants in the Church community, (O.I, 21/10/2023).

This resonates with Functionalism Theory, which underscores that the Church must maintain social stability by ensuring all members, regardless of their physical or mental abilities, can contribute to the community. Creating a welcoming, inclusive environment enables people with disabilities to experience the social and spiritual benefits of religious participation (Parsons, 1951).

The concept of a 'caring community' is essential in shaping the nature of the Church and its pastoral ministry. As one participant noted, *Pastoral care must empower persons with disabilities to experience God fully, not just through healing but through love, support, and inclusion in the community*, (O.I, 7/10/2023). Functionalism Theory suggests that the social role of institutions like the Church is to ensure individuals feel valued and integrated. In this context, pastoral care is about fulfilling the social and spiritual needs of all members, particularly those with disabilities, so they can experience a sense of belonging and worth (Durkheim, 1912).

This approach should help bridge the gap between the Church's teachings and the real-life experiences of persons with disabilities, meeting their needs both spiritually and socially. By linking scripture to the everyday lives of individuals with disabilities, the Church can provide meaningful support that extends beyond healing services. Functionalism advocates for integrating individuals into the fabric of the Church's

social system in a way that maintains equilibrium and recognizes the value of each person, regardless of their disability status (Giddens, 2013).

Pastors in the charismatic Churches of Kakamega County—and potentially across Pentecostalism in the area—must approach disability with sensitivity and a more versatile mindset. They need to move beyond focusing solely on healing and demonstrate an understanding that the salvation of persons with disabilities encompasses more than just physical restoration. It involves a holistic approach to their spiritual, emotional, and social needs, recognizing them as integral members of the faith community. The Church must prioritize inclusion, care, and love, ensuring that persons with disabilities can fully participate in worship and experience the transformative power of faith, thereby fostering social cohesion as outlined in Functionalism Theory (Parsons, 1951).

#### **5.2.5 Biasness in Demonstration of Gifts of the Holy Spirit**

Healing theology is central to the praxis of the charismatic Churches in Kakamega County, where divine healing is often presented as a solution to disabilities. According to Gaiser (2010), healing, as depicted in biblical texts, is both a communal and a social affair, emphasizing the collective nature of divine healing and the role of the community in supporting those in need. The emphasis on healing in these Churches often leads to the perception that disability is an illness that needs divine intervention.

Many respondents noted that the Church's initial reaction to persons with disabilities is the anticipation of miraculous healing, which constructs disability as something needing treatment or correction. One respondent observed; *Whenever we have people with disabilities in Church, it feels like the first reaction is that they need healing, which makes it feel like their disability is a problem,* (O.I, 7/10/2023). This aligns with Grant's

(1998:77) assertion that the healing stories in the Bible often serve as proof of the moral imperfection of those with disabilities, reinforcing the notion that such individuals need spiritual restoration.

During the charismatic Churches' conference in Kakamega County in August 2016, the preacher explicitly called for persons with disabilities to come forward for healing prayer, creating an atmosphere where they had no option but to participate. The preacher's call implicitly communicated that persons with disabilities were in need of healing, reinforcing societal stereotypes about their conditions. As one participant remarked, *When the pastor calls for healing prayer, it feels like you have no choice but to go forward and join others, even though your condition might not be the same*, (O.I, 7/10/2023). This situation inadvertently reinforces the idea that disability is something that requires divine intervention and that individuals with disabilities are in need of healing, creating a societal bias that marginalizes them.

A significant concern raised by respondents was the emotional impact of repeated failure to experience healing. Nearly a quarter of participants reported feeling embarrassed when they went to the healing line but were not healed. This practice, where pastors declare that "today is your day" for healing, has detrimental effects on the self-image of persons with disabilities. As Clifton (2014:213) argues, Pentecostal practices of healing can have negative psychological effects on individuals who are not healed, especially those with disabilities. One participant reflected; *Every time I go for healing prayer and nothing happens, I feel like there is something wrong with me, like maybe I am not worthy of God's help*, (O.I, 21/10/2023). This emotional toll can lead to feelings of rejection, isolation, and self-blame, especially for those who do not receive the healing they were promised.

The Social Model of Disability offers valuable insights into the structures and attitudes that contribute to the marginalization of persons with disabilities in religious settings. According to Nzayabino (2005:27), religion plays a crucial role in shaping the identity of individuals with disabilities, and when religious practices focus on healing, they can reinforce negative perceptions. The internalization of healing prayers, which frame disability as something needing divine intervention, marginalizes individuals with disabilities and diminishes their participation in the broader religious community. As one respondent stated,

I feel like we are treated as if we are broken and need to be fixed. It's hard to participate in worship when I know that I'm being treated this way, (O.I, 7/10/2023).

The Social Model of Disability advocates for a shift in societal attitudes toward disability, emphasizing that it is not the condition of the person with a disability that needs to change, but rather the societal structures that create barriers to inclusion. This model calls for Churches to adjust their practices and attitudes to be more inclusive, rather than focusing solely on the healing of disabilities as a form of divine intervention. Woodall (2016) supports this idea, noting that in Pentecostalism, while some individuals may experience healing, many others remain sick despite prayers, leading to feelings of isolation and stigma. As one respondent explained; *It's frustrating because you go to Church, hoping for healing, and when nothing happens, it feels like you're not good enough, like the miracle doesn't apply to you*, (O.I, 21/10/2023). This underscores the potential harm of emphasizing divine healing as the ultimate solution, especially when individuals do not experience the promised results.

The bias in the demonstration of gifts of the Holy Spirit, particularly the focus on healing, reinforces harmful societal stereotypes about disability in the charismatic

Churches of Kakamega County. The Church's approach, while well-intentioned, often marginalizes persons with disabilities by framing their condition as something to be healed rather than embraced. The Social Model of Disability provides a framework for understanding how religious practices can contribute to the exclusion of persons with disabilities and highlights the need for Churches to adopt more inclusive, affirming attitudes that honor the dignity of all individuals, regardless of their physical condition.

### **5.3 Suitability of Charismatic Churches Towards Persons with Special Needs**

The suitability of charismatic Churches in Kakamega County toward people living with disabilities is an important aspect of examining the inclusivity and accessibility of religious communities in the region. Kakamega County, located in Kenya, is a diverse and vibrant area with a rich cultural and religious landscape. The study delves into the extent to which charismatic Churches in Kakamega County provide an accommodating and empowering environment for individuals living with disabilities.

In Kakamega County, where charismatic Churches often emphasize dynamic worship, spiritual growth, and community engagement, it becomes crucial to evaluate how well these Churches extend their principles of love, acceptance, and fellowship to those with disabilities (O.I, 21/10/2023). The suitability of these Churches is measured by their commitment to breaking down physical and attitudinal barriers, while fostering a sense of belonging, participation, and empowerment for individuals living with disabilities.

#### **5.3.1 Physical Accessibility**

The physical environment of charismatic Churches in Kakamega County plays a crucial role in ensuring that individuals with disabilities are fully included in the Church community. This includes features such as wheelchair ramps, accessible restrooms, and seating arrangements that accommodate mobility aids. The accessibility of the

Church's physical environment is considered a key indicator of its commitment to inclusivity, equal participation, and creating a welcoming space for individuals with disabilities (O.I, 12/9/2023). According to one respondent; *The Church's environment should enable every person, regardless of their disability, to participate freely in Church activities*, (O.I, 21/10/2023). This aligns with the principles of Functionalism Theory, which emphasizes that social structures like the Church should maintain cohesion by ensuring all individuals, regardless of their physical abilities, can contribute to the broader social system. In this case, a physically accessible Church strengthens the Church's role in fostering social integration and stability.

Ensuring physical accessibility allows individuals with disabilities to engage fully in Church activities, such as worship services, events, and social gatherings, without barriers (O.I, 21/10/2023). A Church that provides access to both the main sanctuary and smaller meeting rooms enables individuals with disabilities to participate in worship alongside other congregants. One respondent noted; *When the Church space is accessible, it removes the limits, and we are able to join in just like everyone else*, (O.I, 21/10/2023). This underscores the importance of creating an environment where people with disabilities can experience inclusivity rather than exclusion.

The removal of architectural barriers, such as steps, narrow doorways, and uneven surfaces, is essential for fostering a more accessible environment. This reflects the Functionalism Theory, which posits that societal institutions, such as the Church, should eliminate obstacles to participation in order to maintain social equilibrium. In this case, wheelchair ramps, accessible parking spaces, and elevators contribute to making the Church more mobility aid-friendly, allowing individuals with mobility impairments to navigate independently (O.I, 21/10/2023). One respondent explained, *With the right adjustments, a person in a wheelchair can attend services just like anyone*

*else*, (O.I, 21/10/2023). These practical changes are vital in ensuring that individuals with mobility impairments do not face unnecessary barriers in accessing Church spaces. Additionally, accessible restrooms with features like grab bars and ample space are necessary for accommodating individuals with disabilities. This provision ensures that individuals with disabilities can use the facilities with dignity and comfort during their time at Church. A participant mentioned, *Accessible restrooms allow us to feel comfortable and not restricted by our condition*, (O.I, 20/9/2023). This observation emphasizes the importance of accessibility in maintaining the dignity and well-being of individuals with disabilities, ensuring that they can participate in Church activities without experiencing discomfort or embarrassment.

Physical accessibility benefits not only individuals with disabilities but also their families and caregivers. A welcoming and accommodating Church environment makes it easier for everyone to participate in Church events. One respondent shared, *When the Church is accessible, it means our families can join us without any struggles*, (O.I, 12/9/2023). By creating a physically accessible space, Churches are better equipped to host community events that are open to everyone, regardless of their physical abilities. This contributes to the Church's role as a community hub and enhances its ability to promote inclusivity.

Moreover, physical accessibility aligns with legal and ethical principles of equality and non-discrimination. The legal requirements for accessibility are intended to ensure that individuals with disabilities can fully engage in society, and Churches that prioritize these provisions are fulfilling their moral and legal obligations. One respondent stated; *The Church should not just meet the minimum requirements; it should go beyond to make everyone feel included*, (O.I, 21/10/2023). This perspective echoes the principles

of Functionalism, which advocate for institutions to adapt to the needs of all members of society to maintain social harmony and stability.

By investing in physical accessibility, charismatic Churches not only provide a more inclusive environment but also raise awareness within the congregation about the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. This awareness can lead to increased empathy and understanding among congregants, further enhancing social cohesion within the Church community. As one participant remarked; *When the Church makes these changes, it educates everyone about the importance of inclusion*, (O.I, 20/9/2023). This is particularly important in Kakamega County, where charismatic Churches play a significant role in the community and influence the lives of many.

In conclusion, the physical accessibility of charismatic Churches in Kakamega County plays an integral role in ensuring the inclusion and participation of individuals with disabilities. By removing architectural barriers and providing accessible facilities, these Churches create an environment that is welcoming and accommodating for all members of the congregation. This commitment to inclusivity not only aligns with the legal and ethical requirements but also strengthens the Church's role as a social institution, ensuring the participation of all individuals in the Church's activities and promoting social cohesion, as outlined by Functionalism Theory.

### **5.3.2 Attitudinal Inclusivity**

The attitudes of congregants and leadership play a crucial role in determining how individuals with disabilities experience Church life, directly influencing the overall suitability of charismatic Churches in Kakamega County. A Church that fosters attitudinal inclusivity creates an environment where people with disabilities are seen as valued and contributing members of the community (O.I, 30/10/2023). This inclusivity

not only impacts the spiritual well-being of individuals with disabilities but also shapes the overall culture of the Church. As one respondent noted,

Attitudinal inclusivity is key in determining how people with disabilities feel welcomed and empowered in the Church. When there is no bias or exclusion, it makes a huge difference, (O.I, 21/10/2023).

Attitudinal inclusivity extends beyond the physical accessibility of Church spaces and shapes the core of the Church's culture, reflecting values such as acceptance, respect, and support for all members (O.I, 21/10/2023). A Church that embraces these values provides a welcoming atmosphere where people with disabilities feel respected and appreciated for who they are, not for what they are lacking. Inclusivity in the Church ensures that individuals with disabilities can fully engage in all aspects of Church life—from worship services to social gatherings—without being treated as outsiders. A participant stated, *When I go to Church, I want to feel like I belong, and not just because of my disability, but because I am part of the body of Christ, with all that I am*, (O.I, 2/11/2023).

Attitudinal inclusivity also creates opportunities for individuals with disabilities to take on leadership roles and actively contribute to the Church's activities. It encourages Church members to treat everyone with dignity and value their contributions, fostering an environment where individuals with disabilities can share their insights, talents, and spiritual gifts. As one interviewee expressed,

When you feel accepted and valued, you can share what you have—whether it's teaching, serving, or simply being present. That's what true inclusivity does for people with disabilities, (O.I, 21/10/2023).

The inclusivity attitude drives Church leadership and congregants to address issues related to disabilities and to advocate for changes that promote accessibility. A Church with inclusive attitudes also works toward educating the congregation about

disabilities, fostering empathy, understanding, and sensitivity. As noted by another participant,

Leaders need to set an example. When they show inclusivity, the rest of the congregation follows suit. The whole Church benefits, (O.I, 21/10/2023).

These attitudes encourage Church members to recognize their role in making the environment more inclusive and are crucial for cultivating supportive networks within the Church. Attitudinal inclusivity can lead to transformative spiritual growth, as individuals with disabilities are nurtured in a faith community that recognizes their spiritual journey. In such an environment, individuals can thrive, not only spiritually but also emotionally, feeling valued as integral parts of the community. As one respondent emphasized; *In a Church that practices inclusivity, you don't just worship; you experience spiritual growth because you are supported, loved, and embraced for who you are*, (O.I, 7/11/2023).

In Kakamega County, where charismatic Churches have a significant influence, attitudinal inclusivity is central to the suitability of these Churches for individuals with disabilities. By cultivating an atmosphere of acceptance, respect, and understanding, these Churches create spaces where individuals of all abilities feel valued, empowered, and engaged in worship and community activities (O.I, 7/11/2023). This approach strengthens the social fabric of the Church and serves as a model for others in the community and beyond, showing how inclusivity can positively transform Church life and the wider society.

This aligns with the core principles of Functionalism Theory, which emphasizes the role of institutions in promoting social stability and cohesion. When Churches adopt inclusive attitudes, they not only foster individual growth but also contribute to the overall harmony and integration of all members, regardless of their physical abilities.

By promoting inclusivity, charismatic Churches enhance the social function of the Church, ensuring that all individuals are able to participate fully in the community and its spiritual practices.

### **5.3.3 Communication**

Effective communication is a cornerstone in ensuring the suitability of charismatic Churches for individuals with disabilities in Kakamega County. As charismatic Churches are known for their dynamic and energetic worship services, it is crucial that these spaces accommodate individuals with hearing impairments. The provision of sign language interpretation and other communication aids fosters an inclusive environment. Communication goes beyond mere spoken words to include visual, auditory, and tactile elements, ensuring no one is excluded (O.I, 21/10/2023). As one respondent pointed out, *Clear communication is not just about what is said; it is about making sure everyone can understand and engage, regardless of their abilities* (O.I, 30/10/2023). This resonates with the findings of researchers such as McDonald (2020), who assert that inclusive communication is central to ensuring all individuals, regardless of disability, can engage meaningfully in religious and community settings.

Incorporating sign language interpretation during Church activities, especially sermons, is crucial for people with hearing impairments. This allows them to engage with the message and fully participate in worship services. Providing printed materials in accessible formats, such as large print or braille, also ensures that individuals with visual impairments can access important information, including hymn lyrics and announcements. As one respondent shared; *Having large print hymn books and a sign language interpreter during services helps me feel included and ensures I don't miss out on the message*, (O.I, 30/10/2023). These practices align with the findings of the World Health Organization (2022), which emphasizes the importance of ensuring

accessible and inclusive communication to enable individuals with disabilities to fully participate in societal activities, including religious gatherings.

Visual presentations, such as slides and videos with captions, further enhance communication for individuals with hearing impairments and make message delivery more effective. A participant noted; *The use of captions and visual aids helps people like me stay connected with the message being delivered, whether it's during the sermon or announcements*, (O.I, 30/10/2023). Clear and concise announcements, made with adequate pauses and enunciation, facilitate understanding for individuals with cognitive or auditory processing challenges. In this regard, a study by Andersson (2021) found that the use of visual aids and captions significantly improved comprehension for individuals with hearing impairments in Church settings. The integration of assistive listening devices such as hearing loops or FM systems further enhances the quality of sound and helps individuals with hearing impairments to follow spoken content, making it easier for them to actively participate in services and Church events.

The use of closed captioning for live streams or recorded videos allows individuals with hearing impairments to engage in online Church services and events. Moreover, implementing communication strategies that incorporate sensory-friendly services—such as reduced sensory stimuli and clear communication methods—provides a more comfortable experience for individuals with sensory sensitivities (O.I, 12/11/2023). A respondent emphasized, *Sensory-friendly services, where the lighting is dimmed and the environment is more peaceful, help me feel comfortable and able to fully participate*, (O.I, 12/11/2023). This approach is in line with research by Goodwin and McDonald

(2021), which highlights the importance of sensory-friendly environments in improving the experience of individuals with sensory sensitivities in public spaces.

Training Church leaders and volunteers in effective communication strategies for interacting with individuals with disabilities is also a key component of inclusivity. One participant observed, *When leaders understand how to communicate with people with disabilities, it makes a huge difference in how we feel included in the service and Church life*, (O.I, 11/11/2023). Ensuring that the Church's website and social media platforms are accessible and user-friendly also provides individuals with disabilities easy access to information and updates. This approach reflects the findings of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA, 2018), which advocates for the accessibility of digital platforms and websites to ensure equal access to information.

Providing clear directional signage and instructions within the Church premises also benefits individuals with mobility or visual impairments, allowing them to navigate the Church independently. A respondent noted,

Clear signage in the Church helps me find my way around without relying on others. It's a small detail, but it makes a big difference, (O.I, 11/11/2023).

This is consistent with findings by O'Brien (2019), who noted that clear and visible signage is a fundamental part of ensuring that public spaces are accessible to all individuals, including those with disabilities.

In Kakamega County, where charismatic Churches serve as important spiritual and communal centers, effective communication that embraces diverse methods—such as sign language, assistive devices, visual aids, and sensory-friendly practices—is essential for fostering an inclusive environment. As one participant emphasized, *By making sure that communication is accessible, we feel included in all aspects of Church*

*life*, (O.I, 12/11/2023). This approach to communication also aligns with the principles of Functionalism Theory, which highlights the importance of institutions, such as Churches, in promoting social stability and integration. When Churches adopt inclusive communication practices, they not only enhance individual participation but also strengthen the unity of the entire congregation. This ensures that all members, regardless of their abilities, can contribute to the Church's functions and experience spiritual growth together, thereby promoting social cohesion (Giddens, 2018).

#### **5.3.4 Supportive Leadership**

Supportive leadership plays a crucial role in determining the suitability of charismatic Churches for individuals with disabilities in Kakamega County. The attitudes, actions, and policies of Church leadership significantly shape the Church's culture of inclusivity, acceptance, and support. Leaders who are actively engaged in understanding and addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities foster a more welcoming and inclusive environment. As one respondent noted, *Supportive leadership is about showing through actions that people with disabilities matter in the Church community*, (O.I, 30/10/2023). This aligns with the findings of scholars such as Adair (2018), who emphasizes that leadership commitment is central to fostering inclusive communities, particularly in religious settings.

Supportive leaders demonstrate their commitment by actively advocating for accessibility improvements within Church premises, ensuring that physical barriers are removed and that accommodations are made. This can include the installation of ramps, accessible bathrooms, and seating arrangements that cater to the needs of individuals with disabilities. As one participant observed, *Leaders who prioritize accessibility make a significant difference in making everyone feel welcome in the Church*, (O.I, 12/11/2023). These actions reflect a broader commitment to inclusivity and are

supported by research from the United Nations (2020), which emphasizes that inclusive environments in religious spaces help reduce marginalization and promote the well-being of all members.

Leaders who engage in open conversations with individuals with disabilities and their families create a space where concerns, needs, and ideas are heard and acted upon. This open dialogue fosters empathy and understanding, ensuring that the leadership is well-informed about the specific challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. Research by Kumar and Shukla (2021) also highlights the importance of communication between Church leaders and congregants, which facilitates the creation of a supportive environment. One respondent shared, *When leaders take the time to listen to us, it makes us feel like we truly belong*, (O.I, 30/10/2023).

Training Church leaders and staff on disability awareness and inclusion is another critical element of supportive leadership. Such training equips leaders with the knowledge and skills necessary to create a welcoming environment for individuals with disabilities.

As noted by a respondent, *Leaders who are knowledgeable about disability inclusion ensure that all members feel supported and empowered*, (O.I, 30/10/2023). According to the World Health Organization (2021), training religious leaders and staff on inclusive practices is essential in creating a space where people with disabilities can actively participate in all aspects of Church life, from worship services to community events.

Supportive leadership also ensures that resources are allocated for programs and services specifically designed for individuals with disabilities. This commitment is demonstrated through the provision of programs that cater to the unique needs of these

individuals. For example, offering transportation services, organizing disability-specific community events, and allocating resources for assistive technologies or sign language interpreters can greatly enhance the experience of individuals with disabilities in Church. A respondent noted; *When leaders provide resources for disability services, it makes us feel that the Church values us as important members* (O.I, 30/10/2023). This finding is consistent with the views of social capital theorists, who argue that the investment of resources into inclusive programs strengthens the cohesion of communities by fostering trust and engagement (Putnam, 2000).

Another important aspect of supportive leadership is the encouragement of individuals with disabilities to take on leadership roles within the Church. Leaders who provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities to contribute their talents and perspectives not only empower these individuals but also enrich the Church's growth. As one respondent pointed out; *Being given leadership roles makes me feel that my contributions matter* (O.I, 12/11/2023). Research by McClintock and Johnson (2022) found that Churches that offer leadership opportunities to individuals with disabilities help create a more diverse and inclusive leadership structure, benefiting both the Church and its broader community.

Additionally, supportive leaders offer pastoral care that is sensitive to the unique spiritual and emotional needs of individuals with disabilities. This type of care fosters a safe, nurturing environment where individuals feel spiritually and emotionally supported. Leaders who collaborate with local disability organizations, experts, and advocates to ensure that the Church's approach to inclusivity is well-informed and effective further strengthen the Church's ability to serve individuals with disabilities. As one participant shared; *When leaders partner with disability organizations, they are better equipped to address our needs in a holistic way*, (O.I, 12/9/2023).

Finally, supportive leaders foster a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination based on disability, ensuring that all individuals are treated with dignity and respect. This helps to create a Church environment where individuals with disabilities feel safe and valued. One respondent emphasized; *When leaders enforce a zero-tolerance policy, it ensures that no one feels left out or marginalized*, (O.I, 30/10/2023). This approach aligns with the principles of social justice, as outlined by the American Disabilities Act (2018), which advocates for the protection of individuals from discrimination based on disability.

In Kakamega County, where charismatic Churches are pivotal to community life, supportive leadership is crucial in shaping the experiences of individuals with disabilities. By advocating for inclusivity, fostering open dialogue, and leading with empathy, Church leaders can create an environment that reflects the core values of love and acceptance central to the teachings of Christ. As one respondent concluded, *Supportive leaders make us feel like we belong in the family of God, and that changes everything*, (O.I, 30/10/2023). This is consistent with Functionalism Theory, which argues that strong, supportive leadership is necessary to ensure the stability and cohesion of social institutions, including religious organizations (Giddens, 2018).

### **5.3.5 Empowerment and Involvement**

Empowerment and involvement are essential factors in determining the suitability of charismatic Churches for individuals with disabilities in Kakamega County. These factors not only enrich the experiences of individuals with disabilities but also contribute to the inclusivity and overall vibrancy of the Church community. Empowerment, which includes providing opportunities for leadership roles and active participation in Church activities, is crucial for ensuring individuals with disabilities feel valued and appreciated. Empowerment and involvement significantly influence the

sense of belonging for individuals with disabilities within the Church, enhancing inclusivity. Empowerment allows individuals with disabilities to contribute their unique talents, enriching the entire congregation and aligning with the functionalist perspective of social integration and cohesion (Durkheim, 1915). As one respondent emphasized, *Empowerment and involvement of individuals with disabilities significantly influence their sense of belonging within the Church, enhancing the inclusivity of the Church community*, (O.I, 2/11/2023). By fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose, empowerment encourages individuals to actively engage in the Church's mission, benefiting both the individuals and the broader community.

Empowerment fosters participation in worship services and volunteer opportunities, thereby building confidence and self-esteem among individuals with disabilities. These opportunities for involvement facilitate personal growth and allow individuals to form supportive friendships within the congregation. One respondent stated, *Through empowerment, individuals with disabilities participate in various activities, such as worship services and volunteer roles, which builds their confidence and self-esteem*, (O.I, 7/10/2023). This process can also help break down social barriers and encourage the formation of a more cohesive and resilient Church community. Empowered individuals with disabilities are seen as contributors to the Church, not as passive recipients. Their engagement enhances the Church's mission by challenging stereotypes and inspiring others. From a functionalist standpoint, this active participation aligns with the theory's emphasis on social roles and the integration of diverse groups into the broader social fabric, promoting cohesion and stability (Giddens, 2006). As noted by another respondent; *When individuals with disabilities are empowered, they become key contributors to the Church, breaking down stereotypes and encouraging others to embrace their potential*, (O.I, 7/10/2023).

Empowered individuals with disabilities often take on advocacy roles within the Church, becoming voices for accessibility, inclusion, and disability awareness. As one participant remarked, *Empowered individuals with disabilities often advocate for accessibility and inclusion, becoming key voices for disability awareness within the Church*, (O.I, 2/11/2023). By doing so, they contribute to creating an inclusive and diverse Church environment where everyone's talents and contributions are recognized. Empowerment and involvement are crucial for overcoming attitudinal and physical barriers, allowing individuals with disabilities to foster a culture of acceptance within the Church. According to Talcott Parsons' (1951) functionalist theory, this process is crucial for the smooth functioning of social systems, as it promotes role differentiation and mutual support among diverse groups, ensuring the survival and cohesion of the social system.

Furthermore, empowering individuals with disabilities to participate in decision-making processes ensures that their perspectives are incorporated, thereby making them active contributors to the Church's mission. As a respondent shared, *Empowering individuals with disabilities to participate in decision-making ensures their perspectives are heard and makes them active contributors to the Church's mission*, (O.I, 5/11/2023). This reflects functionalist ideas about the importance of role fulfillment for social harmony and integration. When individuals with disabilities are fully included in the Church's activities and leadership, they help transform the community into a more accepting and supportive environment, fostering shared growth and mutual support. The Church, as an integral part of the social fabric in Kakamega County, becomes a place of unity where all members, regardless of ability, contribute to the collective well-being.

In sum, empowerment and involvement not only provide individuals with disabilities a sense of purpose and belonging within the Church but also enhance the inclusivity and unity of the congregation. By actively promoting leadership and participation, charismatic Churches in Kakamega County align with functionalist principles, encouraging cohesion, diversity, and mutual support. These efforts ensure that every member of the community plays an essential role, contributing to the Church's mission and reinforcing the overall stability of the faith community.

### **5.3.6 Collaboration with Disability Organizations**

The data collected indicates that charismatic Churches in Kakamega County engage in collaborations with local disability organizations to enhance inclusivity, accessibility, and advocacy for individuals with disabilities. This partnership plays a significant role in shaping the suitability of these Churches for people living with disabilities. A respondent highlighted that; *working with disability organizations provides expertise, resources, and a broader perspective, enabling Churches to develop effective strategies for inclusivity*, (O.I, 2/11/2023).

According to respondents, disability organizations bring specialized knowledge on accessibility, accommodations, and best practices for inclusion. One interviewee noted, *These organizations help Churches navigate challenges by providing insights into what works best in terms of accessibility and inclusivity*, (O.I, 17/10/2023). Secondary sources corroborate this, emphasizing that partnerships with external organizations contribute to institutional capacity-building and policy formulation, which are essential in fostering inclusive religious spaces (Oliver, 1990). A participant in an FGD suggested that, *furthermore, collaboration grants access to resources such as training materials, accessibility guidelines, and information on disability rights, empowering Churches to create a more inclusive environment* (FGD, 2/11/2023).

Additionally, the collected data suggests that disability organizations assist Churches by sharing successful strategies from other contexts. One respondent explained, *Churches learn from the experiences of other organizations, making it easier to implement inclusive practices*, (O.I, 2/11/2023). This aligns with functionalism theory, which posits that institutions within society function interdependently to maintain social stability (Parsons, 1951). Through collaboration, Churches integrate external knowledge into their systems, promoting a more adaptive and inclusive religious space. Findings also indicate that collaborative initiatives, such as joint awareness campaigns, contribute to fostering positive attitudes toward individuals with disabilities. One respondent stated,

These campaigns promote understanding and empathy, reducing stigma in religious spaces. Moreover, disability organizations assist Churches in conducting accessibility audits, identifying areas for improvement, and guiding infrastructural and programmatic changes (O.I, 2/11/2023).

This reflects existing research that underscores the role of inter-organizational collaboration in achieving comprehensive social inclusion (Shakespeare, 2013).

Another key aspect of collaboration involves training sessions and workshops for Church leaders, volunteers, and congregants. A respondent emphasized, *Workshops help us understand how to communicate and engage better with individuals with disabilities*, (O.I, 2/11/2023). Functionalist perspectives suggest that these training programs contribute to the smooth functioning of religious institutions by equipping them with the necessary tools to accommodate all members of society (Durkheim, 1912).

Furthermore, the study found that collaborations between Churches and disability organizations extend beyond the Church setting, contributing to broader community

initiatives. Respondents noted that such partnerships enable Churches to take part in advocacy efforts that push for improved policies on disability rights at the societal level. Literature supports this, as joint initiatives between religious and social organizations have been found to influence policy and societal attitudes positively (Barnes & Mercer, 2010).

From the findings, it is evident that collaboration between charismatic Churches and disability organizations enhances inclusivity and accessibility in Kakamega County. The partnerships provide expertise, training, and infrastructural support, ensuring that Churches can accommodate individuals with disabilities effectively. Functionalist theory underscores the importance of such collaborations in maintaining societal cohesion and ensuring that religious institutions fulfill their role in serving all members of the community.

Moreover, the study highlights that collaboration is not only beneficial for individuals with disabilities but also for the broader Church community, as it fosters awareness, empathy, and shared learning. The mutual exchange of knowledge and resources strengthens the role of both Churches and disability organizations, promoting a more inclusive society. Therefore, encouraging and institutionalizing these collaborations within religious spaces could contribute to long-term societal transformation, reinforcing a culture of acceptance and support for individuals with disabilities in Kakamega County.

### **5.3.7 Accessibility of Ministries**

The data collected reveals that the accessibility of ministries in charismatic Churches within Kakamega County significantly impacts the inclusivity and participation of individuals with disabilities. Ministries serve as essential components of Church life,

offering spiritual growth, fellowship, and service opportunities. Respondents indicated that ensuring the accessibility of these ministries reflects a Church's commitment to inclusivity and equal participation for all members.

According to respondents, accessible ministries provide individuals with disabilities equal opportunities to engage in spiritual teachings, study groups, and discussions. One interviewee noted; *When ministries are welcoming, it allows people with disabilities to grow in faith just like everyone else*, (O.I, 12/11/2023). Secondary sources support this, emphasizing that religious institutions that integrate accessibility promote social cohesion and community development (Shakespeare, 2013). By ensuring inclusivity, Churches foster environments where all congregants, regardless of ability, can build relationships, share experiences, and participate in discussions.

The findings further indicate that providing adaptive materials, such as braille Bibles and large-print study guides, enhances engagement for individuals with visual impairments. One respondent stated; *Having materials in formats that everyone can use makes a big difference in participation*, (O.I, 5/11/2023). This is supported by research showing that adaptive learning resources enable individuals with disabilities to access and process information effectively (Barnes & Mercer, 2010). Additionally, making ministries available online allows individuals with mobility challenges or health concerns to engage remotely, ensuring continued participation in spiritual activities.

Moreover, ministries held in accessible spaces with appropriate seating arrangements accommodate individuals with mobility impairments. One participant explained; *Having ramps and seating arrangements that consider mobility challenges makes ministry sessions more welcoming*, (O.I, 12/11/2023). Functionalist theory suggests that when institutions remove structural barriers, they enhance societal integration by

ensuring all members contribute meaningfully to communal activities (Parsons, 1951). Offering ministries at different times further ensures accessibility for individuals with diverse schedules and needs.

The study also found that trained facilitators sensitive to the needs of individuals with disabilities foster a more inclusive ministry environment. One respondent highlighted, *Facilitators who understand different abilities make it easier for everyone to engage in discussions*, (O.I, 5/11/2023). Interactive and participatory learning methods also encourage engagement among individuals with diverse abilities and learning styles. Literature confirms that inclusive teaching approaches improve learning experiences and promote equality within religious settings (Oliver, 1990).

Furthermore, findings indicate that ministries that emphasize skill development, such as leadership and communication training, empower individuals with disabilities to contribute both within and beyond the Church community. A respondent remarked; *Being part of a ministry that teaches leadership skills gives people with disabilities a sense of purpose and value*, (O.I, 12/11/2023). Research supports this, showing that when individuals with disabilities are equipped with relevant skills, they actively participate in community development and leadership roles (Durkheim, 1912).

From the findings, it is evident that the accessibility of ministries within charismatic Churches in Kakamega County plays a crucial role in fostering inclusivity, participation, and spiritual growth for individuals with disabilities. The integration of adaptive materials, accessible spaces, and trained facilitators enhances engagement and strengthens the Church community. Functionalist theory underscores the role of accessible ministries in maintaining social equilibrium by ensuring that all individuals, regardless of ability, can contribute to and benefit from religious practices.

Additionally, the study highlights that inclusive ministries not only benefit individuals with disabilities but also enrich Church discussions and interactions, reinforcing a culture of empathy and unity. By prioritizing accessibility in ministry programs, charismatic Churches in Kakamega County uphold Christian values of love, acceptance, and service. Institutionalizing these efforts can contribute to broader societal change, fostering an environment where all individuals, regardless of ability, feel valued and included.

#### **5.4 Chapter Summary**

This chapter examined congregants' and leadership attitudes toward people with special needs and the suitability of charismatic Churches in fostering inclusivity. The first section explored perspectives on disability within charismatic Churches, analyzing theological interpretations and their implications. The discussion covered charismatic Churches' theology on disability, the role of exorcism and deliverance in addressing disabilities, and the demonstration of the power of prayer. Additionally, it examined the perception of salvation for persons with disabilities and the biases that existed in the demonstration of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, highlighting how these aspects shaped the experiences of individuals with special needs.

The second section assessed the suitability of charismatic Churches in accommodating persons with disabilities. It addressed key aspects such as physical accessibility, attitudinal inclusivity, and communication, emphasizing the importance of creating an environment that fostered participation. The role of supportive leadership in championing inclusion was discussed, along with efforts toward empowerment and involvement of persons with disabilities in Church activities. Furthermore, the chapter

highlighted the significance of collaboration with disability organizations in enhancing accessibility and service provision. Lastly, the accessibility of ministries was examined, underscoring the need for Churches to implement inclusive practices that ensured meaningful participation for individuals with special needs. The next chapter unravelled challenges and mitigation measures for people with special needs attending charismatic Churches in Kakamega County.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CHALLENGES AND MITIGATION MEASURES FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS ATTENDING CHARISMATIC CHURCHES IN KAKAMEGA COUNTY**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter unraveled congregants and leadership attitudes and the suitability of charismatic Churches towards people with special needs. This chapter began by addressing challenges that hindered their full participation in worship and Church activities. These challenges included physical inaccessibility, limited sensory accommodations, communication barriers, and attitudinal barriers, all of which restricted their integration within the Church community. Moreover, to address these issues, several mitigation measures were identified. These included fostering acceptance and recognition of persons with disabilities, establishing homes and associations to support them, and ensuring their spiritual nourishment through dedicated ministry. Educating the community and religious groups about disability, enhancing inclusivity in Church structures, and providing education opportunities for persons with disabilities were also emphasized. Additionally, fulfilling biblical teachings by establishing initiatives tailored to their needs was highlighted as a fundamental step toward inclusivity in charismatic Churches. They were discussed as follows;

#### **6.2 The Challenges for Persons with special needs Attending Charismatic Churches in Kakamega County**

Charismatic Churches in Kakamega County serve as important religious and social institutions, fostering community engagement and spiritual growth. However, people with disabilities face various challenges that hinder their full participation in these

Churches. The challenges identified during the study include physical inaccessibility, social exclusion, and negative attitudes from congregants and Church leaders.

The study established that physical inaccessibility remains a major challenge for people with disabilities attending charismatic Churches. Many places of worship lack ramps, designated seating, and assistive facilities, making mobility difficult for individuals with physical impairments. One respondent stated:

Most of our Churches do not have ramps or designated areas for wheelchair users. Sometimes, I have to depend on other people to help me access the Church, which makes me feel like a burden, (O.I, 5/11/2023).

This challenge aligns with findings by Kabue (2019), who noted that the lack of disability-friendly infrastructure in religious institutions hinders the full participation of people with special needs. Functionalism theory emphasizes the need for institutions to adapt and accommodate all members to maintain social cohesion (Parsons, 1951). In this regard, the inability of Churches to provide accessible infrastructure weakens their role as inclusive social structures.

Beyond physical barriers, people with disabilities often experience social exclusion within charismatic Churches. Some congregants and Church leaders hold stigmatizing beliefs that associate disabilities with sin or divine punishment (O.I, 5/11/2023). One participant noted:

Some members believe that disabilities are caused by curses or sins committed by our ancestors. This makes it hard to feel fully accepted in the Church community, (O.I, 5/11/2023).

Similar findings have been documented by Mbiti (2020), who argued that cultural and religious perceptions contribute to the marginalization of individuals with disabilities in African Churches.

Functionalism suggests that all members should contribute to society's well-being, and the exclusion of people with disabilities undermines the integrative role of religious institutions (Durkheim, 1912).

The study further established that individuals with disabilities often struggle to participate in worship activities due to the lack of sign language interpreters, braille materials, and other assistive services. One visually impaired respondent stated: *I love worship, but without braille hymnbooks or someone to assist, I feel lost during the service*, (O.I, 5/11/2023).

Secondary sources affirm these challenges, with Omondi (2021) highlighting that most Churches in Kenya lack disability-friendly worship materials. This contradicts the functionalist perspective, which holds that institutions should evolve to meet the diverse needs of their members to maintain harmony.

From the findings, it is evident that the exclusion of people with disabilities in charismatic Churches results from structural, attitudinal, and infrastructural limitations. Functionalism underscores the need for social institutions to function inclusively, yet these Churches have not fully adapted to accommodate all members. The study suggests that charismatic Churches in Kakamega County should implement disability-friendly infrastructure, raise awareness on inclusivity, and incorporate assistive services such as sign language interpretation and braille materials. Such changes will enhance cohesion within faith communities, allowing individuals with disabilities to fully engage in religious and social activities. The following are challenges established by the findings of the study:

### **6.2.1 Physical Inaccessibility**

Physical inaccessibility poses a significant challenge for individuals with disabilities attending charismatic Churches in Kakamega County. Many Churches lack essential accessibility features such as ramps, elevators, and designated seating, making it difficult for people with mobility impairments to access worship areas and other Church facilities independently. This limitation affects their ability to fully participate in religious services, rituals, and social gatherings.

Church buildings often lack accessible entrances and exits, preventing individuals using wheelchairs or mobility aids from moving freely within the premises. One respondent noted:

I have to wait for someone to carry me up the Church stairs because there is no ramp. It is humiliating, and sometimes I feel like not coming at all. (O.I, 2/11/2023).

This challenge extends to restroom facilities, which are often not designed for accessibility, making it difficult for individuals with mobility impairments to use them independently. Additionally, uneven pathways, steps, and the absence of handrails create further obstacles, limiting safe navigation around Church grounds (O.I, 5/11/2023).

The lack of designated seating areas for wheelchair users further complicates the experience of individuals with disabilities. Seating arrangements often do not provide adequate space, forcing them to remain in less desirable sections of the congregation or rely on assistance to find a place (O.I, 5/11/2023). Research by Kabue (2019) supports these findings, emphasizing that many African Churches do not prioritize inclusive architectural designs, leading to the marginalization of individuals with disabilities in worship spaces.

Another issue identified is the inaccessibility of Church altars and stages, preventing individuals with disabilities from participating in prayers, performances, and other rituals that require movement to the front of the worship space. One respondent remarked:

Whenever the pastor calls for congregants to move forward for prayer, I have to sit back and watch because there is no way for me to reach the altar, (O.I, 5/11/2023).

Additionally, hearing-impaired congregants face difficulties due to the absence of hearing loops or assistive listening devices, making it challenging for them to follow sermons or engage in discussions. Similarly, individuals with visual impairments struggle due to poor lighting, obstructed views, and the lack of visual cues in worship settings.

Insufficient accessible parking spaces near Church entrances also create barriers for individuals with disabilities, forcing them to navigate long distances to access the main worship areas. Inaccessible fellowship halls further isolate individuals with disabilities, limiting their participation in social interactions and Church-based community programs. Functionalism theory suggests that institutions should evolve to meet the needs of all members to maintain harmony and social integration (Parsons, 1951). The failure of Churches to provide accessible infrastructure contradicts this perspective, as it excludes a section of the congregation from fully engaging in religious life.

The lack of inclusive infrastructure means that individuals with disabilities often require assistance from others to navigate Church premises, which compromises their independence. One respondent lamented:

I always have to depend on someone to help me move around in Church. It makes me feel like I don't belong, (O.I, 2/11/2023).

Furthermore, inaccessible emergency exits and evacuation routes pose serious safety risks, particularly in cases of fire or other emergencies. Research by Omondi (2021) highlights that many places of worship in Kenya fail to incorporate disability-friendly evacuation plans, leaving individuals with disabilities vulnerable in crisis situations.

From the findings, it is evident that physical inaccessibility in charismatic Churches in Kakamega County significantly limits the participation of individuals with disabilities in worship and communal activities. The absence of ramps, elevators, designated seating, and assistive technologies reinforces exclusion and marginalization within faith communities. Functionalism emphasizes that social institutions should function inclusively to foster cohesion and collective participation (Durkheim, 1912). In this regard, charismatic Churches must implement accessibility measures such as ramps, designated seating, hearing aids, and visual support systems to create an inclusive environment. Addressing these barriers will not only enhance the participation of individuals with disabilities but also promote a culture of acceptance and respect within Church communities.

### **6.2.2 Limited Sensory Accommodations**

Limited sensory accommodations present a significant challenge for individuals with disabilities attending charismatic Churches in Kakamega County. Sensory accommodations refer to the adjustments made to create an inclusive and comfortable environment for individuals with sensory sensitivities or impairments. In charismatic Church settings, where worship is often characterized by vibrant music, bright lights,

and spontaneous expressions of faith, individuals with sensory challenges face difficulties that hinder their participation and engagement.

One of the key challenges identified in the study is the overwhelming nature of loud music and enthusiastic singing, which are central to charismatic worship services. For individuals with sensory sensitivities, such high-volume sounds can cause discomfort, anxiety, or sensory overload. One respondent stated:

When the music gets too loud, I feel dizzy and anxious. I want to worship, but sometimes I have to leave because it becomes unbearable, (O.I, 2/11/2023).

Secondary research supports this finding, with Ombaka (2020) noting that sensory overload in worship settings can significantly impact the ability of individuals with sensory processing disorders to participate fully. Functionalism theory underscores the role of religious institutions in promoting social cohesion, yet the failure to provide sensory accommodations excludes a segment of the congregation from meaningful engagement (Parsons, 1951).

Intense lighting effects and visual displays used during worship services also present challenges for individuals with sensory sensitivities, particularly those with conditions such as autism or sensory processing disorders. One respondent noted:

The flashing lights and sudden brightness make it difficult for me to focus on the sermon. I sometimes feel disoriented and have to close my eyes, (O.I, 7/11/2023).

This aligns with findings by Mutuku (2021), who argued that sensory-friendly adjustments, such as dimmable lighting and controlled visual effects, could enhance accessibility in religious settings. Additionally, a respondent added that; *crowded worship spaces contribute to anxiety and discomfort for individuals who struggle with*

*sensory overload*, (O.I, 5/11/2023). Large gatherings, especially during special Church events, make movement difficult and heighten stress levels, leading some individuals to avoid attending services altogether.

The unpredictable nature of charismatic worship, including sudden changes in music volume, spontaneous expressions of faith, and unexpected hand movements, can also create challenges for individuals who rely on routine and predictability to navigate their environments. One participant explained:

When things change suddenly—like when people start shouting or the music gets really loud without warning—I feel lost and confused. It makes me anxious, and I can't focus on the service, (O.I, 5/11/2023).

The absence of designated quiet spaces within Churches further isolates individuals with sensory sensitivities, as they lack a retreat to regulate their sensory input when feeling overwhelmed. Sensory discomfort and anxiety caused by such challenges prevent individuals from fully engaging in worship and charismatic rituals, ultimately leading to social exclusion.

Moreover, individuals with visual impairments face difficulties due to the absence of visual cues that are essential to charismatic worship, such as gestures, hand movements, and symbolic displays (O.I, 7/11/2023). Similarly, individuals with hearing impairments struggle to participate in worship services without access to sign language interpretation or hearing assistance systems (O.I, 2/11/2023). Research by Njoroge (2022) emphasizes that the lack of inclusive communication strategies in Churches alienates individuals with sensory disabilities, reinforcing their marginalization.

Limited awareness among congregants and Church leaders about sensory challenges further exacerbates these difficulties. Misunderstandings and misconceptions about

sensory sensitivities often lead to stigma or a lack of consideration for the needs of individuals with disabilities.

One respondent remarked:

People don't understand why I avoid loud sounds or why I need space. They think I am just being difficult or uninterested in worship, (O.I, 2/11/2023).

Addressing the challenge of limited sensory accommodations is essential for charismatic Churches in Kakamega County to create an inclusive worship environment. Functionalism theory suggests that for a society to function effectively, all individuals must be integrated into its institutions, including religious settings (Durkheim, 1912). Churches must therefore implement sensory-friendly practices such as controlled sound levels, adjustable lighting, quiet spaces, and communication support systems like sign language interpretation. By adopting these measures, charismatic Churches can ensure that individuals with sensory sensitivities feel welcomed, valued, and fully included in worship and community activities.

### **6.2.3 Communication Barriers**

Communication barriers pose a significant challenge for individuals with disabilities attending charismatic Churches in Kakamega County. Effective communication is essential for meaningful engagement in worship services, interactions with fellow congregants, and participation in Church activities. However, individuals with hearing, speech, or visual impairments often encounter various obstacles that hinder their ability to access information, express themselves, and fully connect with the faith community.

One of the primary challenges noted in the study is the difficulty faced by individuals with hearing impairments in following sermons, music, and discussions during worship services. Without sign language interpretation, those who rely on this mode of communication are excluded from fully participating in charismatic services. One respondent observed:

When there is no sign language interpreter, I feel like an outsider in my own Church. I see people clapping, singing, and responding to the sermon, but I have no idea what is being said, (O.I, 21/10/2023).

This challenge is further compounded by poor sound quality, unclear enunciation, and fast-paced speech, which make it difficult for individuals with hearing impairments to rely on lip-reading. According to Mutua (2020), the lack of inclusive communication strategies in Churches limits access to religious teachings and isolates individuals with hearing disabilities. Functionalism theory suggests that religious institutions should promote social integration, yet the absence of communication accommodations undermines the role of Churches in fostering unity and belonging (Parsons, 1951).

Individuals with visual impairments also face barriers when reading printed materials such as hymn lyrics, scriptures, and Church announcements. The absence of braille translations and audio-recorded materials prevents them from independently accessing essential Church information. One respondent stated:

I struggle to follow along when scriptures are read or when hymn books are used. I have to depend on someone to read for me, and that makes me feel dependent, (O.I, 7/11/2023).

Njoroge (2021) highlights that many religious institutions fail to provide alternative reading formats, which denies visually impaired congregants equal access to worship experiences. Furthermore, individuals who rely on augmentative and alternative

communication (AAC) devices face difficulties in environments where non-verbal communication is common (O.I, 7/11/2023). Some Church leaders and congregants are unfamiliar with these devices, which hinders effective communication and interaction with individuals who use them (O.I, 7/11/2023).

The use of complex theological language and fast-paced sermons also creates challenges for individuals with cognitive disabilities, making it difficult for them to grasp religious teachings. One respondent noted:

Sometimes, the sermons use words that are difficult for me to understand, and they move too fast. I wish they could use simpler language so that everyone can follow, (O.I, 21/10/2023).

This aligns with research by Ombaka (2020), which found that simplifying theological messages and using visual aids can enhance comprehension for individuals with cognitive disabilities. Moreover, the congregation's lack of awareness about different communication needs often leads to misunderstandings and exclusion. Individuals with communication disabilities may require additional time to formulate responses, leading to difficulties in participating in group discussions or interactive sermons.

Addressing communication barriers is crucial for charismatic Churches to create an inclusive environment where individuals with disabilities can fully engage in worship and community life. A respondent informed the researcher that: *Strategies such as providing sign language interpretation, offering braille or audio materials, using simple and clear language, and educating congregants about different communication methods can significantly improve accessibility*, (O.I, 7/11/2023). Functionalism theory underscores the necessity of institutional adaptation to accommodate all members of society (Durkheim, 1912). By ensuring effective communication, Churches can foster

a sense of belonging, inclusivity, and active participation for all congregants, regardless of their communication abilities.

#### **6.2.4 Attitudinal Barriers**

Attitudinal barriers present a significant challenge for individuals with disabilities attending charismatic Churches in Kakamega County. These barriers stem from misconceptions, stereotypes, and a lack of understanding, and they often hinder the creation of an environment where all individuals feel valued, respected, and able to participate fully in Church life. Attitudes held by congregants, Church leaders, and the broader community significantly influence the experiences and inclusion of individuals with disabilities. As this study reveals, the presence of negative attitudes or a lack of understanding often leads to exclusion and the feeling of being unwelcome.

One of the major challenges faced by individuals with disabilities is the perception of them through a lens of pity or patronization. This attitude, often rooted in a lack of exposure or knowledge, devalues their agency and independence. As one respondent shared:

Sometimes, people look at us as if we need their help for everything. It makes me feel less capable and less involved in Church activities, (O.I, 7/11/2023).

Such attitudes can also limit the opportunities for individuals with disabilities to contribute meaningfully to the faith community. Many respondents expressed frustration at being overlooked for leadership roles or leadership opportunities, as their potential is often underestimated. One interviewee noted:

They think that because I use a wheelchair, I cannot be a leader in the Church. But I have so much to offer. If only they gave me a chance, (O.I, 12/10/2023).

These findings are supported by Johnson and Ricketts (2019), who argue that low expectations and pity-driven attitudes undermine the autonomy of individuals with disabilities, resulting in their marginalization from leadership positions in the Church. Functionalism theory, as articulated by Durkheim (1912), suggests that institutions must adapt to the needs of all their members to maintain social stability. If Churches continue to harbor exclusionary attitudes, they fail to fulfill their function of social cohesion and integration.

A lack of empathy and understanding of disabilities also contributes to attitudinal barriers. Fear or discomfort around individuals with disabilities often results in insensitivity or avoidance behaviours. This has the effect of isolating individuals with disabilities and preventing meaningful social interactions within the congregation. One respondent shared:

People sometimes avoid talking to me because they are unsure of how to communicate with me. I feel invisible in those moments, (O.I, 9/11/2023).

Additionally, assuming that individuals with disabilities always need assistance or cannot make their own decisions further exacerbates the issue. Such attitudes undermine the autonomy of individuals, casting them as dependent rather than capable participants in the faith community. In these instances, individuals with disabilities are often excluded from events or activities, as their participation is viewed as burdensome.

One respondent reflected:

People believe I can't do things for myself. It makes me feel like I am a burden instead of a person who wants to contribute to the Church, (O.I, 7/11/2023).

This view aligns with Rimmerman (2020), who notes that societal attitudes toward disability are often shaped by paternalism, which limits the opportunities for disabled

individuals to take part in community-building activities. Moreover, impatience with individuals who may take longer to communicate or move also fosters an unwelcoming atmosphere.

These dynamics lead to feelings of exclusion and alienation, which are compounded by the failure to address the specific needs of individuals with disabilities in Church planning.

The research also found that stereotyping individuals with disabilities based on their condition or the use of derogatory language contributed significantly to negative attitudes. Such behaviour undermines the dignity of individuals with disabilities and reinforces their exclusion. As one respondent observed:

I've overheard people using hurtful words to describe someone in a wheelchair. It's painful, and it makes me wonder if I'm seen the same way, (O.I, 9/11/2023).

Given these challenges, addressing attitudinal barriers requires a concerted effort to promote awareness, empathy, and education within charismatic Churches. Congregants and leaders must be equipped with the knowledge and understanding of how to interact respectfully and inclusively with individuals with disabilities. The Church must foster an environment that promotes acceptance and openness, ensuring that individuals with disabilities are seen as valuable members of the community with unique strengths.

In sum, while the barriers related to physical, sensory, communication, and attitudinal factors may seem daunting, they also present an opportunity for transformation within charismatic Churches in Kakamega County. By acknowledging these challenges and actively working to address them, Churches can pave the way for a more inclusive and compassionate environment. These efforts, grounded in the principles of functionalism, will strengthen social cohesion and enable the Church to better serve its entire

congregation. Through intentional outreach, education, and the promotion of positive interactions, charismatic Churches can play a significant role in dismantling the attitudinal barriers that hinder the full inclusion of individuals with disabilities in Kakamega County.

### **6.3 Mitigation Measures for Persons with Special Needs Attending Charismatic Churches in Kakamega County**

In Kakamega County, the journey of inclusion and accessibility within charismatic Churches extends beyond recognizing challenges. It involves taking proactive steps to create an environment where people living with disabilities can fully engage, participate, and experience spiritual growth. Mitigation measures play a pivotal role in breaking down barriers, fostering understanding, and ensuring that every individual, regardless of their abilities, feels welcomed and valued within the faith community. This exploration delves into these mitigation measures, showcasing their potential to create positive change and forge a path toward a more inclusive faith experience for all.

#### **6.3.1 Accepting Persons with Disability in the Charismatic Churches**

Despite the challenges of marginalization and negative attitudes towards people with disabilities within the Christian community, charismatic Churches in Kakamega County have begun taking significant steps towards the acceptance and inclusion of individuals with disabilities. This is a crucial move toward ensuring that these individuals can fully participate in Church life. According to Satterlee (2010), instead of focusing solely on practical checklists, congregations must engage with persons with disabilities in a meaningful way. This view was corroborated by respondents who emphasized that the core of inclusion lies in the attitude of the congregation rather than the logistical adjustments made. One respondent remarked:

The Church has started to accept us more. People have learned to see us as part of the community, not as outsiders who need to be pitied, (O.I, 9/11/2023).

Pierson (2010) also advocates for this approach, suggesting that the attitude of the Church members plays a more significant role than the specific measures implemented. The transformation in mindset is crucial in creating an inclusive environment, as emphasized by Webb-Mitchell (2010). He argues that the Christian community must be educated to recognize the God-given gifts of people with disabilities and adapt their practices to embrace them. This notion is supported by the experiences shared by Churchgoers in Kakamega County, as one participant reflected:

At first, people looked at me differently, but now they talk to me just like anyone else. It feels like they understand that I have value too, (O.I, 9/11/2023).

The research findings support Meininger's (2008) assertion that Churches must be willing to adapt their traditions and rituals to accommodate people with disabilities. It was observed that certain practices in charismatic worship, such as spontaneous prayer, healing services, and ministry participation, are beginning to involve individuals with disabilities more actively. This is a departure from previous exclusionary attitudes where people with disabilities were often sidelined.

Yong (2010) emphasizes three principles for creating an inclusive congregation: 1) the Church consists of the weak, not the strong; 2) each person with a disability, regardless of severity, contributes something essential; and 3) individuals with disabilities represent the paradigm for what it means to live in the power of God. These principles resonate deeply within the context of Kakamega, where charismatic Churches are increasingly valuing the contributions of individuals with disabilities, despite past marginalization by other denominations. A respondent shared:

I used to feel like the Church was a place where I was just an observer. But now, I feel that I can be involved, and my contributions are valued, (O.I, 9/11/2023).

In line with these views, charismatic Churches in Kakamega County have begun acknowledging that individuals with disabilities are human beings for whom Christ died and, therefore, are fully qualified for ministry. They are seen as embodying a unique mark of the image of God, and this recognition has opened doors for greater participation in Church activities. As noted by one respondent: *The Church has realized that we are not just people who need help; we have gifts and talents that can help the Church grow, (O.I, 9/11/2023)*. The findings of this study resonate with functionalism theory, as articulated by Durkheim (1912), which posits that for society to function harmoniously, all members must be included and supported. Charismatic Churches, by gradually accepting people with disabilities, are fulfilling their social function of inclusion and cohesion. They are adapting their practices to ensure that all individuals, regardless of ability, have the opportunity to participate fully and contribute to the Church's mission.

The steps that are taken by charismatic Churches in Kakamega County to accept and include people with disabilities mark a significant progress towards creating an inclusive faith community. By shifting attitudes, engaging with people with disabilities as valuable members of the congregation, and adapting Church practices, these Churches are not only aligning with Christian teachings of love and acceptance but also contributing to a more cohesive and inclusive society. These actions are in line with the functionalist perspective, ensuring that all members are integrated into the social fabric of the Church. However, continued education, awareness, and adaptive practices are essential to further enhance the acceptance of people with disabilities in charismatic Churches.

### **6.3.2 Recognizing Persons with Disability**

Charismatic Churches in Kakamega County have made significant strides in recognizing and valuing individuals with disabilities, an approach that contrasts with traditional attitudes often seen in other Christian denominations. One respondent shared that charismatic Churches, such as Dominion Church, have embraced the opportunity to value and appreciate people with disabilities, recognizing them as integral members of the faith community. As expressed by one participant:

Dominion Church has humbled itself by realizing the importance of people with disabilities. It is not just about who is wealthy or educated but about recognizing the gifts everyone brings to the table, (O.I, 12/11/2023).

This perspective challenges the common misconception that an individual's worth is determined solely by material achievements, such as salary, education, or leadership positions. This idea of partiality is slowly being dismantled within charismatic Churches. In contrast, one of the respondents noted that in Churches like Assemblies of God, people with disabilities are valued and given positions of responsibility, such as ushering, teaching, and even preaching:

In Assemblies of God, we are not sidelined. We are involved in all Church activities, including teaching and preaching. No one sees our disability as a limitation, (O.I, 5/10/2023).

This acceptance and active inclusion challenge traditional notions of ministry, where people with disabilities were often excluded from leadership roles. The shift in perspective is part of a broader movement within charismatic Churches to emphasize the empowerment of all members, irrespective of their abilities, through the Holy Spirit. One respondent further described how the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) embodies this principle, highlighting how members with disabilities are not only recognized but

also trained for ministry. In the AFM, individuals with disabilities are given leadership roles, including pastoral positions, thus breaking barriers that previously excluded them from such responsibilities.

The stories of Pastor Isaac Nominde, who is physically disabled, Pastor Kellen, who is blind, and Pastor Christine, who has one hand, all serve as prime examples of how charismatic Churches in Kakamega County have embraced inclusivity. As one respondent expressed:

People with disabilities in our Church are not just members; they are leaders. Pastor Isaac and Pastor Kellen are proof that disability does not mean inability. They are leading the congregation just like anyone else, (O.I, 12/11/2023).

These examples not only illustrate the Church's willingness to empower people with disabilities but also highlight how these Churches view disability as no hindrance to fulfilling the work of God in the world. The findings align with functionalism theory, which stresses that for a society or community to function effectively, all members must be included and contribute to the social and spiritual work of the group. Durkheim (1912) argued that society thrives when every individual, regardless of their status or abilities, is integrated into the collective system. In this context, charismatic Churches in Kakamega County are fostering a sense of cohesion and unity by including individuals with disabilities in the leadership and ministry of the Church.

Therefore, the recognition and empowerment of individuals with disabilities within charismatic Churches in Kakamega County is a testament to the evolving attitudes toward inclusion in religious spaces. By offering leadership opportunities, including people with disabilities in ministry, and challenging traditional notions of worth based on material success, these Churches are fostering a more inclusive and diverse faith

community. This approach is supported by the functionalist perspective, which advocates for the inclusion of all members in the social and spiritual life of the community. As the Church continues to embrace these individuals, they not only enriching the ministry but also contribute to the broader goal of building a more cohesive society.

### **6.3.3 Establishment of Homes and Associations for Persons with Disability**

Charismatic Churches in Kakamega County have demonstrated a deep commitment to supporting people with disabilities through the establishment of homes and associations dedicated to their well-being and inclusion. One such initiative is seen in Word of Faith Church, which has set up homes for people with disabilities, emphasizing the belief that everyone matters because everyone was created in the image of God. As one respondent shared:

Word of Faith has created a community where everyone matters, regardless of their condition. People with disabilities are appreciated for who they are and the gifts they bring to the community, (O.I, 12/11/2023).

This notion of inclusivity resonates with the Church's interpretation of the biblical story of King David's kindness to Mephibosheth in 2 Samuel 9, where David, despite Mephibosheth's disability, provided food and shelter. The story serves as a foundational teaching for the Church's approach to individuals with disabilities, reflecting a commitment to providing the same care and attention to these members. Another respondent noted:

In 2 Samuel 9, David shows kindness to Mephibosheth, who was lame in his feet. We, too, are mandated to do the same for people with disabilities, (O.I, 5/10/2023).

Beyond Word of Faith, other charismatic Churches, such as Christ Potter's House Ministries, have also embraced the mission to support people with disabilities. The Disabled Helping Hand Association, founded in 2008 under Christ Potter's House Ministries by Pastor Patrick Ogolla, is one example. The association aims to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to marginalized individuals, including those with disabilities, who are often forgotten when it comes to outreach efforts. One respondent explained:

The Disabled Helping Hand Association was born out of Godfrey's burden to reach people with disabilities with the gospel. Many times, they are overlooked, and we want to ensure that they know their rightful place is in the body of Christ, (O.I, 12/11/2023).

The association's activities extend beyond spiritual outreach. They seek to foster improved relationships between people with disabilities and those without, while also raising awareness of critical issues such as HIV/AIDS among disabled individuals. In addition, the association aims to provide biblical solutions to the unique challenges faced by people with disabilities. As one participant further expressed:

The association helps to raise awareness of health issues like HIV/AIDS and provides solutions from a biblical perspective. We believe that the gospel holds the answers to many of their struggles, (O.I, 12/11/2023).

These initiatives reflect a broader trend within charismatic Churches in Kakamega County, where inclusive ministries have been established to care for people with disabilities in a manner that transcends the traditional views of charity. The establishment of homes and associations demonstrates a shift toward empowering individuals with disabilities by acknowledging their worth and contributions to the Church and society.

From the perspective of functionalism theory, these actions can be understood as a manifestation of social cohesion within the Church. Durkheim (1912) argued that for a society or community to be stable and cohesive, all members must have a sense of belonging and purpose. By creating homes and ministries specifically for people with disabilities, these Churches not only provide practical support but also integrate these individuals into the spiritual and social fabric of the community. This approach fosters unity and collective responsibility, ensuring that all members, regardless of ability, contribute to the health and well-being of the Church body.

The establishment of homes and associations for people with disabilities within charismatic Churches in Kakamega County represents a significant shift toward inclusivity and empowerment. These initiatives align with the functionalist perspective, which advocates for the inclusion of all individuals in the social and spiritual life of the community. By providing spaces where people with disabilities are valued, supported, and integrated into Church activities, these Churches are contributing to a more cohesive and resilient society.

#### **6.3.4 Ministering to Persons with Disability**

Charismatic Churches in Kakamega County have demonstrated a strong commitment to ministering to people with disabilities by addressing a wide range of physical and developmental challenges. The Disabled and Helping Hands Association (DHHA), for instance, has expanded its outreach efforts beyond individuals with physical disabilities to include people with conditions such as hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, convulsive disorders, seizures, poliomyelitis, and muscular dystrophy. A participant noted: *In ministering to the physically handicapped, the association also reaches out to people who are deaf and have other disabilities, providing them with both spiritual and practical support, (O.I, 2/11/2023).*

This approach underscores the inclusivity of the ministry, ensuring that individuals with various forms of disabilities are not only accepted into the community but are also provided with appropriate religious guidance. Additionally, DHHA actively works to integrate people with disabilities into the broader community by engaging them in income-generating and self-help projects. Godfrey, the founder of DHHA, encourages people with abilities to participate in these activities, which serve as a means of empowerment and social integration for individuals with disabilities.

The association has received positive feedback regarding its outreach efforts. According to one participant, the response to the DHHA's initiatives has been overwhelmingly encouraging:

There has been an encouraging response towards the association from many people who have been reached by this organization, and it is inspiring to see so many people getting involved, (O.I, 2/11/2023).

Furthermore, the DHHA is planning to expand its reach beyond Kakamega County to other parts of Africa and the world, with the aim of promoting the recognition and acceptance of people with disabilities in society. This initiative is seen as a way to not only spread the gospel but also to advocate for the inclusion of people with disabilities in every aspect of life. Interestingly, the association has three pastors with disabilities who work full-time, traveling to different regions to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and educate communities on the rights and needs of people with disabilities. These pastors were trained at St. Paul's Theological College, where they underwent a two-year program in Bible studies and leadership. One respondent shared: *The pastors with disabilities are not only leading by example but also playing a critical role in spreading the message of inclusion and fighting stigma surrounding people with disabilities*, (O.I, 2/11/2023).

The involvement of pastors with disabilities in the ministry highlights the growing recognition that people with disabilities can serve as leaders within the Church, further breaking down barriers and challenging traditional views of disability.

The actions of the DHHA align with the principles of functionalism theory, which posits that for society to function effectively, every individual, regardless of ability, must be included in the collective activities and social processes of the community. According to Durkheim (1912), social cohesion and stability are achieved when individuals contribute meaningfully to the group, and this is particularly relevant in the context of ministry within charismatic Churches. By involving people with disabilities in leadership and ministry roles, the DHHA is fostering a sense of unity and inclusion, which is essential for the cohesion of the faith community.

Therefore, from the findings, ministry efforts directed at people with disabilities in Kakamega County, particularly through organizations like the DHHA, reflect a progressive approach to inclusion within charismatic Churches. By addressing the needs of individuals with various disabilities, integrating them into income-generating activities, and empowering them to take leadership roles, the Church is fostering an inclusive and supportive environment. This approach is in line with the functionalist perspective, which advocates for the inclusion of all members in society, thus ensuring that the community remains cohesive and united. The DHHA's outreach efforts not only contribute to the spiritual and social well-being of people with disabilities but also promote broader societal change by challenging stigmas and encouraging acceptance. The expansion of these efforts to other regions holds promise for furthering the acceptance and recognition of people with disabilities on a global scale.

### **6.3.5 Educating the Community and Religious Groups about PLWDs**

Efforts to educate the community and religious groups about the needs and rights of persons with disabilities (PLWDs) in Kakamega County have gained momentum, particularly within charismatic Churches. A significant focus of these initiatives is to challenge harmful misconceptions about disabilities, particularly the belief that disability is a result of evil spirits. A participant emphasized the need for religious groups to rethink their approach to people with disabilities:

Religious groups should be educated that disability is not linked to evil spirits. Many Churches still advertise that people with disabilities will be healed if they attend their services, but this creates misunderstandings. It is crucial for Churches to appreciate the condition of people with disabilities and treat them as equals, not charity cases, (O.I, 5/11/2023).

This sentiment reflects an ongoing struggle within many religious communities where disability is often seen as a divine punishment or spiritual affliction. Efforts to reframe this view are being championed by various Church leaders, including those from Serve International Family Church. One leader explained that such misconceptions must be addressed through continuous education and awareness programs for pastors and Church leaders.

The issue of cultural marginalization and stigma surrounding people with disabilities in Kakamega County was also highlighted by a respondent. It was noted that cultural beliefs have often led to the exclusion of individuals with disabilities from society. For example, some communities have accused each other of witchcraft when a child is born with a disability, leading to conflicts within families and social groups. One participant shared:

In Kakamega, we've seen cases where marriages break after a woman gives birth to a disabled baby. Families accuse each other of witchcraft and ostracize those with disabilities. This stigma has long-lasting negative effects on the disabled person and their family, (O.I, 5/11/2023).

In response to these challenges, charismatic Churches are taking steps to combat marginalization. These initiatives include the creation of platforms for young people with disabilities to actively engage in socio-economic and political processes. Church leaders have emphasized the importance of empowering young people with disabilities through training in leadership and governance. One Church leader remarked:

We train youths with disabilities on leadership and good governance, and we lobby for legal reforms that remove discriminatory barriers. We want to ensure that young people with disabilities are registered voters who can vote and be voted for, and have a say in public matters, (O.I, 5/11/2023).

These efforts are a direct response to the marginalization of young women with disabilities, who face even greater barriers to participation in decision-making processes. One respondent noted:

Research on barriers that hinder the participation of young women with disabilities in decision-making processes is essential. Without this, we cannot ensure that they have a meaningful voice in the issues that affect them, (O.I, 5/11/2023).

Furthermore, Churches like Word of Faith have undertaken initiatives to ensure that they fully accommodate and respond to the needs of people with disabilities. These initiatives have become a defining characteristic of the Church's mission, underscoring the Church's commitment to inclusivity. As one participant highlighted:

Responding to and fully accommodating people with various disabilities is not an option for charismatic Churches in Kakamega. It is central to our mission and values, (O.I, 16/11/2003).

However, while the work of Churches like Word of Faith is commendable, there are concerns regarding the terminology used by some organizations. Terms such as "Disabled Helping Hand Association" and "Disabled Village" have been criticized for being derogatory and reinforcing negative stereotypes. Scholars in the field of disability studies advocate for the use of more inclusive and respectful language. One expert noted: Proponents of disability studies argue that the terminology used by some organizations perpetuates a discriminatory narrative. More inclusive terms should be used to empower individuals with disabilities rather than marginalize them, (EDAN, 2003).

The findings align with functionalism theory, which posits that for a society to function effectively, all members, regardless of their abilities, must be included and contribute to the collective good (Durkheim, 1912). By promoting inclusive practices, such as educating religious groups and empowering young people with disabilities, charismatic Churches in Kakamega are fostering a more cohesive society. The focus on education and advocacy within the Church reflects a broader societal shift towards recognizing the dignity and worth of people with disabilities.

Therefore, education and awareness efforts within charismatic Churches in Kakamega County are pivotal in reshaping societal attitudes towards people with disabilities. By challenging misconceptions and promoting inclusivity, these Churches are helping to create a more accepting and cohesive community. The emphasis on training, legal advocacy, and political engagement for young people with disabilities represents a significant step towards greater social integration. While progress is being made, there is still work to be done to ensure that language and practices remain fully inclusive, in line with the values of respect and equality for all.

In a nutshell, the work being done by charismatic Churches in Kakamega County is commendable but needs to be continually assessed to ensure that all barriers, both social and linguistic, are addressed. Only through comprehensive, inclusive education and awareness can society fully embrace the rights and contributions of people with disabilities.

### **6.3.6 Enhancing Inclusivity in the Church**

In the context of charismatic Churches in Kakamega County, inclusivity has emerged as a crucial theme in enhancing the participation of people with disabilities (PWDs) in Church activities. Leaders of these Churches assert that the Church should be a welcoming environment for everyone, regardless of their physical, mental, or sensory condition. One pastor emphasized that the Church should be a place where individuals with disabilities, along with their families, can attend services without feeling inferior, being stared at, or silently condemned. As expressed:

The Church should be a place where parents and children with disabilities can attend without feeling inferior, without being stared at, and without being silently condemned, (O.I, 7/11/2023).

This aligns with the perspectives of scholars such as Hauer (2004) and Yong (2009), who argue that the redemption for individuals with disabilities is not found in their healing, but rather in the removal of societal barriers that hinder acceptance and hospitality from those with able bodies. These viewpoints stress the importance of a Church environment that fosters inclusivity and breaks down the stigmas associated with disability.

In support of this vision, charismatic Churches in Kakamega County are advocating for a more inclusive understanding of the Christian mission. According to one Church leader, the message of Christ's work in the world does not discriminate between those with disabilities and those without. As he noted: *There is no difference between a person with a disability and a person without a disability when it comes to the work of Christ in our lives and in the world*, (O.I, 7/11/2023).

Pierson (2010) similarly argues that the Great Commission, which calls Christians to spread Christ's love to all people, makes no exclusions. There is no mandate in the Bible that excludes people with disabilities from the Christian community, reinforcing the importance of their inclusion in Church activities. This theological perspective is embraced by charismatic Churches in Kakamega County, which emphasize that the gospel is for everyone, regardless of ability or condition.

Furthermore, Webb-Mitchell (1996) posits that a person's mental, physical, or sensory condition neither helps nor hinders their relationship with God. This theological stance is echoed by Bach, as cited in Kunz (2011), who underscores the equality of individuals with and without disabilities. Both are created by God, dependent on Christ's salvific deed, and are reconciled to God through Him. Both are part of the body of Christ, gifted with divine gifts and expectant of salvation. This perspective is reflected in the inclusive practices observed within charismatic Churches in Kakamega County.

Pastors in these Churches express a firm belief in the idea that "disability is not inability." One pastor shared:

We are guided by the belief that disability is not inability. People with disabilities are equal members of the Christian community and should be treated with respect and dignity, (O.I, 7/11/2023).

This belief is also demonstrated in the way that theological education is provided to individuals with disabilities. At Kaimosi, a theological college associated with the charismatic Churches, people with disabilities are integrated into regular classes alongside their peers without disabilities. This practice reflects the Church's commitment to valuing and displaying the supremacy of God in all circumstances, including disability and suffering. One pastor provided a personal example:

In my class in 2013 at Bread of Life Campus, I studied alongside Dickson Ochieng from Amalemba in the Deliverance Church, who is blind. He completed his studies very well, and this is a testimony to the fact that people with disabilities can thrive in an inclusive educational environment, (O.I, 7/11/2023).

The presence of pastors with disabilities in leadership roles within the Churches further emphasizes the commitment to inclusivity. Notable pastors, such as Consepter Rhoda, Mrs. Fridah Akaliche, and Olivia Kanaga, who are respected and well-received by the congregation, serve as role models for inclusion and empowerment within the Church. These individuals are seen as valued preachers of the word of God, despite their disabilities. One participant noted:

These pastors with disabilities are greatly used by God. They are accepted in their conditions and respected as leaders in the Church, (O.I, 7/11/2023).

An FGD with members of the congregation revealed similar sentiments, with participants expressing strong support for the idea of inclusivity within the Church. Many remarked that the presence of pastors with disabilities in leadership positions has positively influenced their perception of disability, fostering a more inclusive and accepting environment.

As one participant from the FGD stated:

The Church has done better than many other institutions in Kakamega County in terms of accepting and accommodating people with disabilities. We see people with disabilities actively participating in Church activities and even leading in some cases, which is a great example for the community, (FGD, 7/11/2023).

The approach taken by charismatic Churches in Kakamega County can be analyzed through the lens of functionalism theory, which argues that social structures should work together to maintain the stability and harmony of society (Durkheim, 1912). By promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities, these Churches contribute to a more cohesive society where all members, regardless of their abilities, are valued and given the opportunity to participate in the community. The emphasis on education, empowerment, and leadership for people with disabilities within the Church context is an example of how religious institutions can play a role in challenging societal norms and promoting social change.

Charismatic Churches in Kakamega County are making significant strides toward enhancing inclusivity for people with disabilities. By embracing the belief that disability is not inability, providing educational opportunities for people with disabilities, and ensuring their active participation in leadership roles, these Churches are setting a strong example of acceptance and equality. While challenges remain in terms of cultural attitudes and linguistic inclusivity, the efforts made by these Churches represent an important step in fostering a more inclusive and compassionate community. From the researcher's perspective, the ongoing work of these Churches in promoting inclusivity should be continued and expanded to ensure that people with disabilities are fully integrated into all aspects of Church and community life.

### **6.3.7 Providing Education to PLWDs**

Providing education to people with disabilities (PLWDs) is a central focus within charismatic Churches in Kakamega County. Church leaders emphasize the importance of education and engagement for people with disabilities, highlighting the need for spiritual and social inclusion. One pastor pointed out that the Church, as the earthly representative of spiritual reality, should take a leadership role in offering opportunities for all individuals to connect with the Spirit of God. He stated: *The Church of Jesus Christ, which is the earthly representative of spiritual reality, should be the leader in providing opportunity for all people to connect with the Spirit of God, (O.I, 2/11/2023).*

Furthermore, the Church should recognize the unique ways in which people with disabilities relate to God. According to another Church leader, the application of the age of accountability to people with disabilities is crucial, ensuring that opportunities are provided for them to experience spiritual growth at their level of understanding:

We need to fully understand the age of accountability and its application to people with disabilities. We should understand how people with disability relate to God and give opportunity for the Spirit of God to speak to such a person at his or her level of comprehension, (O.I, 5/11/2023).

This perspective aligns with the notion that disability should not be seen as inability. According to the Church leaders interviewed, people with disabilities can participate in spiritual activities and education, and they should be given the same opportunities as others. This includes the possibility of mainstreaming PLWDs in traditional schools, allowing them to engage in social and emotional experiences with their peers. The recognition of PLWDs as fully capable of understanding and participating in spiritual matters reflects an inclusive approach that challenges traditional views of disability.

One pastor emphasized the importance of recognizing the unique abilities of people with disabilities, noting that they can demonstrate remarkable creativity, particularly in artistic expression. He said:

People with disability can demonstrate an unusual level of creativity in artistic expression. Many grasp spiritual realities and participate in worship and other Church activities, especially in smaller groups, (O.I, 30/11/2023).

In addition to spiritual engagement, the Church is also promoting practical activities that can offer people with disabilities a sense of independence and participation in the community. One pastor suggested that the Church should organize income-generating activities such as poultry farming, piggery, and sewing projects for PLWDs, which can serve both as educational and economic empowerment opportunities: *We need to provide such activities as poultry, piggery, and sewing projects for people with disability*, (O.I, 30/11/2023).

These activities are not only intended to support the economic well-being of PLWDs but also to facilitate social inclusion by encouraging them to interact with others in meaningful ways. The pastor emphasized that building relationships with people with disabilities is crucial for fostering a sense of belonging and trust. He explained:

The key to understanding and working with people with disabilities is building relationships with them. Developing friendship and trust encourages them to open up to the love of the community, (O.I, 30/11/2023).

This view is supported by findings from a focus group discussion (FGD) conducted with members of the community. Participants in the FGD highlighted that people with disabilities often face challenges in accessing education and economic opportunities. However, they noted that when the Church takes an active role in providing support,

such as through educational programs and vocational training, it significantly enhances the lives of PLWDs. One participant from the FGD stated:

Church initiatives like poultry farming and sewing projects have helped people with disabilities become more self-sufficient and integrated into the community. It's not just about spiritual growth, but also practical skills that they can use to support themselves, (FGD, 30/11/2023).

From the perspective of functionalism theory, these initiatives align with the theory's emphasis on the importance of social institutions (such as the Church) working to maintain the stability and cohesion of society (Durkheim, 1912). By offering both spiritual and practical support to people with disabilities, the Church is promoting social integration and reducing marginalization. This approach also highlights the Church's role in fulfilling the broader societal need for inclusivity and equal opportunities for all members of the community.

Thus, the charismatic Churches in Kakamega County are making significant efforts to provide education and practical support to people with disabilities. These efforts include promoting spiritual education that respects the individual needs of PLWDs, offering vocational training programs, and encouraging social inclusion. The research findings suggest that such initiatives are not only beneficial for the spiritual and economic development of PLWDs but also play a crucial role in breaking down social barriers and fostering community cohesion. The researcher views these efforts as a crucial step toward creating a more inclusive and equitable society, where people with disabilities can fully participate in both Church and community life.

### **6.3.8 Fulfilling the Biblical Teaching and Establishing PLWDs Initiatives**

The charismatic Churches in Kakamega County are actively involved in addressing the needs of people living with disabilities (PLWDs) by aligning their initiatives with biblical teachings and fostering community-based support systems. A key biblical passage guiding their work is Matthew 25:35-36, which emphasizes serving those in need. As one pastor explained:

The initiatives of charismatic Churches in Kakamega County fulfill the words of Jesus: ‘I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me, (O.I, 7/11/2023).

This interpretation underlines the role of Churches in caring for people with disabilities, not just in terms of physical needs, but also spiritual and emotional needs. Several Churches, such as the Family of God (FOG) Church, have undertaken initiatives to advocate for and provide services to people with disabilities. One pastor shared that FOG Church offers consultation services, multimedia resources, and engages in advocacy to raise awareness about disability. He added that the Church conducts disability awareness crusades to foster acceptance and inclusion within the broader community:

FOG Church provides consultation, multimedia resources, and advocates for people with disabilities. They conduct disability awareness crusades to help the human community at large accommodate and take people with disabilities in their condition, (O.I, 7/11/2023).

These efforts aim to shift societal attitudes, moving beyond pity to acceptance of individuals with disabilities for who they are. In line with this, another Church leader emphasized the importance of forming communities specifically focused on addressing

disability concerns. He noted that FOG Church is working to ensure full participation of PLWDs in spiritual, educational, and community activities, and they provide resources to support such initiatives:

FOG Church is also working to form communities focused on disability concerns to establish a ministry that addresses them. They aim to create full participation of people with disabilities in spiritual, educational, and communal activities, providing the necessary resources for these efforts, (O.I, 7/11/2023).

In addition to providing direct services to PLWDs, FOG Church is also committed to helping other Churches make their services and facilities accessible. One pastor described how FOG assists other Christian congregations by providing consultative support to help them become more inclusive: *FOG provides consultative assistance to other Christian congregations wishing to make their Churches accessible to people with disabilities*, (O.I, 7/11/2023).

Educational support for PLWDs is another key aspect of the Church's outreach. FOG Church has also been involved in organizing conferences to discuss the challenges facing people with disabilities and explore solutions. This is in line with the Church's commitment to addressing both the spiritual and practical needs of PLWDs. One pastor noted the importance of the family unit, emphasizing its role in addressing the needs of PLWDs: *The family, as the basic social unit in all societies, plays an important role in meeting the basic human needs of people with disabilities*, (O.I, 12/11/2023).

In line with these views, the Church leaders also highlighted the importance of community sensitization in breaking down the barriers that have historically marginalized PLWDs. As one pastor explained, cultural beliefs and traditional practices often shape negative attitudes toward people with disabilities.

However, through ongoing education and awareness campaigns, these beliefs are being challenged, allowing for greater inclusion and participation of PLWDs in society:

Through community awareness, values and beliefs towards people with disabilities are changing. This enables people with disabilities to participate fully in the community, (O.I, 7/11/2023).

The Church leaders further emphasized the significance of educating the public on the rights and humanity of PLWDs, including their emotional needs and right to respect. They argued that as communities become more educated about disability, traditional and cultural misconceptions about PLWDs will gradually diminish. This process of education is seen as a key driver of social change, helping to reshape the way society views and treats individuals with disabilities:

If people are sensitized on the wholeness of people with disabilities—that they have emotions, needs, human rights, and therefore are worthy of respect and dignified treatment—cultural and traditional beliefs about these people will be dropped, (O.I, 7/11/2023).

Focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted with members of the community further corroborate these views. Participants in the FGDs agreed that community education and awareness are vital in creating a supportive environment for people with disabilities. They also noted that when the Church leads efforts to break down stigma, it helps PLWDs gain more acceptance and recognition in society. One FGD participant shared:

Community sensitization programs have helped change the way people see disabilities. More people are now open to the idea that people with disabilities can live normal, fulfilling lives and should be treated with dignity, (FGD, 7/11/2023).

From a functionalist perspective, these initiatives can be seen as efforts by religious institutions to foster social cohesion and stability by addressing the needs of marginalized groups. As Durkheim (1912) argued, social institutions like the Church play a crucial role in maintaining societal order and solidarity. By advocating for the inclusion of people with disabilities, charismatic Churches in Kakamega County contribute to the broader societal goal of integration and equality. These actions also reflect a functionalist belief in the need for all members of society to be valued and included for the system to function effectively.

The charismatic Churches in Kakamega County are fulfilling the biblical teachings of love and compassion by providing essential services to people with disabilities. Through education, community sensitization, and direct support, these Churches are addressing the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of PLWDs. The Church's efforts to break down societal barriers and promote acceptance align with functionalism theory, which emphasizes the importance of social integration and cohesion. These initiatives not only enhance the lives of people with disabilities but also contribute to building a more inclusive and supportive community.

#### **6.4 Chapter Summary**

This chapter examined the challenges faced by people with special needs attending charismatic Churches in Kakamega County and the mitigation measures adopted to promote their inclusion. The study identified key barriers, including physical inaccessibility, which limited movement within Church premises, and limited sensory accommodations, which hindered the participation of individuals with hearing and visual impairments. Communication barriers further excluded persons with disabilities from fully engaging in worship and Church activities, while attitudinal barriers, such as stigma and misconceptions, contributed to their marginalization.

To address these challenges, various mitigation measures were highlighted. Churches worked toward accepting and recognizing persons with disabilities, fostering a culture of inclusion. The establishment of homes and associations provided support structures for individuals with disabilities. Ministering to persons with disabilities was emphasized as a means of ensuring their spiritual well-being. Additionally, efforts were made to educate the community and religious groups about disabilities to reduce stigma and misconceptions. Enhancing inclusivity within Church programs, providing educational opportunities for persons with disabilities, and fulfilling biblical teachings by establishing disability-focused initiatives were also identified as crucial steps in promoting equality and participation. Through these measures, charismatic Churches sought to create an environment that was more accommodating and supportive of persons with special needs. The next chapter discussed summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study findings.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 7.1 Introduction

The overall objective of the study was to analyse the initiation of inclusivity among the people with special needs in charismatic Churches in Kakamega County Kenya. To achieve this objective, the study was guided by three specific objectives. These objectives were aided by the functionalism theory that was adopted by the study. Thereafter, the study unravelled these objectives by reviewing various literatures that made the researcher to identify the various *lacunae* that were filled by the research after collecting and analysing data. This chapter, therefore, presents the summary of key findings of the study, conclusions, and recommendations of the study according to the given specific objectives. Finally, the study has endeavoured to give suggestions for further research.

#### 7.2. Summary of Key Findings

In this section, the summary of key findings was provided in line with the specific objectives of the study. These objectives were: To determine the characteristics of people with special needs in charismatic Churches. Secondly was to examine congregants and leadership attitudes and the suitability of charismatic Churches towards people with special needs and lastly to investigate the challenges and mitigation measures for people with special needs attending charismatic Churches in Kakamega County.

### **7.2.1 To determine the Characteristics of Persons with Special Needs in Charismatic Churches**

People living with disabilities in charismatic Churches encompass a wide range of conditions, from physical and sensory disabilities to cognitive and mental health disorders. This diversity highlights the importance of creating an inclusive environment that accommodates various needs. These included mobility impairments, visual or hearing impairments, intellectual disabilities, autism, mental health disorders, chronic illnesses, and more.

Disabilities can be visible, such as using a wheelchair or a white cane, or they can be invisible, like chronic pain or mental health conditions. Recognizing and addressing both types of disabilities is essential for providing appropriate support. Visible disabilities are those in which the effects or manifestations of the disability are readily observable by others. These disabilities often have a physical component that is visible to the eye. For example, someone using a wheelchair, crutches, or a mobility aid, or someone with a limb difference, is considered to have a visible disability.

Inaccessible physical environments, such as buildings without ramps, elevators, or accessible restroom facilities, can prevent persons with disabilities from accessing public spaces, transportation, workplaces, and educational institutions. People with communication disabilities may face challenges in accessing information and participating in conversations due to the lack of appropriate communication tools and technologies, as well as limited understanding and acceptance of alternative forms of communication.

Persons with disabilities have unique needs and preferences. Some might require assistance with mobility, while others might need access to sign language interpretation or alternative formats for printed materials. Persons with mobility impairments might require ramps, elevators, or accessible seating to navigate the Church premises comfortably. Ensuring that all areas, including stages and altars, are accessible is crucial. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing could benefit from sign language interpretation, closed captioning on screens, or assistive listening devices.

Charismatic Churches often have dynamic worship styles, including music, dance, and energetic prayer. It's important to ensure that individuals with disabilities actively participate in these activities in ways that are meaningful to them. Ensure that the physical worship environment is accessible to all. This includes providing ramps, accessible seating, and clear pathways for individuals with mobility challenges. Also, consider sensory accommodations like quieter spaces for those who might be sensitive to noise.

A strong sense of community is often central to charismatic Churches. Creating an environment where people with disabilities feel welcomed, valued, and supported contributes to the overall well-being of the congregation. A supportive community ensures that public spaces, buildings, transportation, and communication channels are accessible to individuals with disabilities. This includes ramps, elevators, tactile signage, and other accommodations that enable people with mobility, sensory, or communication impairments to navigate their surroundings independently.

People with disabilities have the same spiritual needs and desires for connection as anyone else. Recognizing and addressing these needs through appropriate pastoral care and spiritual guidance is essential. Spiritual needs and beliefs can have a significant impact on individuals with disabilities within charismatic Churches, as these needs are

closely tied to a person's sense of identity, purpose, and connection to a higher power. Charismatic Churches are known for their emphasis on spiritual experiences, vibrant worship, and a strong sense of community.

### **7.2.2 To Examine Congregants and Leadership Attitudes and the Suitability of Charismatic Churches towards Persons with Special Needs**

Theologies, Church doctrines, traditions and beliefs have a way of giving meaning to disability. Analysing the famous theologies of the charismatic Churches in Kakamega County helps to understand how they construct disability in Kakamega County. Therefore, the use and interpretation of biblical texts that relate to disability provide links to how disability is constructed in the charismatic Churches in Kakamega County. Findings from this study showed that there is no clear theology about disability within the charismatic Churches in Kakamega County. Individuals approach issues of disability based on their convictions.

The theology of exorcism and deliverance in the charismatic Churches in Kakamega County has an impact on disability. From the author's observations, many charismatic Churches in Kakamega County preachers, who are predominantly pastors, and lay workers, create an impression that disability is the work of the devil. The theology of demonstration of the power of God is prevalent in the charismatic Churches in Kakamega County. There is a belief that the 'calling' upon a pastor must be authenticated by the flow of the power of God during ministry. All the pastors who participated in this study believed that demonstration of power is when miracles happen, especially when the blind see, the lame walk and the deaf hear.

The pastoral ministry must accept that the salvation of the souls of persons with disabilities is essential, more so than their conditions. So, this helps pastoral ministry not to approach disability from a position of pity or sympathy, but perhaps from pastoral care. As such, the charismatic Churches in Kakamega County endless prayers towards restoring persons with disabilities and demonstrations of power denigrate the dignity of the persons with disabilities by excluding them from free participation in the religious worship.

Most of the marginalisation of persons with disabilities in the charismatic Churches in Kakamega County is secretly reinforced by the liturgical expression toward them in the Church. From the author's participatory observations, the Church conferences are usually the most suitable playing fields or grounds in which the 'us' and 'them' dichotomy is played out in the charismatic Churches in Kakamega County. Typical rhetoric reiterated by the clergy at conferences, especially when praying for the sick and persons with disabilities, is that they should stir up their faith and expect a miracle because today is their day.

The attitudes of congregants and leadership significantly impact the experiences of people with disabilities. The suitability of these Churches is determined by their ability to cultivate an environment where individuals with disabilities are seen as valued and contributing members of the community. Attitudinal inclusivity is a pivotal factor that greatly influences the suitability of charismatic Churches toward people living with disabilities in Kakamega County.

### **7.2.3 To investigate the Challenges and Mitigation Measures for Persons with Special Needs Attending Charismatic Churches in Kakamega County**

Many charismatic Churches in Kakamega lack ramps, elevators, and accessible entrances, making it difficult for individuals with mobility impairments to access worship areas and other facilities. Physical inaccessibility poses a significant challenge for people living with disabilities when attending charismatic Churches in Kakamega County. This challenge encompasses various barriers that hinder individuals with disabilities from accessing and fully participating in worship services, activities, and events within the Church premises.

Individuals with sensory sensitivities may struggle with loud music, bright lights, and crowded spaces during charismatic worship services. Limited sensory accommodations present a significant challenge for people living with disabilities when attending charismatic Churches in Kakamega County. Sensory accommodations refer to the adjustments and provisions that can be made to create a comfortable and inclusive environment for individuals with sensory sensitivities or impairments.

Individuals with hearing or speech impairments might face challenges in following sermons, participating in discussions, and accessing information. Communication barriers pose a significant challenge for people living with disabilities when attending charismatic Churches in Kakamega County. Effective communication is essential for meaningful engagement in worship services, interactions with fellow congregants, and participation in Church activities

Negative attitudes or lack of understanding from congregants and leaders can lead to feelings of exclusion and unwelcome. Congregants and leaders might not have sufficient knowledge about disabilities, leading to misconceptions and unintentional

insensitivity. Some Church activities and ministries may not be designed to accommodate individuals with diverse abilities, limiting their participation.

In Kakamega County, the journey of inclusion and accessibility within charismatic Churches extends beyond recognizing challenges. It involves taking proactive steps to create an environment where people living with disabilities can fully engage, participate, and experience spiritual growth. Mitigation measures play a pivotal role in breaking down barriers, fostering understanding, and ensuring that every individual, regardless of their abilities, feels welcomed and valued within the faith community.

In Kakamega, while other Christian denominations reject, condemn and marginalize people with disability, charismatic Churches are starting to make strides to love and serve people with disability. People with disability are regarded as humans for whom Christ died, qualifying them for ministry. They are humans who embody a unique mark of the image of God.

People with disability are valued and are given positions in the Church like ushering, teaching, preaching and any sort of Church position. In contrast to other traditional notions of Christian ministry, charismatic Churches like Apostolic Faith Mission emphasize that all members of the body of Christ are empowered by the Holy Spirit to witness to and accomplish the work of God in the world. In the Apostolic Faith Church people with disability are even trained as pastors. For charismatic Churches in Kakamega County, individuals with disabilities can be mainstreamed in traditional schools to participate in emotional and social experiences with their peers.

### **7.3 Conclusion**

In the first objective of the study, which was to determine the characteristics of people with special needs in charismatic Churches, the study concluded that; In charismatic Churches, the characteristics of people living with disabilities paint a portrait of faith, resilience, and unwavering dedication to their spiritual journey. Their presence enriches the entire congregation, fostering an environment of acceptance, diversity, and shared growth in the pursuit of spiritual connection. Additionally, the characteristics of individuals living with disabilities within charismatic Churches exemplify a unique blend of faith, resilience, and active engagement. These individuals are more than the challenges they face; they embody a profound spiritual connection, an unyielding hope, and an unwavering commitment to their faith journey. Their presence within the charismatic community enriches the tapestry of worship, fellowship, and service, and their influence extends far beyond the bounds of their individual experiences.

The studies second objective was to examine congregants and leadership attitudes and the suitability of charismatic Churches towards people with special needs. The study concluded that: In Kakamega County, the suitability of charismatic Churches toward people living with disabilities holds profound implications for the inclusivity, acceptance, and growth of the faith community. It became evident that these Churches have the potential to play a transformative role in the lives of individuals with disabilities. By embracing principles of accessibility, empowerment, education, and collaboration, charismatic Churches can create environments where all members, regardless of their abilities, feel valued, supported, and fully integrated into the life of the Church.

The study's last objective was to investigate the challenges and mitigation measures for people with special needs attending charismatic Churches in Kakamega County. The research concluded that, people with disabilities are essential to the wholeness of the Christian community. In a culture that worships physical perfection, devalues human life, and takes pride in disposability, the Church must protect the helpless, vulnerable, disenfranchised, including people with disabilities. They are people created in God's image, possessing dignity, value, and purpose.

The study major conclusion is that, in order to view people with disabilities as flawed, defective, and possibly a divine mistake, is wrong for a Church with Christ-like compassion. People with disabilities are not platforms for the demonstration of power to heal. The Christian community needs to affirm and minister to those with disabilities and at the same time encouraging their congregational acceptance into Church life and activity. If the Christian community is to fulfil the Great Commission to preach the gospel to every creature, they need to take different initiatives to accommodate people with disability.

#### **7.4 Recommendations**

The study recommendations are based on the summary of key findings and the conclusions drawn from the specific objectives of the study. Based on the first objective, which was to determine the characteristics of people with special needs in charismatic Churches, the study recommends that there is need to provide training sessions for Church leaders, volunteers, and members on disability awareness, sensitivity, and inclusivity. This education should encompass understanding various disabilities, communication techniques, and creating accessible environments.

Additionally, establishing support programs tailored to the needs of people with disabilities is necessary. This might include counseling services, support groups, or specialized educational classes.

Based on the second objective, which was to examinee congregants and leadership attitudes and the suitability of charismatic Churches towards people with special needs, qualified disabled people should be invited to facilitate spiritual and professional functions such as preaching, leaching, conducting disability awareness seminars, and others which would be relevant for them. Furthermore, agencies or organizations dealing with disabilities should facilitate disability awareness seminars to pastors, lay leaders, Christians in general, disabled people and their families to be sensitized to disability issues.

On the last objective, which was to investigate the challenges and mitigation measures for people with special needs attending charismatic Churches in Kakamega County, the study recommends that, Churches should sponsor pastors, Christians, disabled people and their members of the families to various disability awareness seminars such as those conducted by the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK). Also, PLWDs who qualify should be encouraged and sponsored to attend theological colleges. They should be accorded highest academic or professional training up to masters and doctoral degrees. Discrimination or prejudice should be avoided when it comes to processing their recruitment even in Church ranks.

## **7.5 Suggestion for Further Research**

First, there is a need to compare the experiences of individuals with disabilities in charismatic Churches with those in other denominations or religious settings. This could shed light on specific practices or beliefs that impact the inclusion of people with disabilities.

Secondly, there is a need to assess perceptions of inclusivity among individuals with disabilities themselves. This is because, understanding their lived experiences within the Church context and how welcomed and supported they feel can help improve to advise the Church leadership on the action they should take.

Thirdly, research should be conducted on how pastors in particular and interested Christians in general could be sponsored to specialize in sign language and Braille and other PLWDs-related theological studies. As a result, they may be appropriately equipped to integratively serve the challenging twenty first century Church, which should not continue ignoring, isolating or discouraging PLWDs.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: CONSENT FORM

Consent form to allow the use of photographs and verbatim from the respondents

I am requesting for your permission to use your photos and verbatims in this study.

#### If Yes

I.....(Respondents name) allow the use of my  
photographs and verbatim in this research/study on this day  
.....(Day and Date).

#### If No

I.....(Respondents name) do not allow the use of my  
photographs and verbatim in this research/study on this day  
.....(Day and Date).

Signature of the Respondent.....

**APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDES FOR THE RESPONDENTS (Clergy, Ushers, Church leaders, Church elders and PLWDs)**

Dear Respondent,

I am carrying out research on charismatic Churches in Kakamega County on initiation of inclusivity to the people with special needs in Kakamega County. You have been chosen to take part in the study.

The responses you give was be treated with confidentiality.

**SECTION A. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION.**

Please tick or fill where appropriate

1. Are you categorized as Person living with disability  Yes  No
2. Which category of service are you involved in, in your Church  
Clergy  Usher  Church leader  Church Elder
3. Do you have any theological training? Yes  No
4. What is the name of your Church?.....
5. How many years have you served in your current leadership position in the Church? Less than 10 years  More Than 10 years

**SECTION B. DISABILITY**

6. Do you have any training in areas related to disability? If Yes, please elaborate.....  
.....  
.....  
.....
7. If 7 above is NO, then, do you have any knowledge about disability in the society? Please explain how you understand them those who are affected by any disability.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

8. What do you believe is the source of disability in the society?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

9. Do you know of anybody with disability in your family or in your neighbourhood? If Yes, how do people treat them yourself included.

.....  
.....  
.....

10. Which type of disability have you interacted with? (tick from the following)

- a) Cerebral palsy
- b) Spinal cord bifida
- c) Spinal cord injury
- d) Muscular dystrophy
- e) Dwarfism
- f) Crippled
- g) The lame
- h) The blind
- i) The Deaf
- j) The paralysed
- k) The mute

11. How do people perceive or view the physically disability in your Church?

.....  
.....  
.....

12. Are you aware and familiar with the rights and policies concerning people with disability?

.....  
.....  
.....

13. Tick appropriately on the type of disability that is found in your Church.

- a) Cerebral palsy
- b) Spinal cord bifida
- c) Spinal cord injury
- d) Epilepsy
- e) Muscular
- f) Dwarfism
- g) Crippled
- h) The lame
- i) The blind
- j) The Deaf
- k) The paralysed
- l) The mute
- m) Those with leprosy

14. Do the people with special needs really need support from the Church or anywhere else? If Yes, how? If No, explain

.....  
.....  
.....

15. Is it important to initiate inclusivity to people with special needs? If Yes, how. If No, give reasons why?

.....  
.....  
.....

**SECTION C. CONGREGANTS AND THE SERVING LEADERSHIP ATTITUDE AND THE SUITABILITY OF THE CHARISMATIC CHURCHES TOWARDS PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS.**

16. Does the Church play any role of inclusivity to people with disability? If Yes, how? If No, elaborate.

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.....  
.....

17. How should the Church recognise people with special needs?

.....  
.....  
.....

18. If it recognises, does the Church provide the care needed to the People with special needs?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

19. Does the Church have the strategies on recognising children born with disability at a tender age so that it can give medical services and the immediate care needed? If Yes, how? If No, why?

.....  
.....

20. How often do your Churches involve the people with special needs in the programmes of the Church? Mention the programmes available in your Church.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

21. How are the Church structures convenient for the people with special needs Are they all inclusive?

.....  
.....  
.....

**SECTION D: CHALLENGES AND RELIABLE MEASURES FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN CHARISMATIC CHURCHES IN KAKAMEGA COUNTY.**

22. What do you understand by the term reliable measure?

.....  
.....

23. How has your Church initiated inclusivity to the people with special needs?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

24. How does your Church ensure that people with physical disabilities who have internalised problems such as low self-esteem stigma, rejection and deformity of their images which reflects the psychological, emotional and spiritual torture, are attended to?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

25. Do you think the theology in our Churches can interfere with the attitude of the physically disabled in our Churches? Explain your view.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

26. Do your styles of worship bring boredom to the people with special needs? If Yes, how was it be improved to ensure inclusivity in the Church?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

27. Interaction and acceptance to the people with special needs in charismatic Churches leads to increase in numbers of the people with special needs and their regular attendance in the Church. How true is this statement?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

28. The treatment given to the people with special needs in charismatic Churches attracts them to the Church or not.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

29. How does the Church address the participation of people with special needs in Church programmes or institutional matters as far as decision making and policy development is concerned? Does this affect their morale in Church?

.....  
.....  
.....

## APPENDIX III: APPROVAL LETTER FROM MMUST-DPS



### MASINDE MULIRO UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (MMUST)

Tel: 056-30870  
Fax: 056-30153  
E-mail: [sgs@mmust.ac.ke](mailto:sgs@mmust.ac.ke)  
Website: [www.mmust.ac.ke](http://www.mmust.ac.ke)

P.O Box 190  
Kakamega – 50100  
Kenya

#### Directorate of Postgraduate Studies

Ref: MMU/COR: 509099

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> August 2023

Everlyne Khakai Asibwa  
REL/G/01-54969/2020  
P.O. Box 190-50100  
**KAKAMEGA**

Dear Ms. Asibwa,

#### RE: APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL

I am pleased to inform you that the Directorate of Postgraduate Studies has considered and approved your master's. Proposal entitled: *'Initiation of Inclusion among the People Living with Disability in Charismatic Churches in Kakamega County Kenya'* and appointed the following as supervisors:

1. Dr. Angeline Savala - MMUST
2. Dr. John Ekwenye - MMUST

You are required to submit through your supervisor(s) progress reports every three months to the Director of Postgraduate Studies. Such reports should be copied to the following: Chairman, School of Social Arts and Social Sciences Graduate Studies Committee and Chairman, Department of Social Science Education. Kindly adhere to research ethics consideration in conducting research.

It is the policy and regulations of the University that you observe a deadline of two years from the date of registration to complete your master's thesis. Do not hesitate to consult this office in case of any problem encountered in the course of your work.


We wish you the best in your research and hope the study will make original contribution to knowledge.


Yours sincerely,




Prof. Stephen O. Odebero, PhD, FIEEP  
**DIRECTOR, DIRECTORATE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES**

# APPENDIX IV: NACOSTI RESEARCH PERMIT

  
REPUBLIC OF KENYA

  
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR  
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION


Ref No: 595860 Date of Issue: 12/October/2023




This is to Certify that Miss. EVERLYNE KHAKAI ASIBWA of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Kakamega on the topic: MEASURES TAKEN BY CHARISMATIC CHURCHES TOWARDS INITIATING INCLUSIVITY TO THE PHYSICALLY DISABLED IN KAKAMEGA TOWN for the period ending : 12/October/2024.

License No: NACOSTI/P/23/28598

595860  
Applicant Identification Number

  
Director General  
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR  
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &  
INNOVATION

Verification QR Code



NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document,  
Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.

See overleaf for conditions

**APPENDIX V: APPROVAL RESEARCH INTRODUCTORY LETTER FROM  
COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
STATE DEPARTMENT FOR BASIC EDUCATION

Telephone:  
Fax:  
E-mail: wespropde@yahoo.com  
When replying please quote our Ref.

County Director of Education  
Kakamega County  
P. O. BOX 137 - 50100  
KAKAMEGA

**REF: KAKA/C/GA/29/17/VOL.VI/252**

**1<sup>st</sup> Nov, 2023**

MS. EVERLYNE KHAKAI ASIBWA  
MASINDE MULIRO UNIVERSITY  
OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY  
**KAKAMEGA**

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

Reference is made to a letter from NACOSTI Ref No: NACOSTI/P/23/28598 dated 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2023 concerning subject matter.

This is to inform you that you have been authorized to carry out research on **'Measures taken by charismatic churches towards initiating inclusivity to the physically disabled in Kakamega County'**, for the period ending 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2024.

Please accord him/her any necessary assistance he/she may require.


*for*  **FOR  
COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION  
KAKAMEGA COUNTY**  
**HELLEN NYANGAU  
COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION  
KAKAMEGA COUNTY**

**Copy to:**

**The Regional Director of Education  
WESTERN REGION**

**APPENDIX VI: APPROVAL RESEARCH INTRODUCTORY LETTER FROM  
COUNTY COMMISSIONER-KAKAMEGA**

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION  
STATE DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNAL SECURITY AND NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Telephone: 051-331111  
Email: [cckakamega12@yahoo.com](mailto:cckakamega12@yahoo.com)  
When replying please quote:  
Ref: ED. 12/1/VOL.VII/17

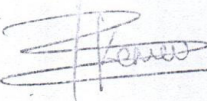
County Commissioner  
Kakamega County  
P O BOX 43 - 50100  
KAKAMEGA

Date: 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2023

Mr. Dwayne Khakai Asibwa  
Mushide Muliro University of Science and Technology  
P.O Box 190 – 50100  
KAKAMEGA

RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your authorization vide license Ref: No. NACOSTI/P/23/28598 dated 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2023 by NACOSTI to undertake research on “*Measures taken by Charismatic Churches towards Initiating Inclusivity to the Physically Disabled in Kakamega County*” for the period ending 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2024. I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to carry out the research on the same in this county.

  
P. M. MULI  
COUNTY COMMISSIONER  
KAKAMEGA COUNTY

cc: All Deputy County Commissioners  
KAKAMEGA COUNTY