DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EFFORTS CHANNELED TOWARDS THE MANAGEMENT OF AUTISM AS A PROBLEM AFFECTING CHILDREN IN ZIMBABWE. A CASE OF AUTISM ORGANISATION OF ZIMBABWE REHABILITATION CENTRE.

BY
JUDITH ZVIKOMBORERO MUPINDA
B 1128177
A RESEARCH SUBMITTED TO BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE OF BARCHELOR OF SCIENCE HONORS IN SOCIAL WORK
OCTOBER 2014
ABSTRACT

The study was primarily aimed at assessing the efforts channelled towards autism management, as a problem affecting children in Zimbabwe. The study sought to find out the effectiveness of efforts on ground in managing autism in children, establishing the extent to which these children with autism are benefiting from government and NGOs in terms of management and exploring the ways to improve the situation of children living with autism in Zimbabwe. Quantitative and qualitative research designs were used and a sample of 20 children living with autism housed at Autism Organisation of Zimbabwe Rehabilitation Centre, Harare and registered under the Department of Special Needs. Questionnaires were used by parents or guardians of children with autism and interview guides were used on the children themselves to those who were able to respond to the questions asked. Interview guides were also used by key informants, the Autism Organisation Director. Data was presented in descriptive statistics, thematic analysis and Excel packages. From the findings, lack of awareness and discrimination were the major challenges hindering the management of autism in children in Zimbabwe. Financial problems and dependence are also other problems which hinder management of autism. Only a few of the children living with autism benefited from government as well as NGOs. Thus, as a counter measure, more awareness, therapy, dietary modifications, socio-medico interventions and donations prompts early identification which in-turn results in effectively manage the condition in children. The study recommended services and policies created for these children should readily direct them, more awareness on autism as a disability and that government should take part in affirmative action targeted at managing the condition. Lastly, further research should be conducted concerning topic at hand so that a point of autism management can be achieved.