

Yobe State at Depressed Economy, Way-Out

Hassan Auta Miringa

Department of Education,

Faculty of Arts and Education, Yobe State University, Damaturu - Nigeria

Abstract

The school should be fully accessible to children with disabilities and all learning materials should be accessible to the specific individual needs, and the curriculum must be designed in a flexible way to ensure that all children can participate in all activities. Removing the barriers which prevent a wide variety of children from attending schools is a step in the right direction because children with disabilities (visually impaired) are the largest group of children who have been excluded, or restricted to a separate system of education and their right to an equal education denied (UNESCO 2009) thus, to what extent does depressed economy affect inclusive education of visually impaired children in our primary schools? However, "Is there a significant relationship between depressed economy and inclusive education of visually impaired children in our regular primary school settings? The survey design was used, a total of 500 respondents from both private and public primary schools. The major instrument used for data collection was check-list type of questionnaire/observation. Simple percentage statistics used to analyze data. The findings of this work revealed that visually impaired children are valuable assets of the society, but are most vulnerable. They lost their right to inclusive education due to the depressed economy-affecting physical barriers, lack of relevant learning materials, lack of special teachers/related services etc which require adequate funding from every stakeholder. Finally, suggestions were made.

Keywords: *Inclusive education, Visually impaired children, Depressed economy*

Corresponding Author: Hassan Auta Miringa

Background to the Study

The school should be fully accessible to children with disabilities and all learning materials should be accessible to the specific individual needs, and the curriculum must be designed in a flexible way to ensure that all children can participate in all activities. Removing barriers which prevent a wide variety of children from attending school is a step in the right direction because children with disabilities (visually impaired children) are the largest group of children who have been excluded, or restricted to a separated system of education and right to an equal education denied (UNICEF 2009). The physical environment must be constructed with disabled children in mind, especially the school environment, a look at the way most of our schools are constructed will clearly reveal that visually impaired children are clearly excluded in the design. There are many physical barriers that can limit access of many disabled children in the society. For instance, many schools have staircase that systematically limits access of crippled and blind children. Whereas, inclusive education implies education where the whole school considers what measures it must take to be accessible to all children including children with disabilities.

However, the implementation of inclusive education in Nigeria can only succeed if the allocation of funds is made possible. Rather than depending solely on government. Significantly, this study would cause awareness among teachers, head teachers, policymakers and parents the need/ sources of funding inclusive education effectively and efficiently in a manner that ensure that visually impaired children get opportunities to use and develop their potentialities. Also, provide information usable to all stakeholders who are in support to end segregated education of the visually impaired children on grounds depressed economic situation of the country.

Research Questions

This study intends to provide answers to the following questions:-

1. What perceptions do teachers and head teachers hold of inclusive education of visually impaired children at the primary school setting at this depressed economy?
2. What extent does depressed economy affect inclusive education of visually impaired children in our regular primary school settings?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided this research:

- H1. There is a significant relationship between depressed economy and inclusive education of visually impaired children in our regular primary school settings.
- H2. Visually impaired children are not enrolled in regular primary school because of the depressed economy cannot provide the required facilities.

Review of Literature

Inclusive education being the current trends in the field of special education should be made to operate in Nigeria if the implementation of the UBE (Universal Basal Education)

program is to be realised. In doing so, special education personnel, resources room, physical structural reform, specialised instructional equipment/instrument should be provided for efficiency. Inclusive education best practices require not only Children's presence in the regular school/classroom but equally to include removal of architectural barriers that the physically impaired child faces. In Nigeria today, the tendencies are filled with confusion to move children with special needs into regular schools/classroom without ensuring adequate security of the physically impaired children backed-up with adequate funding (Obani, Obosi & Ogbue 1991).

However, the UNESCO world conference on special education held in Salamanca, Spain, in June 1994 advocated inclusive education for all. This means that every child should be given the opportunity to enrol in regular school setting despite his/her disabling condition. This will no doubt improve on the social integration of children with disabilities and offer opportunities for equal learning experiences with their non-disable peers at school.

Structuring the physical planning environment in a manner that eliminates the effect of physical impairment. Such modification of the physical planning environment as clearly pointed out in National Policy on Education section 8 (No's 80-86, 200). All necessary facilities that would ensure easy access to education shall be provided. Federal, state and local government shall fund these programs within their areas of jurisdiction. Special education professional have consistently pointed out that the education of exceptional children should be seen as investment capital in the sense that it is a sound investment in human potentials. Government not only agrees with this point of view but also believes that, given the necessary support, inclusive education can become an important instrument for effective educational change in Nigeria as it labours to find how all children can learn to maximum of their potentials. To end, the government is determined to ensure that projects and other special education programs are financially supported within the limit of government recourses. Funding inclusive education programs in depressed economy, Lere (2007) pointed that, toward effective and efficient implementation, there should be sound financial base as would reveal from this study, the sources of rising such fund should include the following:- Turn over from commercial banks, turn over from companies, contribution from donors agencies etc.

Methodology

The research is of survey in nature which seeks to find out teachers and head teachers perceptions on inclusive education of visually impaired children in regular primary school setting in the depressed economic situation of the state. As survey design, all variables involved in this problem have been taken into consideration and questionnaire has been designed to take care of such variables. A sample of 500 drawn from teachers and head teachers of both public and private primary schools in Potiskum in stratified random form. The detail of respondents by school, sex, status and qualification are shown in tables 1-3.

A questionnaire called check-list was used for data collection; items on the questionnaire were derived based on content validity/relevance, which was critiqued by colleagues and experts to ensure its validity. Some items were consequently improved. The questionnaires were administered by researcher himself directly. Respondents responded promptly, therefore, there was 100% return. Simple percentage statistics procedure employed in the analysis of data, which is expressing respondents' perception to a given question.

Result and Discussion

Sometimes people fail to understand why government should spend scarce/reasonable public funds on the education of exceptional children, especially inclusive education of visually impaired persons program; consider it a waste of such resources. The analysis of the result shown on the appendix that, only 35% of the respondents have heard of inclusive education, 70% of the respondents think visually impaired children should be educated in special schools, also 97% of the respondents are of the opinion that, no specially trained teachers to handle inclusion of visually impaired children at primary school setting, reasonably percentage of respondents are of opinion that:- no resources room, no braille machines and materials, no tactile maps, tape recorder. However many programme/plans for special needs children could not be implemented due to inadequate funds.

Conclusion

In past, the emphasis was on segregation and building of special schools, but later there was a shift to integration either partial or full. Now the cry of professionals is inclusive education for the children and adults with special needs. All these are capital intensive and the government should take the bull by the horns to meet up with the rest of the world by allocating a substantial part of the national budget to special education. Inclusive education being the current trend in the field of special education should be made to operate in Nigeria and particular Yobe state if the implementation of the (UBE) Universal Basic Education programme is to be realized. In doing so, special personnel, resources room, Braille machines/ materials, specialized instrument and equipment should be provided for efficiency.

Recommendations

A number of things must be properly put in place if special Education/inclusive education is to be implemented in the country/state. First, the government must be ready to abide by the policy made as regarding Special Education. That is all children irrespective of the nature of disabilities have the right to education. It is obvious that inclusive education is capital intensive, and if the needs of visually impaired children must be met in regular primary school setting provision must be made available to purchase Braille materials, abacus, typewriters, resources room, specially trained teachers, etc.

Secondly, parents and special needs children must know their rights and should be to fight for it at all cost, for special Education to what it is in developed countries today,

parents and special needs children fought for their right, and today a higher percentage of their educational budget is devoted to special education, and these children enjoy equal rights in all aspects of life like every other person in the community.

The problem of inadequate funding is universal in depressed economic situation of this country; however, Lere (2007) firmly opined that, towards effective and affective implementation of special Education policies and programmes, there should be sound financial base especially as revealed from this research-work. The source of raising such funds should include the following: Turn-over from commercial banks.

- a) Special allocation from central banks.
- b) Turn-over from companies.
- c) Sales of products from special/rehabilitation centres.
- d) Contributions from donor agencies.
- e) Contributions from philanthropic organizations.
- f) Allocations from federal consolidated funds.
- g) Annual budget allocation from federal government.
- h) Local government budget for special Education.
- i) State government budget for special Education.
- j) Individuals can sponsor project.
- k) Donations from parents of special needs children.
- l) Government/individual can award scholarship.
- m) Advocacy groups can donate.
- n) Donations from National Association of Special Education Teachers.
- o) Allotment from petroleum tax fund (PTF).
- p) Contributions from value added tax (VAT).
- q) Contributions from Education Tax Fund (ETF).
- r) Special intervention fund from UBE allocation.
- s) NGOs like university women Association, governor's wives Association, local government area chairmen wives, policy officer's wives, Army officers' wives etc.
- t) Implementation committee generated funds.
- u) Donations from politicians etc.

Appendix

Table 1: Respondents by gender

Sex	Number	%
Male	260	52
Female	240	48
total	500	100

Source: Field work 2018

Table 2: Respondents by Qualification

Qualification	Number	%
OND/HND	58	12
N.C.E.	259	52
Graduate	175	35
Masters	08	2
Total	500	100

Source: Field work 2018

Table 3: Respondents by public/private schools.

Type of school	Number	%
Public school	350	70
Private school	150	30
Total	500	100

Source: Field work 2018

Table 4: Respondents by status

Status	Number	%
Teacher	350	70
Head teacher	150	30
Total	500	100

Source: Field work 2018

What perceptions teachers and head teachers hold on inclusive Education of visually impaired children in regular primary school setting in depressed economic situation of the society?

S/N	Items	Yes %	No %	Not sure %	Total %
1	Have you heard of inclusive education?	175 (35%)	167 (33%)	158 (32%)	500
2	I think the visually impaired child should be educated in regular school/ class?	125 (25%)	333 (67%)	42 (8%)	500
3	I will be willing to admit visually impaired child in my school/class.	42 (8%)	350 (70%)	108 (22%)	500
4	Beside regular teachers, there are specially trained teachers to teach visually impaired children.	16 (3%)	485 (97%)	00 (00%)	500
5	I believe the visually impaired child shall best be educated in special school	450 (90%)	45 (9%)	5 (1%)	500
6	Beside library is there resource room in your school?	00 (00%)	500 (100%)	00 (00%)	500
7	Beside print books, is there a braille material in your school?	00 (00%)	498 (99%)	02 (1%)	500

8	Beside computers, is there a type writer in your school?	05 (1%)	482 (98%)	13 (3%)	500
9	Is there parkin brailer in your school?	00 (00%)	500 (100%)	00 (00%)	500
10	Are there tactile maps, abacus, and tape recorder in your school?	05 (1%)	490 (89%)	05 (1%)	500
11	I feel my school is not conducive for visually impaired child.	492 (98%)	04 (1%)	04 (1%)	500
12	Do you have financial planning/cost for inclusive Education?	05 (1%)	495 (99%)	00 (00%)	500
13	Many programmes/plans for special needs persons could not be implemented due to inadequate funds.	450 (90%)	20 (4%)	30 (6%)	500

Source: Field work 2018

References

Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (2003). *Chater for inclusion*.

Federal Ministry of Education (2004). *National Policy in Education*. Lagos: NERDC.

Lere, M. M. (2007). *The organisation and administration of special education in Nigeria*. Jos: University Press Ltd.

Obani, T. C, Obasi, O. C. & Ogbu, R. M. (1991). 4 Ibadan: He, Nemann Education Books Nigeria Plc.

UNESCO, (1994). *The Salamanca Statement and Frame Work for Action*, Ref: ED-94/WS/18.

UNICEF (2001). *Children's and women's rights in Nigeria: A wake-up call*. Abuja: Nation Planning Commission & UNICEF Nigeria.