CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR UBE SCHOOLS IN NASARAWA STATE

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Introduction

The school placement of children with special needs and especially those with hearing impairment has always been a challenge for the Universal Basic Education (UBE) and special educators. Placement for these children have ranged from homes, hospital, learning centres, special boarding schools, special day schools, special classes in regular schools, part time in special class and part time in regular class of full main streaming to inclusion.

Inclusive education is the full integration of learners with special needs and other learners into the same classrooms and schools thereby exposing them to the same learning opportunities while providing for the optimal development of every learner. The centre for studies on inclusive education (CSIE), (2003) cited in Afoi, Tajuddeen and Atukum (2008, 471) defined inclusive education as all children and young people with and without disabilities or difficulties in learning together in ordinary pre-primary schools, colleges and Universities with appropriate network support CSIE sees inclusive education as the progressive increase in the participation of students, in reduction of their exclusion from the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools Okwudire and Ogbonna (2008: 371) further explain that with inclusive education, "all students in a school regardless of their strength or weakness in any area, become part of the school community. It is a place where children are seen as equal members of the classroom, derived of discrimination and malginalization.

It is in the bid to get one nation if the world to provide quality basic education for all children as enunciated by the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) agenda and the Education for all (EFA) declaration that propelled the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) in collaboration with UNICEF (FME 2008) to adopt a protocol to refocus the attention of the Nigerian populace to the benefits of enshrining inclusive education in our National School Health Programme. In doing so, this is expected to lead than evolution of a school based protocol on child inclusion which would serve as the way forward in ensuring the end of child discrimination and malginalization in Nigeria.

OBJECTIVES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The goal is to eliminate all barriers in order to achieve learning (Lipsiki, 1998). Inclusion promotes quality and equity education for all without any type of barrier or exclusion,

including those who may be potentially marginalized due to disability, gender, emotional/behavioural problems, family background, ethnicity, giftedness, migrants, poverty, hearing or visual impairment, language delay, among others. (Salamanca Statement, p, 6)

This is a big challenge for all but, it is an opportunity to advance the school as a change factor that promotes dialogue and participation, making possible well-being through an education of all without exception, for the commitment of the community.

PRINCIPLES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The principles can be applied to any classroom or lesson plan to increase equity and decrease exclusion, they are:

1. **TEACHING ALL STUDENTS**
   Educators should take several different approaches to teaching the same material so that information becomes more interesting and tangible to a greater number of students.
2. **EXPLORING MULTIPLE IDENTITIES**
   Students who are proud of themselves and excited by the world around them will be more compassionate and understanding people; the same is true for educators.
3. **PREVENTING PREJUDICE**
   Educators should take proactive approaches to debunking preconceived stereotypes and preventing them from escalating into prejudices and negative biases
4. **PROMOTING SOCIAL JUSTICE**
   Students are good judges of what is fair, especially when they are affirmatively challenged to consider issues of social justice. Educators should talk to them about issues of social justice and injustice in terms of fair verses unfair, respectful verse disrespectful.
5. **CHOOSING APPROPRAITE MATERIALS**
   Inclusive classroom use of books and materials that reflects accurate images of diverse peoples and challenged stereotypes.
6. **TEACHING AND LEARNING ABOUT CULTURES AND RELIGION**
   Educators should create curiosity and expand students' horizons by teaching about others in a positive manner. Students should have the opportunity to learn from their peers as well as other cultures.
7. **ADOPTING AND INTEGRATING LESSONS APPROPRAITLY**
   Educators should be flexible when using and adopting lesson in our curricular as well as in prescribe curricular in general. Many of them must teachable moments are unplanned and unscripted.

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Reflections on teachers for inclusion requires a large vision and specific competencies for all teachers. Now the teachers need to know that diversity is present in the classroom, and

that they should attend to learners with a range of diverse needs. In this frame, it is imperative to prepare teachers for inclusion in all curricular plans for pre-service teachers, also for teachers in services, with the following professional aptitudes:

Researcher. Always searches for explanations about their educative reality, has intellectual skills to propose diverse hypothesis, solve problems, generate innovation, and face challenges in the education field.

Strategic. Is a professional with strong self-regulation, skills for planning, guiding and assessing, not only their own intellectual resources about the learning of curricular issues but also in their performance as a teacher. Always has an attitude to learn and to improve. Faces uncertainty with creativity.

Resilient: Always moves towards the future, inspite of their difficult situations, by making healthy adjustments against adversity.

The knowledge skills and attitude for all inclusion teachers must emphasize that the purpose of all teacher interventions is the students' learning. They also need to have high expectations for all (inclusive vision), develop inclusive projects including diverse teaching strategies and support systems (inclusive practices) and participate in a collective work (inclusive language).

COMPONENTS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

In inclusive education, students with disabilities are valued as contributing members of the school community, leading to a sense of belonging within the classroom and community at large. Its components includes:

- Leadership
- School climate and structure
- Students placement
- Family and community involvement
- Collaborative practices
- Instructional planning
- Instructional practices

THE CALL FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES

The implication here is that inclusive education is still being addressed tangentially within the learning plus initiation which will serve as the road map to actually institutionalize the practice of inclusiveness in our schools. Garuba (2003) observed that Nigerian and most countries of Africa are still grappling with the problem of making provisions of children with special needs even on main streaming basic. However, in the National policy on education (FRN, 2004), the concept of inclusiveness is entrenched which is a welcome development. It seems that inclusive education in Nigeria most especially Nasarawa State is still at the awareness level and this paper therefore; seek to joints in the crusade to popularize it. It looks at the various philosophies perceptions,

rationale and conceptions of inclusive to special needs learners (SNL): The advantages of inclusive education over discrimination and integration as well as suggested counseling for overcoming envisaged implementation challenges to the practice of inclusive education in UBE school in Nasarawa State.

The roots of inclusive eduation came from other disciplines. Ademokoya (2008) believes that inclusion started as a social issue in the 1980s and has grown to be a significant education reform programme in the 1900s and 2000. Hallum and Kauffman (1994) describe inclusion as one of the contentious professional issues ever engaged in, in the field of special education. Forlin (1995) explained that the philosophy of inclusive education developed from a strong human rights and social justice, perspective which has permeated all disciplines and formed the basis for rethinking and reforms in education. In Nigeria, the National policy on Education (2004) Federal Government of Nigeria, (FGN), stated as one of it's aims, to "gives meaning to the idea of equalizing educational opportunities for all children, their physical, sensory, mental, psychological or emotional disabilities notwithstanding." Okwudire and Obgbonna (2008: 371) insist that "inclusion is about a philosophy of acceptance and provision of a framework within which all children (regardless of their proven difficulty at school, can be valued equally, treated with respect and provided with equal opportunities at school. Teachers accept all students even those with disability into regular classes and are responsible for meeting their needs. They create an environment of love and acceptance for the child with special needs."

It is important to drawn attention at this point and differentiates inclusion from other alternate forms used in practice. A main streamed student attends some general education classes say physical education and art classed while other times are spent with students having similar problems. On the other hand a segregated student does not have any opportunity of being in the same classroom with without special needs learner (WSNL) but may attend special schools or placed in a special classroom where special needs learners only are provided with some education. There are other rare situations in which a SNL is confined in a hospital because of serious medical conditions and received some learning from there. Integration education represents a situation in which SNL are brought into the school premises to participant in learning but on the school term. Such pupils could stay if they are benefiting from what is already on offer as the school does not act in any way to accommodate and support different needs. On the other hand, inclusive education is a process in which the school is expected to change in certain ways relating to curriculum offering delivery teaching strategies to accommodate the whole wide range of needs and abilities among pupils, and especially relationship among pupils, staff, parent, school authorities and agencies as well as the way in which schools and support systems are organized in the manner the school seeks to adopt systems and structures to build it capacity to accept all pupils in respective of the nature of their learning needs and reduces the needs to exclusive puils (Sebba and Schader 1997). Other kinds of changes envisaged in the school include adaptation to attitudes and values language curriculum and building.

THE RATIONAL/CONCEPT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Rational meaning and element of inclusion Education inclusion is about the clud's right to participate and learn together with other children and it is the duty of the school not to discriminate exclude or send away by reason of any disability as there are no legitimate reasons to separate child learners or "protect" them from each other. Each child belongs to a regular classroom where they learn and play together. Exclusion is devaluating, discriminatory, in human indefensible, immoral, and unacceptable (Carroll, 2006). Inclusive education is to maximize the participation of all learners in the community school of their choice thereby making learning more meaningful and relevant for all particularly those learners most vulnerable to exclusionary pressure and to rethink and restructure policies, diverse learning needs can be accommodated. This position is based on the rationale that all students can learn and benefits from education while school can adapt without removing any from others to the individual differences.

It is equally important for teachers and parents to clearly understand the meaning of inclusion at this period efforts are being made to popularize its usage for incorporation into our school system. Inclusive education allows children with and without special needs in regular classroom. The blend of special and regular classroom should be of optimal benefits to disable learners Ainscoul (1999) posits that efficient monitoring and management of inclusive education will immensely benefit learners who appeared marginalized in general education in the universal basic education (UBE) programme. Ndoh (2008) believes that inclusion releases the special needs person from a "feeling of infirmity, isolation, and rejection which segregation in special schools seems to promote." He affirms that socialization is made easier by providing opportunities for both disable and non-disabled to learn how to relate to each other and interact. This he says increases the exposure of children with special needs to more learning experiences than schools. He however, warned that if it is not well arranged, it may not be suitable for all children with special needs specially the severely learning disable. The issue here is: are these inclusive schools taking better care of social and emotional needs of exceptional children.

Social and emotional development of a child refers to the child's capacity to experiences, manage and express a full range of positive and negative emotion, develop satisfying relationship with others, and actively explore their environments and learn "policy centre 2007: 1). Children who exhibit behavioural problems such as withdrawn, isolation and school phobic reactions. They are disruptive and disturbing, hyperactive and lack concentration.

Some negative perception as dumping students with disabilities into regular UBE programmes without preparation or support, Jeopardizing pupils safety and well being isolating and placing students with disabilities in non-age appropriate classes white pilling undue demands on teachers should be reversed into positive ones.

There are certain essential elements that distinguish inclusive education from other forms as identified by Maryland Coalition (2000). They include the following:

i. Pupils/students are assigned to aged appropriate grades in heterogeneous classrooms.
ii. Grouping and regrouping for daily activities are based on interest and skills not on disability labels.
iii. Required therapies are applied in regular classroom setting and other environments.
iv. Planned and structured activities to enhance friendship between special need learners (SNL) and without special needs learning (WSML).
v. Collaboration between general and special educations occurs regularly.
vi. The general education curriculum and instruction is used as the base for accommodations and modifications to meet inclusive education in (UBE) programme (UBE) goals.

Carroll (2006) explained her opinion that even when without needs learns (WSNL) are harmed academically the full inclusion of certain special needs Learners (SNL), the non-inclusion of these pupils/students would still be fatalistic as the academic harm is less important that the social harm caused by making student with disabilities non-visible in the society" In another developments is being able to like the perspective of and empathize with other, recognizing and appreciating individual and group similarities and differences. Relationship skill are those skills that deal with "establishing and maintaining healthy and rewarding relationships based on co-operation and resistance to impropriate social pressure, preventing, managing and constructively resoling interpersonal conflict, seeking help when needed."

ADVANTAGES OF OVER SEGREGATION, INTEGRATION AND MAINSTREAMING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

General Advantages of inclusive education. There are quite a number of advantages and benefits accruing special needs learners (SNL) WSNL teachers parents, the schools and community as well as the Nigerian nation as a wide. If a number of inclusive education principles are adhered to the benefits of it will be maximized such principles includes acknowledging.

i) The capacity of all children learn irrespective of any form of disability.
ii) The role of SNL as the first education of their children.
iii) The close relationship between low levels of SNL's educational outcome and poverty, health, housing and access to government services and infrastructure.
iv) That high quality, accredited and culturally inclusive education and training opportunities are provided.
v) That all learners should feel involved and valued by the services offered.
The experience of inclusive education appear4s to have a positive effect on everyone that is on all stakeholder.

For the special needs learners (SNL) they have the opportunity to interact with other members of the society and get to do some of the normal things that will enhance.

Their social skills and a chance to feel as part of the society. They also have the opportunity to create different sustainable relationship with, without specials needs learners (WSNL) and also meet with role models. These are some of the opportunities that were lacking when SNL were tugged up in isolated special schools where they could never have achieved self – esteem motivation. For competition to achieve, and confidence to make it in life. Without the opportunity offered by it they would generally lack academic skills for higher education and to compete for jobs hence tend to rely on relatives or take to the streets for begging to survive in adult life.

Some studies have indicated improvement in self concept, personal principles worth's friendship, and reduction in fear of human differences, despite the inclusion policy (Wanter et al, 2008) express surprise as the few studies that have been carried out on the social integration of deaf children especially as social integration appears to be one of the major challenges for deaf children in inclusive settings. Different studies also have reported that main streamed deaf children efforts have few friend, have less interaction with peers, and are more often rejected or neglected than their learning peers. They may consequently feel isolated or lonely (Kuwin, Stinson & Colarossi, 2002) Stinson & Anita 1999).

Baker et'al (1994) had found that SNL inclusive schools do better academically and socially than their counterparts in non-inclusive schools. In another study. Bunch and Valeo (1997) also, found that special education placement for students with disabilities has failed to demonstrate substantive advantage academically and socially over regular classes placement despite lower teacher pupils/students ratio and specialized teaching rather they make significant gains in reading language., work skills and living skills also Hollowoad 1995) conformed that inclusion was not detrimental to students without disabilities rather they appear to make more progress in both academic and social skills.

In the case of without special needs learner (WSNL) the following benefits with accrue.

a) Acquisition of leadership skills patience, tolerance and peer acceptance would appear to be a feature of inclusive classrooms.
b) WSNL will learn how to be more useful especially helping SNL to pick up more subtle communicative cues regarding interpersonal behaviour thereby shunning selfishness.
c) They will require increase appreciation and diversity as well as for all kinds of people which are very important during adult life in an inclusive society.

THE CHALLENGES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION TO THE TEACHER

For the teachers in the inclusive classroom, they should be able to improve their professional skills and competence as they make extra efforts to understand different types of children and how to deal with them. In this regard they easily become better role models as they learn to be at their best most times following regular and constant visitation from supervisory authorities. Also by setting opportunities to interact with the teachers and

mentors at conferences and workshops they becomes better equipped and proved of their jobs and contributions effort to implement inclusion education in Nigeria.

During colonial era up to 1970, education including provision, for children with special needs were virtually under the control and management of private voluntary agencies. Individuals and communities Christian Religious bodies were mostly at the helm of affairs with make shift. Provisions for persons with disabilities while government virtually special education schools in 1970 can aftermath of the Nigeria Civil War. From their private owners Fafunwa 1991). The Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme was established including teacher training for both regular and special education according to Bakare (1989). Univeristy of Jos started bachelor's Degree in 1976 and 1977 respectively in special education while Federal College of Education (special) Lagos the largest in black Africa) offered special education programmes in 1977.

In this regard the National policy on education on 1977, 1999, (FRN 2004) required equalization of educational opportunities especially for the handicapped development special education is now given legal backing in 1993 via a decree "Nigerian with disability (FRN) 1993).

The conception rationale, goals, principles and benefits of inclusive education have been quite eloquent and laudable in the international fora. In Nigeria a number of policies and decreed have been enunciated to back the implementation of inclusive education in schools. The problem is that, according to Garuba (2003) quoting Obani (2002) "The old special education system with its restrictive practices cannot even successfully address, these problems of special needs learners. The solution lies in inclusion."

The numbers of challenges that have been threatening the implementation of inclusive education in Nasarawa state include the follow:

- Inadequate plans for the identifications of children with special learning disabilities.
- Most special needs schools are located in Urban Centres.
- Parents lack adequate information and guidance on available special education services.
- Begging for aims seems to be a lucrative business among adults with disabilities and children with special needs as they even run away from rehabilitation centres.
- Lack of adequate provision for the maintenance and education centres.
- Parents are not even able to provide for the education of normal children even under the Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Nasarawa State.
- Government has no definite strategy to search for and identify children not attending school whether normal or disabled.
- The UBE laid more emphasis on regular schools and literacy education and not alternation on special needs education is usually on normadie groups and the girl/boy duld and not much special consideration for children with learning disabilities.

On the other hand the implementation of inclusive education strategies in an environment weighed down by these challenges is no doubt a daunting task therefore, a successful adoption of learners with special disabilities and also make the programme a worthwhile venture.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendation and strategies to facilitate the take offered in of inclusive education in UBE school in Nasarawa State.

a) The inclusive education programme should take off at the Universal Basic Education (UBE) schools in Nasarawa State as the formation level for formal behavioral development.
b) A special directorate of inclusive education should be create in Federal, State ministries of Education change with the responsibilities of planning strategizing implementation and monitoring of inclusive education (IP) activities in UBE schools.
c) Adequate plans should be put in place to take a special census (house to house) and school to school to identify and document children with categories of disabilities. This will make it easier to plan the proportion of different kinds of special needs learners (SNL) to be assigned or place in schools set aside initially for inclusive education.
d) Initial training and retraining of general and special education teachers to partake in the principles and practices of inclusive education must be put in place prior to their utilization.
e) Special task-force to be set up by federal government made up of educational technocrat to design and streamline the goals and objectives to be attained by inclusive education in the short medium and long term.
f) Special committee at community to be set up state, in collaboration with local governments to brainstorm ideas to establishing priorities, assigning responsibilities for action and reviewing progress towards defined goals.
g) There should be a National campaign spearheaded by orientation agency for the identification of children with special needs for purposes of enrolment in inclusive education programme.
h) State and local government with the Federal Ministry of Education, information and Women Affairs to mandatory earmark substantial funds in their annual budget for inclusive education programme campaign, development and implementation.
i) Inclusive education should be specially provided for and funded in terms of planning and implementation designing instructional environments such as (accommodation, adaption modifications to materials strategies, equipment and others facilities.

CONCLUSION:

Inclusive education by its conceptions portends a panacea for getting schools and communities to provide learning that will guarantee equalization of education opportunities for all children irrespective of their learning ability an disability status. By this means, children are able to benefit from each other through interaction, stable work and life skills for achieving desirable behaviour for successful life in an inclusive society. To a large extent, funding, willingness to adapt and accommodate the demands of this laudable programme will be paramount to overcoming the4 challenges that will no doubt arise at the implementation stages which should start from the and primary and UBE school levels.

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