



Teacher's Related Challenges in the Implementation of Inclusive Education Programme in Public Primary Schools in Jalingo Education Zone of Taraba State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigated teacher's related challenges in the implementation of inclusive education programme in Taraba State. Four specific purposes of the study were formulated that guided the conduct of the study, thus to ascertain: the nature of inclusive education programme, availability of the teaching-learning material resources, teachers related challenges hindering the implementation of the inclusive education programme and to find out socio-cultural factors hindering the implementation of inclusive education programme in Taraba State. Four research questions were also formulated based on the purpose of the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. A sample of 160 teachers were selected out of 218 teachers in the sample schools in Jalingo education zone using purposive sampling technique and 40 stake holders were also selected in Taraba state making a total of 200 respondents. The instrument used for data collection was researchers structured questionnaire on the research instrument consist of a researcher designed questionnaire titled Teacher's related challenges in the implementation of inclusive education programme in public primary schools in Jalingo Education zone of Taraba state, Nigeria (TRCIIEPSJETN) and data collected were analyzed using a computer programme; the statistical package analysis for social sciences (SPSS). Data analysis entailed the computation of certain indices or measures. SPSS analysis enabled the researcher to handle large masses of raw data efficiently. The researcher presented qualitative data using pie charts, bar graphs and calculation of percentages. Raw data are tabulated and transformed into bar graphs and pie charts. The findings of the study revealed that inadequate teaching-learning resources in the schools practicing inclusive education in Taraba such as facilities and instruments, assistive devices, space and an up to-date curriculum to guide the concerned teachers, inadequate experience and confidence to handle the pupils with special needs effectively, problems of socio-cultural factors leading to stigmatization, and lack of funding by government, donors, and other well-wishers among others were the challenges in the implementation of inclusive education programme in Taraba State. The implication of the study is that administrators and lecturers should be sent on in-service training courses, seminars, workshops, conferences etcetera. The training enables the teachers to improve in their worth to the attainment of the inclusive education goals and objectives, the headmaster should embark on fund raising programme so as to improve on the financing and purchase of materials/ facilities for inclusive education in their primary schools. Conclusion was drawn based on the findings, some recommendations made were as follows: - Classroom teachers should be given regular in-service training on the methods and approaches of handling students with disabilities, Students with disabilities should be given an appropriate learning environment with adequate provisions of supportive specialist staff, gadgets, equipments and materials that will enhance the implementation of the inclusion programme, also, adequate public awareness, and appropriate communication channels should be provided for students with disabilities for effective achievement of inclusive education programme.

Keywords: Challenges, Implementation, Inclusive, Education, programme, Taraba State

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive Education

Inclusive Education is the process of giving the learners in mainstream primary schools equal learning opportunities, flexible or changeable teaching methodologies, and a way of responding to the diverse needs of learners with barriers to learning. It entails education that accommodates all learners, regardless of their differences. It can be interpreted as the philosophy and practice of educating children with disabilities in general educational settings. It came as a rescue mission in the actualization of educational and psychosocial services for children with impairment (Ozegya & Babudoh, 2012). One truism which finds expression readily in democratic settings is that "All men are born equal". It is pursuance of the realization of such lofty idea that led to the emergence of the concept of inclusive education (Ozegya & Babudoh, 2012). In inclusion education, all students, regardless of any challenges they may have, are placed in age-appropriate general education classes that are in their own neighborhood schools to receive high quality instruction, interventions, and supports that enable them to meet success in the core curriculum (Bui, Quirk, Almazan, & Valenti, 2010; Alquraini & Gut, 2012). UNESCO (2005) defined inclusive education as responding to diverse needs of all learners by increasing participation in leading and reducing exclusion within education. This means that all children have equal right to quality education that caters for their individual needs. Inclusive education is internationally recognized as a philosophy for attaining equity, justice and equality in education for all children, especially those who have been excluded from education for the reason of disabilities (Christopher and Elizabeth, 2012). Ahmad (2000) defined inclusive education as the education of 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. Okwudire and Okechukwu (2008) saw inclusive education as the progressive increase in the participation of pupils, in reduction of their exclusion from the cultures, curricula, and communities of local schools. They further explained 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 without being marginalized. Nigeria, in 1993, made a decree for the provision of inclusive education with clear and comprehensive legal protection and security backing (FRN,1993), yet due to governmental policies and cultural constrains, such decree did not succeed. This is a big problem for most special education and non-special education school administrators in Nigerian. In an inclusion classroom, general education teachers and special education teachers work together to meet the needs of children. This type of classroom gives special education children the support they need and allows them to stay in the least restrictive environment where all children can benefit from the additional resources and supportive techniques used in an inclusion classroom. Inclusive classes are set up in a number of ways, other inclusive classes have special education teachers "push in" at specific times during the day to teach (instead of pulling kids out of class to a separate room) Some use a collaborative team teaching (or co-teaching) model. With co-teaching, there's a special education teacher in the room all day. In either case, both teachers are available to help all children that is, the general education teacher and special education teacher work together to meet the children's needs.

Inclusive education can be effectively taught in an inclusive classroom setting through various communication and educational strategies. "Learning strategies help students learn and perform by providing them with a specific set of steps for: (a) approaching new and difficult tasks, (b) guiding thoughts and actions, (c) completing tasks in a timely and successful manner, and (d) thinking strategically (Lenz , 2004, p. 261). Learning strategies may include organizing materials, memorizing information, taking notes, reading text, and taking tests. According to Ozegya & Babadoh, 2012 and Isaiah& Aderibigbe (2013). Such strategies include oral, manual, total communication, amplification system, visual aids, and etcetera.

The Oral Method: This method involves the use of speech by the teacher. However, the oral approach is more successful among those with residual hearing (hard-of-hearing) and among those who are post lingual hearing impaired. Consequently, this method leads to poor academic achievement if used without complementary methods especially for those with hearing impaired students (Okuoyobo, 2006) asserted.

The Manual Method: This involves the use of sign language, fingers spelling, facial expression and pantomimes. Instructing an inclusive education setting can best be achieved through a communication process that is understandable to the learners.

Total Communication: This approach recognizes the use of speech, sign language, finger spelling, body language, drawing, writing, painting, gestures, pantomimes that aided hearing. In Nigeria, total communication is widely used as it is regarded as the most effective modality for teaching in an inclusive classroom setting.

The utilization of lecture and discussion strategies by the teacher should consist of assignments for the drill, practice or homework to the hearing impaired children in a written format (by writing on blackboard, presentation on a transparency through an over head projector, etc). The class teaching, instructions and other activities should also be conducted by making use of multisensory approach. Instead of using lectures and whole class discussions, attempts should be made in using such teaching strategies that include exhibits, demonstrations, experiments and simulation for seeking proper involvement of the hearing impaired children in the teaching-learning process.

The instructional strategies employed by the teacher must follow other modes of communication than the oral. In making use of written materials, attempts also should be made for its modification in terms of graphic-pictorial forms such as pictures, diagrams, maps, graphs and graphic outlines.

Other strategies that may be employed for the hearing impaired in an inclusive setting are amplification system to aid classroom instruction. The system consists of a teacher's microphone with an associated radio transmitter in a single unit and a number of students' radio receivers with audio amplifier units. The teacher can reach the learners with hearing impairment with amplified speech. Other support equipments and materials are overhead projector, cassettes, computer assisted instructional television, etc.

Other methods /strategies include:

1. **Interactive Teaching** - Teachers alternate roles of presenting, reviewing, and monitoring instruction.
2. **Alternative Teaching** - One person teaches, or enriches a concept for a small group, while the other monitors or teaches the remaining students.
3. **Parallel Teaching** - Students are divided into mixed-ability groups, and each co-teaching partner teaches the same material to one of the groups.
4. **Station Teaching** - Small groups of students rotate to various stations for instruction, review, and/or practice.(Walther-Thomas , 2000)
5. **Employ active learning** strategies such as "think, pair, share" to promote recall and understanding of new learning. This strategy allows students to reflect individually on a question, pair up with a partner to share and compare answers, and finally give the best answer (Kagan, 1994).

To ensure success for students with disabilities in general education classrooms, teachers must plan collaboratively, create structured classrooms with clear rules and expectations, and teach content in meaningful and memorable ways. Essentially, the Nigerian government has adopted inclusive education as a policy and through the Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria as a country has adopted policy guidelines for inclusive education that targets the three groups (the disabled, the disadvantaged and the gifted or talented), Federal Ministry of Education, 2008).

Statement of the Problem

Despite the efforts made by government, parents, state and federal ministries of education and other stakeholders over the inclusion of education in Taraba state, there is still some challenges . Nigeria, in 1993, made a decree for the provision of inclusive education with clear and comprehensive legal protection and security backing (FRN,1993), yet due to governmental policies and cultural constrains, Ajobiewe (2004) observed that there are still problems in implementing the policy which is in consonance with the inclusive education programme. Looking at inclusive education vividly, teachers are the driving force to the success of the programmes, including students with disabilities into regular classes. The prepared teachers are the custodian to advocates inclusive education programmes in order to make it more realistic and profitable to persons with special needs which kick against discrimination and stigmatization that is usually accorded to them by the populace. Therefore, problem addressed by this study was the teacher's related challenges facing the process of implementation of the inclusive education programme

in Jalingo Education zone, Taraba state. This has motivated the researcher to investigate into the teacher's related challenges in the implementation of inclusive education programme in Taraba State public primary schools.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate teacher's related challenges facing the implementation of inclusive education programme in public primary schools in Taraba state.

Objectives of the study

1. To investigate the Nature of inclusive education programme in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.
2. To ascertain the availability of the teaching –learning material resources in those public primary schools that are practicing inclusive education in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba state.
3. To find out teachers related challenges hindering the implementation of the inclusive education in programme in Jalingo Education, Taraba State.
4. To find out socio-cultural factors hindering the implementation of inclusive education programme in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.

Research Questions

1. What is the Nature of inclusive education programme in public primary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.
2. What is the material learning resources available for the teaching –learning in those public primary schools that are practicing inclusive education in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba state.
3. What is the teachers related challenges hindering the implementation of inclusive education programme in public primary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.
4. What is the socio-cultural factors hindering the implementation of inclusive Education programme in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.

Theoretical framework

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used classical liberal theory of equal opportunities advanced by Sherman and Wood, (1982). Sherman and Wood, (1982) expressed the view that there should be equal opportunities in education for all. This theory asserts that each individual is born with a given amount of capacity to acquire education. The theory demands that opportunities be made available for individuals to go through all levels of education (primary, secondary and tertiary) to which access will not be determined by the disability of the learners but on the basis of individuals' capability. However to enhance the implementation of inclusive education in all public primary schools in Taraba state, parent, churches and community leaders should work tirelessly for the inclusion of disabled children into public schools in partnership with the government and professionals bodies and any other factors that hinder the access to education for such children should be eradicated.

Conceptual frame work

Teachers related Challenges in teaching children with an inclusive education setting

Looking at inclusive education vividly, teachers are the driving force to the success of the programmes, including children with disabilities into regular classes. The prepared teachers are the custodian to advocates inclusive education programmes in order to make it more realistic and profitable to persons with special needs which kick against discrimination and stigmatization that is usually accorded to them by the populace, The commitment made to equalize educational opportunities for all children, irrespective of their physical, sensory, mental, psychological or emotional disabilities, these are lofty goals directed to the improvement of quality of education services, but much more is needed to translate the goals into current action.

Despite the section (8) of the National Policy, Ajobiewe (2004) observed that there are still problems in implementing the policy which is in consonance with the inclusive education programme.

Challenges in the implementation of inclusive Education

Most citizens in Nigeria live in the rural areas, therefore not receiving public awareness on inclusive policy. The vast majority of people living with disabilities in Nigeria have no access to quality education, social services, etcetera, like their non-disabled counterparts. Furthermore, the government has not put in

place the necessary legislation, infrastructural facilities, instructional materials, equipments, gadgets and human resources to enhance the full implementation of the programme. As a result, students with hearing impairment among others who should have benefit from inclusive education are being deprived. In addition, the inclusive movement believes that children with special needs should be placed in the regular school system which they would have otherwise attended, if they had been without impairment. In order to adequately cater for the needs of the different categories of children with special needs in the school system. Uppa and Dey (2001) as cited in Mangal (2007) reiterated that inclusive educational requirements of children with special needs include a common curriculum with a view of accommodating the differential learning needs of the children.

Egaga, & Aderibigbe, (2015) identified the following as some of the challenges affecting disable children or impairment such are:

Improper Staff Training

The regular classroom teachers in the inclusive classroom are not trained regularly. Most of them, do not know the characteristics of disabilities children, their needs and how to communicate with them. In addition there are not enough support specialize staff to complement the service of the regular classroom teachers to make teaching and learning activities effective in an inclusive environment.

Lack of Funding

There is lack of adequate funding to purchase specialized resources that are quite different from the ones used by normal children such as brail machines, walking sticks, wheel chairs etc. and when the fund is not there it becomes an uphill task to provide them since some of these resources are quite expensive to procure. A visit to most Nigerian inclusive primary schools will prove that most of these required services are not available.

Lack of Learning Materials/gadgets

There is no enough provision of appropriate and adequate learning materials, equipments, facilities, and gadgets in the regular school for teachers to successfully implement inclusive education programme.

Socio-Cultural factors

Social cultural practices play a big role in influencing education. Some cultural values are obsolete and education is therefore the only agent that can bring about drastic change that is most needed. Cultural and linguistic diversity is on the rise and this presents new challenges to teachers when deciding the how to manage an inclusive classroom. This diversity has led to a number of challenges to teachers in ensuring that they will use culturally accepted and sensitive management techniques.

According to Obegi and Ritblatt (2005), the lack of definition for identifying culturally responsive classroom management and a research base for management pedagogy are problems for teacher-educators charged with preparing teachers to effectively manage their inclusive classrooms. Some cultural beliefs and ways of life are so much obsolete in many sub-saharan countries. Some cultures blame the causes of disability to ancestral sins and other misdeeds. Such beliefs call for drastic change and the only agent for such change is education for all (EFA) irrespective of their learning differences.

Other challenges inhibiting the successful implementation of inclusion policy are communication problem, lip reading complexity, delay in legislation backing, inadequate public awareness etcetera.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey research design to elicit the opinion of respondent on teacher's related challenges in teaching children with an inclusive education setting in Taraba state. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), it's the best method in collecting original data to be used in describing a population that is too large to observe directly. The design adopted enabled the researcher to gather information from the head teachers, teachers and ministry of education officials/ stakeholders on the challenges facing the implementation of inclusive education programme for pupils with learning disabilities in public primary schools in Taraba state. The study was carried out in Jalingo education zone of Taraba state. Taraba State has a common boundary with Gombe and Bauchi State in the North, in the West by Benue and Plateau State; in the East by Adamawa State and in the South by Cameroon Republic. This area is made up of both rural and urban dwellers with many schools; nursery, primary, secondary

and higher institutions. The inhabitants of the zone are mostly farmers, traders (business-men and women) as well as career civil servants with Hausa and English languages as common Languages. The Jalingo education zone comprises of Jalingo, Ardo- kola, and Lau. This area was preferred by the researcher because inclusive education programme were mostly practiced in the Zone. The population included; head teachers, teachers and ministry officials/ stakeholder in the study areas. The target population of the study comprised of all the 218 public primary schools in study areas, 218 head teachers, 3364 primary school teachers and 40 ministries of education officials / stakeholder.

A sample of 160 teachers were selected out of 218 teachers in the sample schools using purposive sampling technique and 40 stake holders were also selected in Taraba state totally 200.

The research instrument consist of a researcher designed questionnaire titled Teacher's related challenges in the implementation of inclusive education programme in public primary schools in Jalingo Education zone of Taraba state, Nigeria (TRCIEPSJETN) was validated by colleagues in the department of Educational Foundations in Taraba state university Jalingo and trial tested using test retest method with a reliability of 'r' – 0.70. The structured questionnaire use four (4) point likert type questionnaire with strongly agree to strongly disagree options. The total of 200 questions was used to collect data from three different categories of respondents (Head teacher, Teachers and Stake Holders /Ministry of education officials). The responses were analyzed using a computer programme; the statistical package analysis for social sciences (SPSS). Data analysis entailed the computation of certain indices or measures. SPSS analysis enabled the researcher to handle large masses of raw data efficiently. Such raw data was condensed into meaningful groups and tables for further analysis through the computation of frequencies, totals, percentages and tabulation. The researcher presented qualitative data using pie charts, bar graphs, and calculation of percentages. Raw data are tabulated and transformed into bar graphs and pie charts. The discussion was based on research objectives and research questions.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Research Question 1. *What is the Nature of the sampled primary schools practicing inclusive education in Jalingo Education zone?*

According to the results of (figure 1), most respondents indicated that the percentage of schools without the inclusive programme was 59 % while those with the inclusive education programme was 41%.

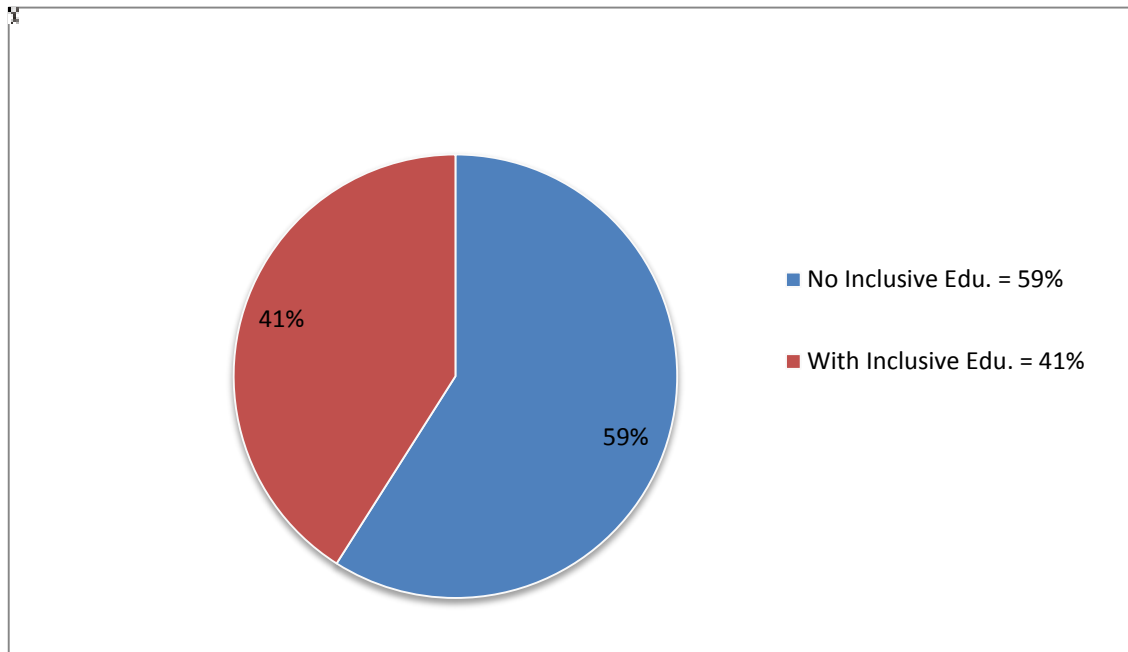


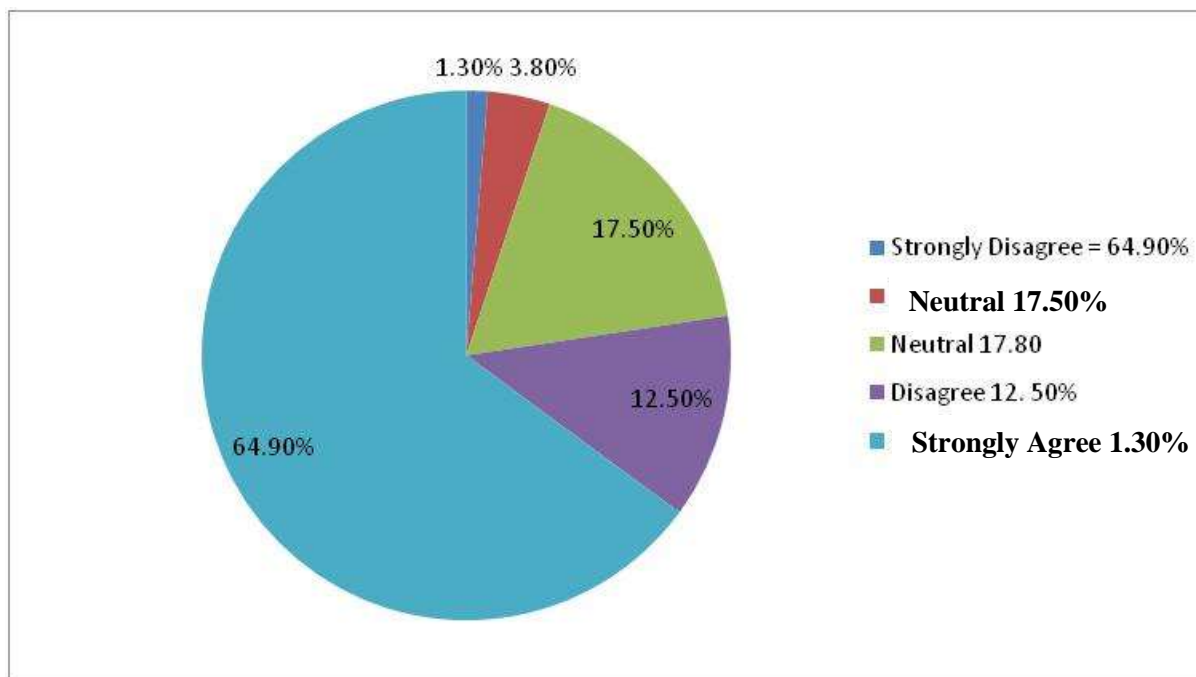
Figure 1 Nature of the sampled primary schools practicing inclusive education in Jalingo education zone, Taraba state.

This shows that the implementation of inclusive Education programme has been a major challenge in many public primary schools in the area of study as shows in the results of None inclusion education is 59% inclusive education 41%.

Research Question 2. *What are the learning materials (Equipment and facilities) available for the teaching of inclusive education programme in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba state.*

The researcher sought to explore whether public primary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba state had the necessary equipment and facilities to cater for the disable pupils needs in education.

Figure 2: Learning materials available



The outcome of (figure 2) shows that most respondents strongly disagreed to the schools having necessary equipment & facilities needed by disable pupils, Such facilities were unavailable. The study strongly disagreed at 64.90% that the schools in the area of studied had no the necessary equipment and facilities for special pupils.

Research Question 3: *What is the teachers related challenges hindering the implementation of inclusive education programme in public primary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.*

Research Question 3a. *What is the Professional qualifications and training of teachers teaching inclusive education in primary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba state.*

The researcher sought to find out the level of professional qualifications of teachers in the sample schools.

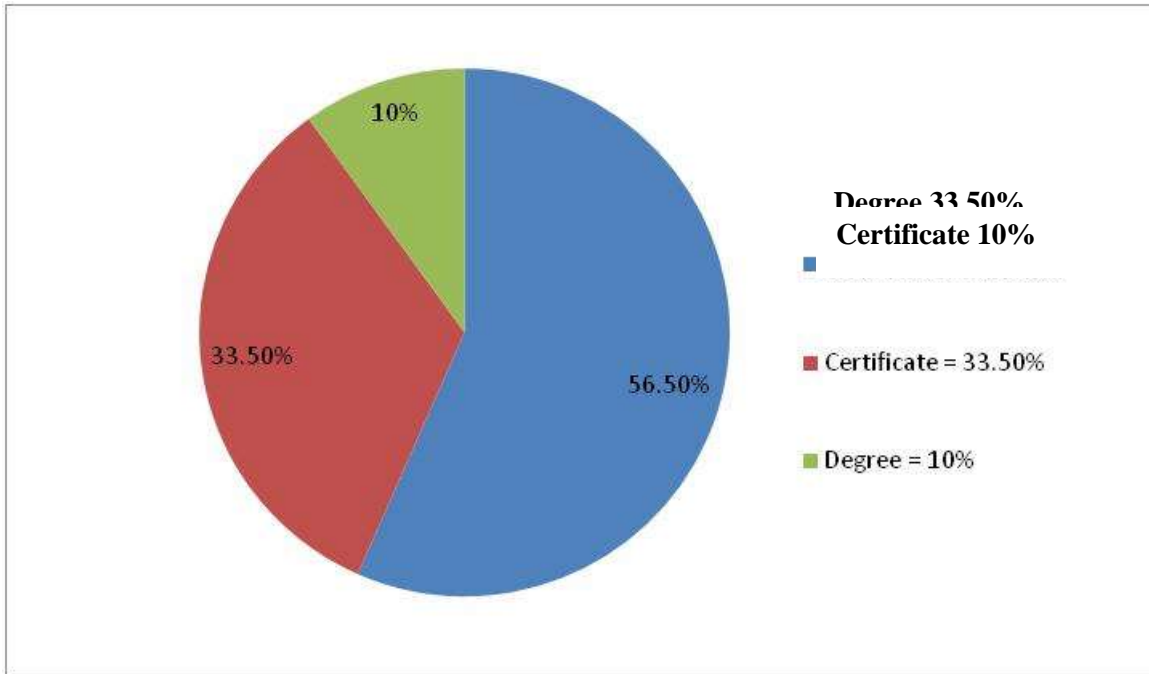


Figure 3a: Professional qualifications and training of teachers in inclusive education in public primary schools Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba state

The result of (figure 3a) showed that 56.50% of the respondents are NCE/ diploma holder while 33.50% degree holder and lastly 10% are certificate holder. The outcome established that the largest number of respondents was diploma /NCE holders while degree holders were few at 33.50% and 10% are certificate holders, which shows that most of the teachers are not professionally trained.

Research Question 3b: *What is the Teachers' experience in handling inclusive education programme in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State?*

The study intended to determine the experience of teachers. The outcome established the largest population of teachers with 16-20 years of teaching experience at 40%.

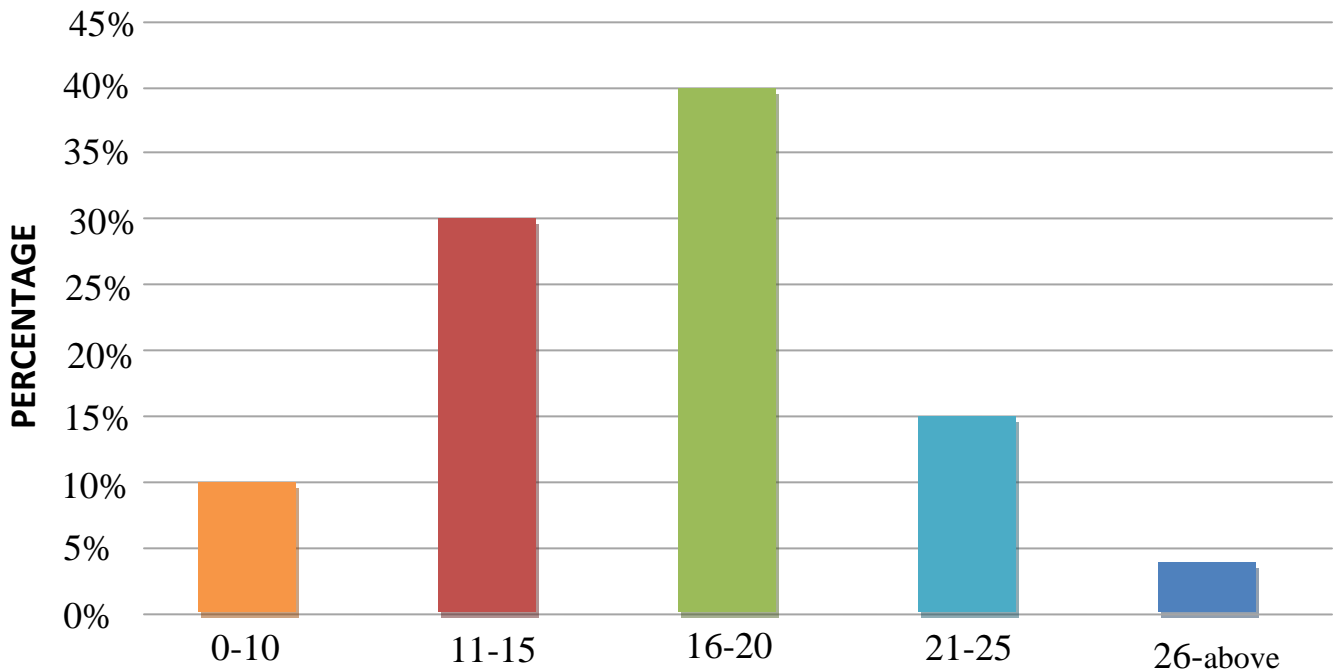


Figure 3b: Teachers’ experience in handling inclusive education programme public primary school in Jalingo Education Zone

According to the result of (figure 3b), the largest number of respondents at 40% had been in the teaching profession for a range of 16-20years followed by a range of 11-15 years at 30%, 21-25 years at 15%, 0-10 year at 10% and 26 years and above at 3%. This shows that teachers’ experience in handling disable pupils was significant to the success of inclusive education programme in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba state.

Research Question 4: *What is the Socio-Cultural factors facing the implementation of the inclusive education programme in public primary school in Jalingo Education Zone.*

The researcher sought to investigate whether socio-cultural factors contribute to the exclusion of pupils with learning difficulties. The results strongly agreed to their high contribution.

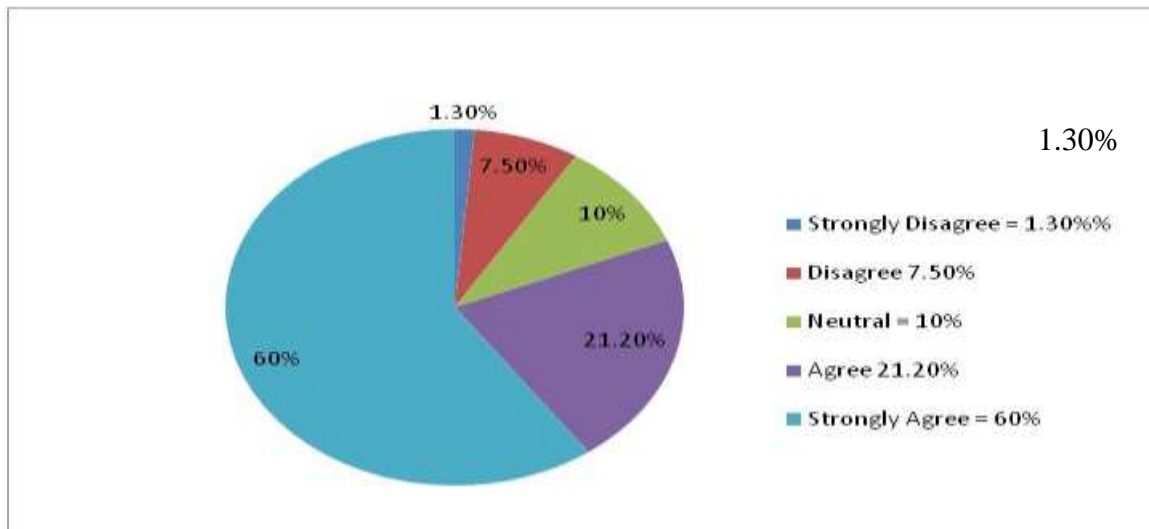


Figure 4: Socio-cultural factors

The result of (figure 4) indicated most respondents at 60% strongly agreed that socio-cultural factors contribute to exclusion of pupils with learning difficulties. This is so because most parents with disable children are faced with stigmatization and segregation from the society they live in and as a result they hold back their children at home. They are seen as a curse in the society.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In this study, the discussions of the findings of the study are made by the researcher with regard to the major issues of the study.

The findings of data analysis on figure 3 showed that the respondents accepted that inadequate teaching and learning materials such as a favorable curriculum, equipment and other facilities which had the greatest representation in percentage at 64. 90% are some of the challenges inhibiting inclusive education. This was closely followed by insufficient teacher training and experience at 33.50% and 40% respectively. This findings supports prior findings of Egaga & Aderibigbe (2015) who stated that Inadequate infrastructural facilities, irregular staff training, and inadequate teaching/learning materials hinders inclusion education .

The findings of data analysis on figure 4 shows that the respondents accepted that socio-cultural factors contribute to exclusion of pupils with learning difficulties whereby according to the research results, most respondents felt that the society greatly contributed to the negative attitude towards learners with special needs in education and that the reason for such failure is the cultural believes and values in the society. Some cultures blame the causes of disability to ancestral sins and other misdeeds and such believes lead

to exclusion of disability pupils in school environment. The findings echoed the view of Obegi and Ritblatt (2005) which states those ancestral sins and other misdeeds believes lead to exclusion of pupils in any school environment. The study showed that the attitude reported was generally unfavorable and many teachers, regular pupils and the society at large were seen to perceive such learners in a negative light. The main problem encountered by the parents in educating their children with learning disabilities was stigmatization, negative attitudes from members of the society and parental ignorance.

Educational Implications of the Study

The findings of the study have Educational implications for teachers, and head master. From the study, it is obvious that teachers and head teachers should take training and development as important as any other aspect of the organizational activities, teachers should be sent on in-service training courses, seminars, workshops, conferences etcetera. The training enables the teachers to improve in their worth to the attainment of the inclusive education goals and objectives.

The headmaster should embark on fund raising programme so as to improve on the financing and purchase of materials/ facilities for inclusive education in their primary schools.

CONCLUSIONS

The study came up with the following conclusions:

-Only 100 out of the total 218 regular public primary schools in Jalingo Zone, Taraba state have integrated special units in their schools.

-The major problem encountered by teachers in their effort to implement the inclusive education programme in schools is inadequate teaching-learning resources in the schools practicing inclusive education in Taraba such as facilities and instruments, assistive devices ,space and an up to-date curriculum to guide the concerned teachers.

-The teachers who were sampled in the schools with special units were trained but had inadequate experience and confidence to handle the pupils with special needs effectively.

-The key barriers to effective inclusive education implementation process in public primary schools are mainly; socio-cultural factors leading to stigmatization.

-Some of the strategies that need to be put in place for successful implementation of inclusive education are increased funding by government, donors, and other well-wishers. Others include parents –teachers co-operation, proper planning in schools to cater for the special pupils needs adequately and provision of a well-defined curriculum.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, and the implications drawn, the following recommendations are made:

-The government should make all the possible efforts to improve and modify the existing physical facilities to make sure they are barrier-free and therefore easily accessible to all learners and especially to the special needs pupils. Provision of facilities and other items to enhance the special pupils learning would as well be recommended. The existing general curriculum should be modified to suit the needs of learners with educational difficulties.

- Classroom teachers should be given regular in-service training on the methods and approaches of handling students with disabilities.

-Students with disabilities should be given an appropriate learning environment with adequate provisions of supportive specialist staff, gadgets, equipments and materials that will enhance the implementation of the inclusion programme.

-Also, adequate public awareness, and appropriate communication channels should be provided for students with disabilities for effective achievement of inclusive education programme.

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