

THE NEED FOR APPROPRIATE STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN KATSINA STATE

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Abstract

This paper with titled “The need for appropriate strategies for effective implementation of inclusive education in Katsina State” attempts to look at some definitions, goals/objectives and benefits of inclusive education. The paper had also highlighted on procedures for developing inclusive education, classroom practices and inclusive setting. The paper concluded that, pilot classrooms should be established in each senatorial zone where the programme is to be pilot tested.

Introduction

According to Ozoji (2005), inclusive education is an education option or program carefully designed to educate special needs learners with diverse needs within the re-structured mainstream or school community. It means that all students in a school, regardless of their strengths and weakness in any area, become part of the school community.

The index for inclusive published by Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE) in 2002 cited in Ozoji (2005), defines inclusive education as the process of increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from the culture, curricula and communities of local schools.

Nichy (2004) defined inclusive education as a developmental approach seeking to address the learning needs of all children, youths and adults with specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion. This definition sees inclusive education as a process of combining special needs students with the normal in the same class with support services provided to all the students.

Therefore, there is the need for Katsina State Government to properly implement inclusive education system at basic and secondary school level. The two special schools (Govt. School for the Blind Katsina and Govt. School for the Deaf Malumfashi) can serve as pilot centres to pilot test the programme with sampling classes, one class at Primary level and one class at Junior secondary level. The two schools have already graduated students who are at various tertiary institutions within and outside the state being at an inclusive setting without proper arrangement that take care of special needs students. If inclusive education properly and effectively implemented in the state, the special needs persons/children will find it easy and higher institutions to cope with the system.

Furthermore, inclusion is full placement of all special needs students into regular school or classroom, and the main contention is to avoid segregation and promote equality. It involves giving the special needs individuals the opportunity to live their lives in a manner that is typical or normal as possible.

- ***Goals/objectives of inclusive education***

Ozaji (2005) itemized the goals / objectives of inclusive education as follows:

- To provide education for children with diverse learning needs within the re-structured school community.
- To make special needs children active members of the school community and then to help them achieve quality educational outcomes based on their individualized educational programme (IEP's) and to achieve social competence.
- To build a supportive school community that is able to identify and minimize barriers to learning and participation.
- To empower children who are hitherto excluded or isolated.
- To enable students to participate in mainstream education to the best of their abilities.
- To build inclusive schools that can respond to diverse needs.

- ***Benefits of Inclusive education***

Students with special learning needs can benefit from inclusive education in the following ways:

- Teachers acquire positive attitudes towards disabilities.
- It affords a sense of belonging to diverse human family
- It provides a diverse stimulating environment in which to grow and learn.
- It involves in feelings of being a member of a diverse community
- It enables development of friendship
- It provides opportunities to be educated with same age peers

- ***Procedures for developing inclusive education***

- A feasibility study of what is and should be if inclusive school is to be provided, must be ascertained.
- A well planned training manual for the major stakeholders in inclusive education must be developed.
- The administration of inclusive education programme should be establish pilot schools first, for pilot testing
- Awareness campaign on children with special needs should be created in different Nigerian languages.
- Administrative machinery that coordinates the inclusive programme should be put in place.
- Necessary implementation strategies

- ***General Classroom Practices***

King – Sears and Cummings (1996) in Olabisi (2011), noted seven different practices that teachers can use to help students succeed in inclusive settings;

- Curriculum based assessment: Assessment of the learner is based on what is being taught in the curriculum.
- Cooperative learning: Uses teams of children to teach each other and work together on various learning activities.
- Self management: Allows students to manage their own behaviour or learning needs.
- Peer – tutoring: Students helping each other in learning situations.
- Strategy teaching: Teaching students the skills that they need to succeed in academic and social situations.
- Direct instruction: The instructional approach in which students are taught specific skills and content.
- Goal setting: Focuses on setting specific goals for students in learning activities (Smith et al, 2001)

- ***Inclusive Settings***

For inclusive setting to be appropriate, many things should be in place in terms of the physical structures, equipment and personnel. Nwazuo (2008) quoted Mba (1995) who outlined nine areas of competencies needed for personnel in special needs education to possess for providing appropriate support in an inclusive settings as follows: -

- Ability to understand the child with special needs and how the child deviates from the so-called normal child or learner.
- Expertise in curriculum adjustment and in the use of special teaching methods.
- Ability to select and use special equipment and materials such as the audiometer, overhead projectors etc
- Skills in counseling and guiding children with difficulties arising from their disabilities or giftedness.
- Technical knowledge in special areas such as hearing impairment, education of persons with visual impairment, programme for gifted children etc.
- Ability to use assessment tests and keep individual children's records.
- Administrative ability relating to the educational programme for special needs education.
- Knowledge of secondary handicaps apart from the main handicapping condition, for example, a child who is deaf may also experience visual difficulties which may be serious but not as handicapping as his deafness.
- Special characteristic, these include the teachers attitude towards persons with disabilities, empathy, cooperativeness, resourcefulness, high tolerance values and motivational qualities.

Conclusion

Effective implementation of inclusive education in Katsina State will promote social justice, equality of opportunity between the special needs individuals and the so-called normal persons, it will also bring an end to segregation as well as stigmatization of such persons with special needs. Therefore, its implementation needs a very careful planning, more funding, training and re-training of both specially trained teachers and the regular teachers.

• *Suggestions/Recommendations*

- Government should established three pilot classrooms in each senatorial zone of the state.
- Adequate funding should be provided for proper effective implementation of the programme.
- Desk officers and monitoring until should be established at each of the zones for proper evaluation of the programme.
- Regular teachers should be given intensive training through workshops and seminars to enhance the programme.
- Materials / equipments needed by both special needs persons and the normal should be provided.

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