

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF EDUCATING CHILDREN WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT UNDER INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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Abstract

The paper is an attempt to find out problems associated with the education of visually impaired child under inclusive education system. A structured questionnaire was used to generate data, and the data collected were properly analyzed. The paper concluded that the visually impaired student under inclusive education system encountered difficulties of inadequate teaching and learning materials and trained teachers on their academic pursuits compare to their normal counterparts in the inclusive class room settings. The paper highlighted some suggestions as a way forward, this can only be achieve through public awareness to the parent of the special needs child, government on her part should ensure prompt and adequate release of funds for adequate teaching and learning materials, in service training for teachers should be encourage, workshop and seminars on inclusive education system should also be encourage for successful implementation of inclusive education system, this is because special education learning materials are expensive whether locally or imported. The paper also aimed at finding out the prospect of visual impaired persons and possible ways of improving it. Finally conclusion was made based on some issues raised in the papers.

Introduction

It is one of the fundamental right of every Nigerian child to be educated, the physical make up economic status of the parents, sex, religion and place of origin notwithstanding. As Nigeria national policy on education (1977, 1981, 2004 and 2009) all confirms the policies statement of the Nigerian government that:

“To give concrete meaning to the idea of equalizing educational opportunities for all children, their physical, sensory, mental, psychological or emotional disability notwithstanding: Provide adequate education for all children with special needs in order that they may fully contribute their own quota to the development of the nation”.

In March 1990 there was a world conference on education for all (EFA) held in Jomtein Thailand article 33 clause 5 of the world declaration for all and frame work of action to meet basic needs of the EFO conference was that:

“The learning needs of the disable demands special attention, step need to be taken to provide equal access to education to every category of disable person as integral part of

education system. In June 1994 a world conference titled “special needs education, access and equality: was held in Salamanca Spain. It was there that inclusive education was officially born.

Therefore, educational system should be so organized to ensure that the needs of all children are met including the visually impaired. In fact, special preference must be given to the visually impaired because of their special needs. The federal government directive on the U.P.E scheme requesting that every child irrespective of his/her mental and physical state should be enrolled for the universal primary education scheme derives from this basic premise.

Handicapped children are those identified with “blindness” partial sightedness, deafness, hardness of hearing, mental retardation, social maladjustment, physical handicapped etc. due to circumstances of birth, inheritance, social position mental and physical health pattern or accident in later life. NPE (1981). As a result of any of these handicaps, the children are unable to cope with normal school organization and teaching method.

Conceptual Background of the Adaptation of Children with Visual Impairment

Visually impaired are taught by utilizing a number of adaptations.

According to Heward and Orlansky (1984), these include the use of Braille, canes, tape, tape recorders, magnifying device and typewriters. These special materials are mainly used to teach educational, social and mobility skills to blind children. For educational Braille, tape recorders and typewriters are more commonly used.

Braille arrangements are made on Manila paper which is capable of absorbing the raised dotations. To write Braille, a stylus is passed through a Braille guide on the Braille paper. The dotations then appear raised out in combinations of letters, words and communications symbols.

The Braille can be very complicated and requires very skillful commitment to learn and teach to blind persons.

Mobility and orientation training is also another important aspect of education of visually impaired (Abang 198, Sykes and Ozoji 1992).

According to Abang (1981), mobility refers to:

..... the ability to move from one point in space to another while orientations refers to

..... the awareness of one’s position in space.

Mobility is very important to facilitate moving around for the blind, orientation training is important for relating to set condition like the use of dining table and looking for objects.

Kirk and Gallagher (1989), Sykes and Ozoji (1992) further stressed the importance of social skills to be taught to blind and visually impaired children and youths, such social skills for which they need to be training include dressing, posture, body image, relating to other people and sex education. Adedoja (1991) advocated for adapting physical education activities like in basket ball, gymnastics, swimming, track

and field athletics, weight lifting and base-ball through special teaching and coaching guidelines and adaptation of rules and equipments for the benefit of visually impaired. Another important aspect of education of visually handicapped people is vocational training. Kolo(1991) is of the view that with adequate facilities, visually impaired person can be trained in a variety of vocations, including farming, weaving, packaging, leatherwork etc.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives for this research are:-

1. To identified people opinion, and believe about the education of the visual impaired under inclusive education system.
2. To clearly identify the merit and demerit of educating people with visual impairment under inclusive education system.
3. To find out whether there is adequate or inadequate facilities for instruction.

Research Design

The method used in collecting data is survey research; survey research is most appropriately for this study, because it allowed the researcher to gather enough information about the target population without taking a complete enumeration. The study cover a large respondent, therefore, the most common used of descriptive method is educational research (survey research technique) will be used as methodology because of its relevant in terms of efficiency and usefulness in collecting data.

Survey research method is in fact, very efficient and can be reliable, accurate and representative; it equally saves time of both the researcher and the respondents.

Instruments Used for Data Collection

The researcher used questionnaire and interview in the process of collecting data for this study. The questionnaire is divide in to two sections; section A and B.

Section A contains respondents personal data, while section B contains the questions about the education of the visually handicapped to be filled by the respondent.

Data Analysis

The presentation and analysis of data collected in respect of this paper from teaching and non teaching staff of inclusive education schools

There are 80% male respondents, 20% female respectively, the age of respondent range from 25-30 20% 36-45 with the highest percentage of 56% and 46 years and above with 12%, 84% of the respondents are Diploma and NCE holders, graduate, while 4% holding masters degree. 16% of the respondents have experience ranging from 1-5 years have 44% experience, while respondents with 11 and above years have 40% experience respectively.

Research Questions

Q.1 The visually impaired of this school received instructions through:

Key	Response	Respondent	No of Quest.	Percentage
A	Dictation	13	25	52
B	Hand out	2	25	8
C	Other sources	10	25	40
	Total	25	25	100

The result of the findings obtained in table one above shows that 52% of the respondents indicate that visually impaired student's under inclusive education received instructions through dictation, 8% said it is through hand out, while 40% disagreed with both A B responses.

Q.2 The special writing facilities for the visually impaired in inclusive schools are by the school.

Key	Responses	Respondent	No. quest.	Total
A	Provided	4	25	16
B	Inadequately provided	1	25	4
C	Not provided	20	25	80
	Total	25	25	100

Table two shows that 16% agreed that the school provided writing facilities, 4% percent of the respondent maintain that the facilities are inadequately provided, while 80% of the respondents disagreed with the both responses.

Q.3 which of the following equipment did visually impaired students use?

Key	Responses	Respondent	No. quest.	Total
A	Braille machine	2	25	8
B	Set of writing frame	23	25	92
C	None of the above	0	25	0
	Total	25	25	100

This shows that 8% ironically believe in Braille machine as the equipment used by the visually impaired school, 95% opined that set of writing frames are used by the student and there is no percentage to the third response.

Q.4 Do you have enough supply of the Braille books in difference subject offered in your school.

Key	Key responses	Respondent	No. of quest.	Total
A	Yes	-	25	-
B	No	1	25	4
C	Not any	24	25	96
	Total	25	25	100

Looking at table four above, one can see that no percentage for the first responses, 4% of the respondents are of the opinion that there are some Braille books in the school, while 96% disagreed with the two responses.

Q.5 what would you say about the number of special teachers in your school.

Key	Responses	Respondent	No. quest.	Total
A	Adequate	8	25	32
B	Inadequate	15	25	60
C	Too many	2	25	8
	Total	25	25	100

In this table, 32% of the respondents said that the number of teachers is adequate, 60% of the respondents strongly agreed that the number of teachers are inadequate. But only 8% claimed that the number of teachers is too many.

Q.6 Can you state how professional the teachers in your school are?

Key	Responses	Respondent	No. of quest.	Total
A	All the teachers are professionals	5	25	20
B	Few of them are professionals	20	25	80

From the above we can deduce that 5 of the respondents are of the view that all the teachers are professionals with a total percentage of 20%, 80 are of the view that a few among the teachers are professionals. And no response to item C

Q.8 Did the teachers undergo special education training?

Key	Responses	Respondent	No. of quest.	Total
A	Some of them attended	18	25	72
B	All of them attended	3	25	16
C	None of them attended	4	25	12
	Total	25	25	100

Table 8 shows that 72% supported that some teachers have attended special education training 16% believe that all of them attended, while 12% disagreed with both responses.

Q.9 What would you say about teachers/pupils relationship?

Key	Responses	Respondent	No. of quest.	Total
A	Very cordial	21	25	84
B	Cordial	4	25	16
C	Not cordial	-	25	-
	Total	25	25	100

The above table shows that 84% of the respondents strongly agreed that teachers/pupils (special and normal) relationship is cordial, and no response to item C.

Suggestions

From the findings made in this project, the following suggestion can be made in order to alleviate the problems associated with the education of visually impaired children.

These include among others;

1. Government should provide in service training for teachers to be retrained for inclusive education, as no good teaching is adequate without qualified teachers.
2. Seminars and workshops should be organized on regular basis for teachers to update their knowledge on inclusive education.
3. Government should provide enough funds for adequate and relevant teaching and learning materials so as to constitute and indispensable part of teaching and learning process.
4. The curriculum planners should consider inclusive education system when planning for education of the visual impaired "
5. Public awareness should be made to educate the parents' and peers to bring their children for intervention.
6. The teachers should be constantly supervised by the ministry of education or zonal officer.

Conclusion

Finally, I would like to conclude by saying that visually impaired children can grow up fully educated and live on relatively equal footings with their seeing counterparts. However, to do this it is imperative that they must be truly and sincerely educated and train using all necessary aids and materials, genuine support of the government, wealthy individuals, and organization, create the right psychological climate and maintain it, in order to ensure meaningful integration in to the larger community.

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