

# STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTION OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR CHILDREN WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY IN OGUN AND LAGOS STATES, NIGERIA

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## Abstract

*This paper discusses the stakeholders' perception of the educational programmes for children with intellectual disability in Ogun and Lagos States Nigeria. Children with intellectual disability were deprived of educational programmes in the past, when compared with other categories of children with special needs. However, a few decades ago, children with intellectual disability were included in the educational programme. This paper sought to identify the types of programmes that are in place for children with intellectual disability and to what extent they are effective. One hundred and thirty eight (138) special teachers from Ogun and Lagos States participated in the study. The instrument used in collecting data was the educational programmes for children with intellectual disability questionnaire (EPCIDQ). Data collected were analysed using Descriptive Statistics. Results revealed that segregation (special school) was the major form of educational programme being practiced, although mainstreaming and inclusive were said to be in practice by the teachers. However, shortage of trained teachers was identified as the major constraints in the educational programmes in both Ogun and Lagos States. It was therefore recommended that the Government should endeavour to train more teachers as a matter of urgency for effectiveness in the education of children with intellectual disability. Main streaming and inclusive education should be much more in practice over segregation method as this is hoped that it will reduce or eliminate the discrimination of the society against children with disability.*

**Keywords:** Intellectual disability, Educational programmes, Segregation, Mainstreaming, Inclusive.

## **Background**

Intellectual Disability (formally called mental retardation) is a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior, which covers many everyday social practical skills. This disability originates before age 18 (American Association on intellectual and Development Disability [AAIDD], 2010). Children with intellectual disability are among the categories of children with special needs who have been deprived of their fundamental human rights in the past especially with regards to education. For decades, they were denied a right to education probably because the society did not believe that they could do well academically because of their low intelligence quotient and their maladaptive behavior.

Mba (1995) remarked that children with special needs, especially those with intellectual disability were not accepted as total humans and were misunderstood, maltreated, and in many cases put to death. This he said was the situation in Europe and in Africa many centuries ago. Abang (2005) in the same vein submitted that children with intellectual disability were either left as jesters in the kings' palaces or taken to the mountain tops as meat for the animals. Even when education was being extended to other categories of children with special needs such as those with visual and hearing impairments, those with intellectual disability were left out.

The development of special education in Nigeria, according to Abang (2005), has been greatly influenced by Europe and American missionaries in the same way they influenced the Nigerian regular educational system. Among the early Christian Missionaries that came to Nigeria were the Sudan United Mission (SUM), Roman Catholic Missionaries (RCM), Church Missionary Society (CMS) etc. Their aim in educating children with special needs was to help them to become self-reliant and independent.

Those that were blind for instance, were taught to read and write with Braille. It was not until after independence in 1960 that formal education was extended to children with intellectual disability. According to Abang, Elizabeth Torrey, a missionary and a devoted educationist, was the first to start education of children with intellectual disability in Nigeria. She established a child placement treatment school at Apapa Lagos in 1965.

Subsequently, when the Nigerian Government saw the efforts of the missionaries, they also came on board and in the bid to recognize the need to also educate children with special needs, officially included the education of children with special needs in the National policy on education in 1979 (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1979). The content of policy states "All school – age children irrespective of their physical, mental or emotional disabilities should be educated". This gave rise to the establishment of special schools. Avoke (2005) remarked that the reason for special schools was because the mainstream education (regular school system) did not go down well with the society as it was thought that persons with disability especially those with intellectual disability will pollute their non-special needs children. Today, in Nigeria there are at least about 100 special schools for children with special needs, and this includes children with intellectual disability.

With civilization and advancement in technology, the educational programme for persons with intellectual disability has witnessed tremendous progress in Nigeria and the society is beginning to understand that biological factors, rather than cultural beliefs are the major causes of intellectual disability. The society has begun to accept children with intellectual disability as part of them, unlike few decades ago, and have begun to seek for help educationally, no longer do they hide them away in their homes, this, really in Nigeria, is a great achievement. At the state and Federal levels, efforts are being made to support education for children with special needs, by establishing schools and supporting them financially. Much more, however, still needs to be done in order to realize the goal of the National Policy on Education. Scholars and parents of children with special needs had engaged in a lot of debates on the pattern of the education with special needs, particularly in developed countries with respect to the kind of schools to be provided for them: whether segregation/special schools or inclusive type.

Mainstreaming has been clearly preferred to special schools. For instance, Hegarty (1987) in Eni-Olorunda (2001) stated that in the 1960s, parents agitated for the removal of all forms of discrimination against children with special needs which the practice of segregation in education would promote. This was seen as infringing on the right of the child to education. The concept of mainstreaming according to Perles (2012) is based on the fact that a child with disability may benefit from being in a general education classroom both academically and socially. In other words with mainstreaming, a child in special education is selectively placed in the regular education setting, which may be for only physical exercise(PE) music or art as the case may be.

The National policy on education (FRN, 2004), in support of mainstreaming, stated that “integration is the most realistic form of special education, since children with special needs are eventually expected to live in the society”. Despite this policy, the educational system has not been very much disposed to accommodating children with intellectual disability in the mainstream of education. This may be due to some cultural beliefs and also possibly because of shortage of trained teachers that can handle children with intellectual disability in the regular educational system. Segregation/special school seems to be the major educational programme being pursued in Nigeria presently.

Tammy, Reynolds, Zupanick and Dombeck (2012) pointed out that as laudable a mainstreaming is, it has its advantages and disadvantages. Talking about advantages, for instance, firstly, it provides opportunities for socialization, secondly, a regular classroom may inspire and challenge children with intellectual disability to excel. Looking at the disadvantages, Tammy Reynolds, et al (2012) observed that mainstreaming is more of “philosophy of inclusion intended to promote the greater good”, whether or not this idea is realized is another matter entirely. Funding is often inadequate, public schools often struggle to provide adequate educational services to those without special needs. Many of the teachers are not trained in the techniques needed for a successful academic achievement of children with intellectual disabilities. Some people argue that

mainstreaming is unfair to average children because the teachers' time and attention is spent with the children who require one-on-one attention leaving the rest of the children to help themselves". Tammy Reynolds, et al (2012) however concluded that the best educational setting is the one that best helps the child to achieve the goals of their individualized (IEP) educational plan. Be as it may, the issue of mainstreaming as against segregated/special school remains controversial issues as pointed out by some scholars. For instance, Tornillo (1994) who was the president of the Florida Education Association United was concerned that the implementation of mainstream/inclusion of children with disabilities together with non-disabled children leaves classroom teachers without the resources, training and other supports necessary to teach children with disabilities in their classrooms.

Consequently, they are not getting appropriate specialized attention and care and the regular children's education is disrupted constantly. The position of mainstreaming in Nigeria today leaves much to be desired. Some of the mainstream schools if not all, are built as separate buildings within the regular education setting and this cannot be regarded as absolute mainstreaming. Some of the factors affecting mainstreaming in Nigeria are very much related to the attitudinal nature of the society towards persons with intellectual disability, the non acceptance of children with intellectual disability into the regular schools probably because the regular teachers think they are not experienced in handling them, lack of adequate materials, gross shortage of trained teachers, overcrowded nature of the regular education system, inadequate funding, non-implementation of legislation among others (Dada, 2007).

The Developed countries unlike developing countries such as Nigeria, have gone beyond mainstreaming and the practice majorly now in the educational system is inclusion. This is thought to be a more accommodating and friendly approach for children with special needs. Inclusive education has been defined in many ways by various scholars. Tilstone, Florian and Rose (1998) described inclusion as the opportunity for all persons with a disability to participate fully in all the educational, employment, consumer, recreational, community and domestic activities that typify every society. Avoke (2005) remarked that inclusive education seems to be controversial issue in special education. Perles (2012) in the same vein said that the concept of inclusion is based on the idea that students with disabilities should not be segregated, but should be included in a classroom with their typically developing peers. This means that they are in the regular classroom all day long, while the special education teacher collaborates with the regular teacher in the teaching of the student. Even though inclusion has become a global issue, especially with the inclusion in educational policy, efforts to have more of inclusive settings are being met with a lot of resistance in some settings (Vlanchou, 2004). UNESCO and the Salamanca Declaration of 1994 made provision for the international and theoretical frames for inclusive education, because it was thought to be the most effective way of getting rid of discriminatory attitude against persons with special needs.

Inclusive education has been a matter of concern to all, especially those in special education in Nigeria. The import of inclusion for instance, made special educators to focus the theme of the National Conference of the Council for Exceptional Children held at Minna in 2002 on inclusive education (Garuba, 2003). Obani (2002), the keynote address speaker at the Minna Conference argued that the old special education system with its restrictive practices cannot successfully address problems of children with special needs, the answer lies in inclusion or inclusive schooling in changing and recognizing the entire school system to accept all children and cater for their varied "special" or ordinary learning needs and difficulties". Garuba (2003) pointed out the fact that apart from the inadequate plans for the identification of children with special needs and the location of most schools in urban areas, the attitude of parents of children without disability has been seen to affect the practice of inclusive education in Nigeria. For instance, parents have been observed to withdraw their children from some schools simply because of the presence of a child with special needs. One of these writers have witnessed a situation in a particular institution in which some parents withdrew their children with mild intellectual disability because they felt these children could start behaving like those that have severe intellectual disability. Indeed, inclusive education in Nigeria is complex.

Inclusion could be viewed as a theory rather than practice in Nigeria. Nigeria, for instance, adopts the policy of inclusive education in her National Policy of Education of Federal Republic of Nigeria (1998) revised (2004), however, it is only one state out of thirty six states that has attempted to implement it at the primary school levels. The inclusive schools, however, have been found to be facing a lot of challenges such as lack of professional teachers, materials, inadequate fund, over population of pupils, lack of incentives for available trained teachers among others (Fakolade, Adeniyi & Tella 2009).

However, the overall evaluation of the Educational programme for children with intellectual disability could be said to have improved greatly despite all the challenges. Special educators and persons with special needs are advocating for inclusion rather than segregation in Nigeria. The Government could be said to be making efforts in supporting the course of education and care for persons with special needs. For instance, late Stella Obasanjo the wife of a one-time President of Nigeria, established a centre for children with special needs in Abuja because of the passion she had for them. Also, the immediate past first lady of Ondo State Mrs. Funke Agaju initiated a project to care for the welfare of children with special needs (Oyebola, Abiodun & Kolawole, 2005).

Ogun and Lagos States Governments also established schools for children with special needs, as in some others, hence the awareness about children with special needs in Nigeria today cannot be compared with what it was a few decades ago. Some NGO's have also set up educational projects for children with special needs. Generally, it has been observed that there is more awareness now about the need for the educational programme for children with special needs including children with intellectual disability in Nigeria. It

was thus pertinent to discover how these programmes are being implemented. The study, therefore, focused on Stakeholders perception of the educational programmes for children with intellectual disabilities in Ogun and Lagos States, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions:-**

Consequently, the following research questions were answered:

1. What is the perception of teachers on the educational programmes available for children with intellectual disability in Ogun and Lagos States?
2. What is the perception of teachers on the effectiveness of the educational programmes for children with intellectual disability in Ogun and Lagos States?
3. What are the respondents' perceptions of the extent to which the Governments of the two States financially support these programmes in Ogun and Lagos States?
4. What is the perception of teachers on the adequacy of trained teachers for children with intellectual disability in Ogun and Lagos States?
5. What are the respondents' perception on the need to educate children with intellectual disability in Ogun and Lagos States?

### **Methodology**

The Design: The study adopted a survey research method.

### **Population**

The study population consists of teachers of five special schools in Ogun state, six special schools, and thirty-one inclusive schools in Lagos State. Ogun state do not have inclusive education programme.

### **Sample**

One hundred and thirty eight (138) participants made up of 54 teachers from four out of the five special schools in Ogun State (the remaining one do not have children with intellectual disability) and 84 teachers from three out of six special schools and 15 out of 31 inclusive schools respectively in Lagos States were purposively selected to participate in the study, in order to ensure adequate representation of children with intellectual disability. Purposive in the sense that only teachers teaching children with intellectual disability were involved.

### **Instrumentation**

A twenty-five (25) item questionnaire covering the various aspects of the educational programme for children with intellectual disability was validated and administered on the participants with the assistance of two postgraduate students, over a period of two weeks.

Likert scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Strongly Disagreed (SD), Disagreed (D), and Neutral (N) was used to elicit response from the respondents.

### Reliability

The reliability of the instrument was determined through the use of Cronbach Alpha yielding a reliability index of 0.69.

### Results

**RQ 1:** What is the perception of teachers on the Educational programmes (i.e. segregation, mainstreaming, and inclusive education) available for children with intellectual disability in Ogun and Lagos States?

Table 1:

**Perception of Teachers on the Educational programmes available for children with intellectual disability in Ogun and Lagos States.**

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	N	MEAN	STD.D
Mainstreaming is the only form of educational programme for children with ID in my State	9 (6.5)	29 (21.0)	69 (50.0)	30 (21.7)	1 (0.7)	3.10	.87
Segregation is the only form of educational programme for children with ID in my State	8 (5.8)	18 (13.0)	83 (60.1)	29 (21.0)	0 (0.0)	3.03	.76
Segregation method has been the practice over 4 decades (40 yrs) now	42 (30.4)	53 (38.4)	30 (21.7)	9 (6.5)	3 (2.2)	3.86	1.04
Mainstreaming has been in practice over (40 yrs) now	22 (15.9)	50 (36.2)	51 (37.0)	14 (10.1)	0.0	5.00	.93
Mainstreaming and segregation are the two educational programmes being practiced in my State	60 (43.5)	59 (42.8)	10 (7.2)	9 (6.5)	0.0	4.23	.85
Inclusive education has been introduced and being practiced in my State	40 (29.0)	60 (43.5)	22 (15.9)	16 (11.6)	0.0	3.90	.95
Inclusive education is not being practiced in my State	12 (8.7)	26 (18.8)	69 (50.0)	26 (18.8)	5 (3.6)	3.10	.93
Parents frown at inclusive education in my State	3 (2.2)	5 (38.4)	55 (39.9)	27 (19.6)	0.0	3.23	.79
Inclusive education is preferred to segregation or mainstreaming in my State	41 (29.7)	39 (28.3)	34 (24.6)	19 (13.8)	5 (3.6)	3.67	1.15

*Note: Figures in parenthesis are in percentages*

Table 1 reveals that majority of the teachers (81.1%) disagreed that segregation is the only form of educational programme for children with ID in the States also 71.7% disagreed that mainstreaming is the only form of educational programme for children with ID in the States; 68.8% of the teachers disagreed with the statement that inclusive education is not being practiced in the States and 59.5% also disagreed that parents frown at inclusive education in the States. 68.8% of the teachers however agreed that segregation has been

the practice over 4 decades now, 52.1% also agreed that mainstreaming has been the practice over 4 decades now. As high as 86.3% of the teachers agreed that mainstreaming and segregation are the two educational programmes being practiced in the two States. 72.5% also agreed that inclusive education has been introduced and being practiced in the States. 58% however agreed that inclusive education is preferred to segregation or mainstreaming in the States.

It can then be inferred that segregation mainstreaming and inclusive education are the three educational programmes for children with ID in both Ogun and Lagos State, Nigeria.

RQ 2 – What is the perception of teachers on the effectiveness of the educational programmes for children with ID in Ogun and Lagos States?

**Table 2 Respondents perceived effectiveness of educational programmes for children with intellectual Disabilities (ID) in Ogun and Lagos States**

Items	SA	A	D	SD	N	MEAN	STD.D
Segregation method is effective for children with intellectual disability	18 (13.0)	56 (40.6)	47 (34.1)	12 (8.7)	5 (3.6)	3.52	0.95
Children with intellectual disability respond better to learning in the segregation setting	10 (7.2)	64 (46.6)	42 (30.4)	19 (13.8)	3 (2.2)	3.43	0.89
Children with intellectual disability respond positively to learning in a mainstreaming setting	18 (13.0)	46 (33.3)	48 (34.8)	23 (16.7)	3 (2.2)	3.38	0.98
Children with intellectual disability are indifferent in academic work in a mainstreaming setting	6 (4.3)	55 (39.9)	49 (35.5)	17 (12.3)	11 (8.0)	3.20	0.99

*Note: Figures in parenthesis are in percentages.*

Table 2 reveals that 53.6% of the teachers agreed that segregation setting is effective for children with ID. 53.8% of the teachers also agreed that children with intellectual disability respond better to learning in the segregation setting. 51.5% disagreed that children with intellectual disability respond positively to learning in a mainstreaming setting while 47.8% also disagreed that children with ID are indifferent in a mainstreaming setting

It can then be inferred that segregation educational programme is more effective for children with ID in Ogun and Lagos States Nigeria.

RQ 3 – What are the respondents' perception of the extent to which the Government of the two States financially support this programmes?



**Table 3: Financial support from Government towards the education of children with intellectual disability (ID)**

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	N	MEAN	STD.D
My state government supports the educational programme financially	32 (23.2)	77 (55.8)	26 (18.8)	3 (2.2)	(0.0)	4.00	0.71

Table 3 shows that 79.0% of the teachers in the two states agreed that the State Government do support the educational programmes financially.

RQ 4: What is the perception of teachers on the adequacy of trained teachers for children with ID in Ogun and Lagos States?

**Table 4: Respondents' perceptions of adequacy of trained teachers for children with ID.**

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	N	MEAN	STD.D
Shortage of teachers have been a major problem encountered in the segregation setting in my State	44 (31.9)	67 (48.6)	6 (4.3)	18 (13.0)	3 (2.2)	3.95	1.04
Shortage of teachers have been the major problem in the mainstreaming setting in my state	35 (25.4)	51 (37.0)	35 (25.4)	17 (12.3)	(0.0)	3.75	0.97
My State is doing excellently well in terms of provision of adequate teachers	16 (11.6)	66 (47.8)	41 (29.7)	15 (10.9)	0.0	3.60	0.83
All the teachers of children with ID are specialists	12 (8.7)	61 (44.2)	34 (24.6)	37 (22.5)	(0.0)	3.39	0.93
Most of the teachers of children with ID in my state are non-special educators	8 (5.8)	53 (38.4)	52 (37.7)	25 (18.1)	(0.0)	3.32	0.84

Note: Figures in parenthesis are in percentages.

Table 4 reveals that 80.5% Of the teachers agreed that shortage of teachers have been the major problem encountered in the segregation programme in the States. 62.4% agreed that shortage of teachers have been the major problem encountered in the mainstreaming programme in the States. 59.4% says that the states are doing excellently well in terms of provision of adequate teachers. 47.1% of the teachers however disagreed that all the teachers of children with ID are specialists and also 55.8% also disagreed that most of the teachers of children with ID in the states are non-special educators. With these, it can be inferred that there are no enough specialist teachers to handle the educational programmes for children with ID in Ogun and Lagos State, Nigeria.

RQ 5: What are the respondents' perception on the need to educate children with ID in Ogun and Lagos States.

**Table 5: Respondents' perception on the need to educate children with ID in Ogun and Lagos State.**

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	N	MEAN	STD.D
Teaching children with ID is a total waste of time	3 (2.2)	34 (24.6)	68 (49.3)	24 (17.4)	9 (6.5)	2.99	0.88

Note: Figures in parenthesis are in percentages.

Table 5 reveals that 66.7% of the teachers disagreed that teaching children with ID is a total waste of time; this implies that there is the need to educate children with ID in the two States.

### **Discussion**

This study was designed to investigate stakeholders' perception of the Educational programmes for children with intellectual disability in Ogun and Lagos states, Nigeria. Table 1 reveals that as high as 71.7% and 81.1% of the respondents respectively did not perceive mainstreaming and segregation method to be the only forms of programmes available for children with intellectual disability in the two States.

As high as 72.5 % of the respondents agreed that inclusive education is also been practiced. 68.8% and 52.1% of the respondents respectively however agreed that segregation and mainstreaming have been in practice over four decades now. As regards the practice of inclusive education in the two states, 72.5% as against 27.5% of the respondents agreed that inclusive education has been introduced and being practiced in the two States. In contrast, Fakolade et al. (2009) remarked that out of the thirty six states in the country, it is only one state (Lagos state) that has attempted the implementation of inclusive education at the primary school levels, and that this is even facing a lot of challenges such as lack of trained teachers, inadequacy of funding, overpopulation of pupils among others. Since literature reveals that Lagos is the only state out of the thirty six states practicing inclusive education, the teachers might probably be referring to mainstreaming as inclusive education, since two terms are often used wrongly in some educational settings to mean the same thing.

Tammy Reynolds et al. (2012) in the same vein remarked that mainstreaming is more of a philosophy of inclusion intended to promote the greater good, and whether or not this is realized is another matter entirely.

As per the effectiveness of the educational programmes, 53.6% of the teachers perceive that segregation method is more effective than the other methods. The respondents (53.8%) also agreed that children with intellectual disability respond better to learning in a segregated setting. Perhaps, the small number of pupils/students in a segregated setting coupled with the exposure to special teachers could be responsible for the effectiveness. This corroborates the findings of Obani (2006) that children with special need benefit more in segregation setting.

Interestingly, as high as 79.0% of the respondents as indicated in Table 3 agreed that the Government in the two States (Lagos and Ogun) supports the course of the education of children with intellectual disability financially. This contradicts the findings of Dada (2007) and Tammy Reynolds et al (2012) that inadequate funding is a major problem in the education of children with special needs vis a vis provision of educational materials.

Majority of the respondents (80.5%) and (62.4%) respectively expressed shortage of trained teachers (special teachers) to handle the educational programmes in the segregation and mainstreaming settings respectively (Table 4). This agrees with the findings of Eni-Olorunda (2001) and Dada (2007) that special teachers are inadequate in special schools in Nigeria. The response of majority (66.7%) of the respondents as indicated in Table 5 shows that the education of children with intellectual disability is necessary and should not be considered as a waste of time. This is encouraging and it suggests that the teachers have some knowledge about the nature of children with intellectual disability and the role that education can play in their being independent in life.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The aim of this paper was to evaluate the educational programmes that were in places for children with intellectual disability in Ogun and Lagos State, Nigeria. The special teachers that were the major stakeholders in the educational programme were the participants for the study. The findings from the survey carried out however showed that segregation method was the most practiced in the two states when compared with mainstreaming and inclusion. The study further showed that the government was supportive financially although the teachers expressed shortage of trained teachers in the educational programmes for children with intellectual disability.

On the basis of the above therefore, it was recommended that the Government should see it as a matter of urgency to see to the training of more teachers for effectiveness of teaching in any of the programmes. Mainstreaming, although in practice now is not as popular as the segregation. Mainstreaming should be much more encouraged. Inclusion should also be implemented in our educational setting. With these in places, discrimination with children with intellectual disability will be prevented as much as possible, since they would receive instruction in the same classroom with their pairs without disability.

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