

**EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES IN TEACHERS' TRAINING
PROGRAMME FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN DELTA STATE,
NIGERIA: EMPHASIS ON SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS**

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ABSTRACT	KEYWORDS
With a focus on social studies instructors, the study examines difficulties in Delta State, Nigeria's inclusive education training program. In order to facilitate the teaching-learning process, the study examines how inclusive education with relation to social studies students with special needs presents difficulties for the classroom instructor. According to article 223 of the UN Child Rights Convention, which was ratified in 1989, students with needs are entitled to a complete and dignified existence in circumstances that uphold their dignity, encourage independence, and enable them to actively participate in an inclusive educational system. This study reviews pertinent research on the challenges and clarifications of social studies teacher preparation for school inclusion, particularly with reference to individuals with special needs. In order to prevent prejudice against people with special needs, the government at all levels should mandate inclusive education for schools, according to the paper's conclusion, which also highlighted the importance of a sufficient Social Studies teacher training programme.	Teacher Training, Inclusive Education, Social Studies, Special Needs.

Introduction

Since education empowers people, everyone should have access to it, regardless of disability. Therefore, it is impossible to overstate the importance of inclusion in education. In order to accommodate and respond to the diverse needs of all students, inclusion in education involves eliminating exclusion from and within the classroom as well as enhancing student engagement in learning, cultures, and communities. With a shared vision that considers all children with special educational needs and a belief that it is the duty of the regular system to educate all children, it thus entails a variety of modifications and adjustments in content, approaches, structures, and methods (UNESCO, 2005). Implicit here is that, inclusive setting must put flexibility and assortment at its core. The school's structure, curriculum, staff, parents, and students' attitudes and beliefs should all reflect this, and the objective should be to provide each student with a suitable education and the best chances for growth (Eboh & Egwu, 2017). In order to execute initiatives that enhance inclusion in the classroom environment, educational institutions need have sufficient people and material resources. The teaching

staff should be given access to pertinent information and required to complete courses that would enable them to work well in an inclusive environment.

Teachers in a variety of fields must receive specialized training from educational training institutions. Teacher education is an essential tool for the successful implementation of inclusive education in Nigeria because it can enhance innate abilities for the betterment of the country (Amwe, 2012 as cited by Egwu et al. 2025). A qualified teacher is expected to have a background in general education as well as specialized training that includes the psychology, emotional and philosophical condition of children or adolescents, the principles and techniques of teaching, and the historical foundations of education. According to Christopher and Elizabeth (2012), a nation's educational programs can only be implemented if its instructors are suitably taught and equipped to implement the programs in accordance with national policy. Teachers must thus be sufficiently motivated in order to maximize the potential of children with special needs, since this will encourage them to work hard. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) aims to provide special needs individuals with proper educational planning and welfare programs that will enable them to operate effectively in society. Some characteristics of people with special needs include difficulties communicating, emotional and behavioral disorders, etc. Individuals that possess these qualities are meant to gain from extra education services, which is an alternative kind of instruction.

Education, whether it be inclusive or exclusive, is essential to the growth and progress of both individuals and a country. Without a question, it is a powerful tool for both individual and societal progress. Teacher preparation is essential for the system to provide a successful and long-lasting education for individuals with special needs. In Nigeria, people with special needs have faced several obstacles to their education over the years (Egwu et al. 2024). This is caused, among other things, by a lack of suitable institutions that promote inclusion, a teacher shortage, and insufficient support services for successful inclusion programmes. Because there are no appropriate policy frameworks to upend the system, inclusive education practices in Nigeria are many and speculative. In light of this, the purpose of this article is to examine the difficulties in Nigeria's teacher training programme for inclusive education of individuals with special needs, as well as the implications for the country's progress.

Theoretical framework

Sherman and Wood's (1982) classical liberal idea of equal opportunities served as the foundation for this investigation. According to the notion, all qualified students should strive for equal educational chances. According to this theory, every person has a certain amount of capacity from birth, and educational systems should be created to remove any obstacles that prevent students with learning disabilities from utilizing their innate abilities because a disability is not an incapacity. Since education is a wonderful equalizer that improves the life prospects of children with special needs, the education provided to such groups of learners will speed their social advancement. According to the principle, chances should be provided for people to pursue education at all levels, with access based on each person's aptitude rather than their impairment. In this sense, education would at the very least guarantee economic equality, allowing people of all social classes, racial backgrounds, and genders to profit monetarily from superior academic achievement and subsequently contribute their fair share to the advancement of society. This idea is pertinent to this essay because it highlights the necessity of

comprehensive education for all, and it has the power to elevate social status and quicken the recipient's desire to have a beneficial societal influence.

Concept of Inclusive Education

According to UNESCO (2005), inclusive education reduces exclusion in the classroom and increases leadership engagement in order to address the varied needs of all students. This implies that every kid has an equal right to a high-quality education that meets their unique requirements. In inclusive education, all kids are accepted into age-appropriate, normal courses in their local schools and are encouraged to study, participate, and contribute to all facets of school life. The idea of inclusive education is widely acknowledged as a means of achieving fairness, justice, and equality in education for all children, particularly those who have been denied access to education due to disability (Christopher & Elizabeth, 2012). It appears that inclusive education is widely praised as a choice and best practice for teaching children and adults with special needs, and that parents, special educators, and other stakeholders have continued to discuss the advantages and difficulties of this educational standard (Ajuwon, 2008). Ajuwon went on to say that the inclusion principle, which makes it clear that all students should be accommodated in regular schools regardless of their circumstances or personal traits, has greatly influenced the problem.

The Salamanca Declaration on inclusive education called on governments all over the world to provide a more inclusive educational system that is based on an ideological stance that acknowledges that every student should have an equal opportunity and fundamental right to receive an education in regular schools (Egwu, 2022). This implies that if every student has an equal chance to study, society will undoubtedly flourish more quickly. Teachers are the key to the success of inclusive education programs that integrate students with disabilities into regular classrooms. In an effort to make inclusive education programs more useful and advantageous for people with special needs, prepared instructors work as curators. This goes against the stigmatization and discrimination that the general public typically inflicts upon them. According to Burden (2008), inclusion is a standard method of accommodating all learners, that is, the entire spectrum of various abilities, with a single system so that everyone participating may be guaranteed a flourishing, equitable, and high-quality participation in real-life experiences from birth to death. As a programme for special needs students attending regular schools, inclusive education preserves the majority of essential aspects of normalcy.

Relevance of Inclusive Education to persons with Special Needs

The following among others are the benefits of inclusive education to persons with special needs.

- All parents want their children to have friends, be accepted by their peers, and have "regular" lives; inclusive arrangements can help many children with disabilities achieve these goals.
- Students develop an optimistic understanding of themselves and others: Children learn to appreciate variety when they attend lessons that mirror the similarities and contrasts of individuals in the real world. When kids from different backgrounds and skill levels play and learn at the same time, reverence and understanding shine.
- Friendships grow: Schools are crucial locations for kids to make friends and acquire social skills that will empower them and benefit society as a whole. In an inclusive environment, kids with and without disabilities learn from one another.
- In inclusive classrooms, students with and without disabilities are expected to learn to read, write, and do math. These academic skills are crucial for children to have a fulfilling existence in the

world or at work. Higher standards and quality education help students with disabilities acquire academic skills that will contribute to the growth of society.

In-Service Training Programmes for Social Studies Teachers in Inclusive Education

Teachers have a crucial role in the teaching and learning process, according to Ali (2014). It assumes that social studies teachers have the greatest influence over the type and level of academic success in schools. This illustrates their use in an educational environment. According to Shade and Stewart (2001), social studies instructors report feeling frustrated, burdened, anxious, and lacking because they don't think they can meet the demands of students with special needs in their classroom. This suggests that before they were hired and assigned to an inclusive environment, their specific abilities were not developed. Teachers of social studies who are already in the classroom must have a solid foundation in inclusive education methods and strategies.

Instructors across the nation, including social studies instructors, must learn the fundamentals of efficiently disseminating knowledge in a welcoming environment. Teachers must therefore receive specialized training on inclusive principles and the fundamentals of disability in order to be prepared to deal with students with special needs and implement social studies curriculum content that will benefit both social studies students and the country as a whole. It is important to note that social studies instructors should get ongoing training in order to provide them with the skills and methods necessary to adapt to evolving educational and technology approaches to knowledge effect. Additionally, pre-service and in-service social studies instructors should get training.

In order to effectively implement inclusive education, teachers in the field must receive high-quality specialized training at the pre-service and in-service levels in an effort to update their knowledge and skills in meeting the needs and aspirations of a diverse school population. Initially, social studies educators had a pessimistic attitude toward inclusion because they were being trained to deal with students who faced learning barriers and because their various institutions lacked the facilities or equipment these students needed. As a result, schools must be restructured and educators must receive in-service training in order for inclusive education to become a reality while keeping the growth and development of the students and the country.

Special Education Teacher and Inclusive Education

According to Ihanacho, reported in Christopher and Elizabeth (2012), social studies teachers in inclusive education have the following unavoidable responsibilities in the classroom:

- aware of the child's educational aims and objectives, as well as the unique tactics and goals that will help him achieve his daily growth;
- observing, evaluating, choosing, and organizing learning as opposed to falling more behind;
- to encourage and support kids with exceptional needs;
- Special educators serve as speech and language therapists for stroke patients in hospital settings;
- For parents of children with exceptional needs, they serve as advisors and counselors.

Teacher Training and Challenges of Inclusive Education

The local culture of the community, parents, guardians, and their judgment of schooling those with disabilities may be responsible for the inclusion issues. However, Ahmed (2001) asserts that in Nigeria, despite unquestionable efforts to educate students with disabilities in schools, a significant number of them continue to be neglected because of, among other things, societal perception, a lack of resources

in the school and environment, a lack of personnel to administer instruction, and funding to purchase pertinent and necessary materials. It is expected of a classroom instructor to choose an instructional approach that works best for each student. For a single teacher who may have more than thirty pupils in each of six to eight courses, this is a difficult objective. The majority of social studies students may be paired with other students who have comparable educational requirements. As a result, just two or three groups may need to plan. This effort can feel nearly overwhelming if you include special needs pupils who have developmental problems, learning impairments, or who speak little or no English. This is especially true if the inclusive classroom lacks a co-teacher and pertinent instructional aids.

Being accessible to all Social Studies students, regardless of their individuality, is the main challenge faced by special education teachers working with students in inclusive classrooms. For instance, it is impossible for a special education instructor to help every kid every day if there are fifty students spread among the courses at any given time. For extra assistance, pupils might need to be taken out of class a few times a week, which affects both the students' and the teacher's capacity to keep up. The special education teacher may not be accessible when they are most required if they rotate into various classrooms on different days and are unable to fully understand the circumstances of the class. It is beneficial for both special education and regular education to share a classroom. After all, intelligence or skill do not separate life from work. But there are still some issues that must be acknowledged. It might be challenging for the classroom teacher to provide the individualized time and attention that one or two special education kids need and deserve in a classroom of thirty. Because they can achieve with little help, pupils who require a more demanding setting may be neglected if the instructor is concentrating on the special needs students. Even though the students will probably do well in the course, they might not feel challenged and might lose interest in it (Okogi et al. 2023).

When their individualized educational program objectives become more apparent in areas like presentations, projects, and homework obligations, special education students may feel singled out if the teacher tries to make the class more demanding for the regular students. According to Christopher and Elizabeth (2012), students may become increasingly estranged from one another if they attend all of the same classes. Even when a special education teacher in an inclusion program is well-prepared to carry out their duties, effective and efficient teaching and learning cannot occur if the current teaching resources do not meet the demands of individuals with special needs. This means that special education teachers deserve quality and precise teaching materials to facilitate the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching task in both inclusion and exclusion.

Conclusion

The study looks at issues with Nigeria's inclusive education program for social studies teachers and how they affect the country's progress. Sherman and Wood's (1982) classical liberal idea of equal opportunities served as the foundation for this investigation. According to the notion, all qualified students should strive for equal educational chances. The necessity of providing social studies teachers with specialized training to deal with inclusion in the classroom cannot be overstated, as it is essential for inclusive education to flourish and produce its associated benefits in society. The paper examined the need for in-service training of teachers and its impact on Social Studies students and national development.

Suggestions

Arising from the conclusion reached, the paper suggested that for inclusive education with to be sustainable and efficient in Nigeria, the following steps should be taken cognizance of:

- To prevent prejudice against people with special needs while they pursue their educational goals, all levels of government should mandate inclusive education in all schools and universities.
- To make it easier for citizens to accept inclusion, there should be a public awareness campaign.
- Teachers of social studies should become more knowledgeable about inclusive education as it will make them more significant.
- In order to motivate social studies instructors and students inside the system, it is essential to have access to skilled social studies staff, financing, and sufficient instructional resources.

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