CHALLENGES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN POST COVID 19 ERA AND EMERGING SECURITY ISSUES IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
Inclusive education is a programme that welcomes diversity among all learners. It removes discrimination of any kind from educational practices, caters for the needs and learning styles of individuals and provides all students with greater opportunities for academic and social achievement. This paper examines some issues in Inclusive Education, the challenges of Inclusive Education during Covid 19 has been highlighted. The paper also briefly discussed the emerging trends and security challenges in Nigeria, it briefly explains how insecurity and Covid 19 pandemic tremendously become a hindrance to the success of education and raising the implication of Inclusive Education as a strategy for modifying schools' systems. Suggested recommendations was put forward among others are: government should make sure that Inclusive Education should not be a matter of policy alone, but put into actual practice. school structures should be constructed bearing in mind the comfort and convenience of the disabled and teachers should be employed in adequate number to cater for the different needed of children with disabilities.

Key words: Inclusive Education, Security challenges, Post covid 19.

Introduction
Inclusive education is an emerging concept that has recently attracted the interest of both local and international stakeholders in education. Global organizations with educational concerns, such as the United Nations Organization (UNO), United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) etc., are also not left out in the intellectual discourse concerning the success of inclusive education world over. Irrespective of the importance attached to this issue, a lot of challenges still dangle in the face of the successful adoption of the programme. Asiwe and Omiegbe (2014) opined that it is in the bid to get all nations of the world to provide quality basic education as enunciated by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agenda and the Education for All (EFA)

that propelled the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) in collaboration with United Nations International Cultural and Scientific Education Fund (UNICEF) to adopt a protocol to refocus the attention of the Nigerian populace on the benefit of enshrining inclusive education in our school programme. This is aimed at bringing an end to an era of segregation in Nigerian school system.

UNESCO, (2009) gave an all-encompassing definition of inclusive education to mean a process of transforming schools and other centers of learning to accommodate all learners including boys and girls, learners from ethnic and linguistic minorities, rural populations, those with disabilities and difficulties in learning and as well provide opportunities for all. Garba (2003) observed that, Nigeria and most countries of Africa are still grappling with the problem of making provisions for children with special needs, even on mainstreaming basis.

Concept of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education means creating access to all students to partake in the educational and social opportunities in society regardless of their conditions (Bešić, 2020; Toquero, 2020). Inclusive Education is an approach to Education where all students, including people and children with special educational needs and developmental disabilities, can partake in building and developing a humane society in the post-pandemic era. (Brown,2020) . To Allen and Schwartze (2000), inclusive education means that all students attend and are welcome by their neighborhood schools in the appropriate age, into regular classes and are supported to learn, to contribute and participate in all aspects of life of the school. Inclusive education is all about how we develop and design our schools, classrooms, programs and activities so that all students learn and participate together.

Inclusive education is the new approach towards educating the children with diverse abilities and learning difficulties with that of normal ones in the same manner. It seeks to address the learning needs of all children with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion. It implies all learners with or without disabilities being able to learn together through access to common preschool provisions. This is possible only in flexible education system that assimilates the needs of diverse range of learners and adapts itself to meet these needs. (UNESCO 2012). According to Adetoun (2003), inclusion means more funds, additional experience to deal with new challenges, extra work, being abreast of recent information, willingness to work in collaboration with other professionals and many more. Knight (1999), opines that the inclusion involves all children with disabilities, full time participation in schools and communities with their neighborhood. Stevens (2009) considers an inclusive classroom as a replacement option for students with learning disabilities. The author explains further, that, it is a least restrictive form of education for special needs students and it allows the students to be included in a typical classroom enrolment with his or her peers. Inclusion is not an experiment to be tested but a value to be followed. All the children

whether they are disabled or not have the right to education as they are the future citizens of the country. In the prevailing Nigerian situation resources are insufficient even to provide quality mainstream schools for common children, it is unethical and impracticable to put children with special needs to test or to prove anything in a research study to live and learn in the mainstream of school and community (Dash, 2006).

Inclusive education is premised on the fact that if the right to education for all is to be upheld, all learners must have access to quality education that meets basic learning needs and enriches lives, because education is not only about making schools available to those who are already able to access them but it is about being proactive in identifying barriers and obstacles learners encounter in attempting to access opportunities for quality education, as well as removing those barriers that lead to exclusion .

Challenges of Inclusive Education
Inclusive education is expectedly confronted with many challenges. Some of these challenges are discussed below:

1) Expense: Inadequate Funding for Procuring the Required Resources: The physically challenged children also need specialized resources that are quite different from the ones used by normal children, such specialized resources are quite expensive to procure. The provision of these resources requires adequate funding and when the fund is not there, it becomes an uphill task to provide them. However, teaching students with disabilities in general education classrooms need specialists and additional staff to support students' need,coordinating services and offering individual support to children requires additional money that many schools do not have, particularly in a tight economy (Stephanie, 2012). Inadequate funding can hinder on-going professional development that keeps both specialists and classroom teachers updated on the best practices of inclusion.

2) Misinformation: One of the greatest challenges associated with inclusion in education is the negative attitude. As with society in general, this attitude and stereotype is often caused by a lack of knowledge and understanding. Public enlightenment in schools must begin with the process of educating the school and the general community in order to eradicate superstitions about causation of disabilities, and to modify the fears and myths about children with disabilities that create misunderstanding and inhibit normal interaction (Ajuwon, 2008). The attitude and abilities of general education teachers and para-educators in particular can be a major limitation in inclusive education. For instance, teachers in regular schools in Kano State, Nigeria (primary and secondary) are enthusiastic and dynamic in using appropriate methods, techniques and instructional materials to enhance learning. They are, still, however, skeptical of the workability of inclusive education arrangements in regular schools. (Galadima, 2012). If educators have negative attitude towards students with special needs or have low expectations about them, children will unlikely receive a satisfactory, inclusive education.

3) Lack of Qualified Personnel: Another problem is the issue of qualified personnel, for a child with disability to benefit maximally from inclusion, it is imperative for general education teachers to be able to teach a wider array of children including those with varying disabilities. Some of these disabilities require teachers that are specially trained. For instance, blind students need to be taught how to use brail machine, the deaf and dumb students need to be taught how to understand and use sign language. The implication of this is that, these specially trained teachers should be available in adequate numbers in each school. If not learners with disabilities will be disadvantaged.

4) Provision of Essential Services: Inclusion involves keeping special needs students in regular education classrooms and making support services available to them rather than bringing to them without support services. To this end, it becomes necessary to provide essential services needed by learners in their different areas of disabilities. The blind students need to be taken around from one place to another while in school. If it is a higher institution, they need to be guided from one lecture hall to another. The lame students also need help to move from one place to another regardless of the fact that they are on wheel chairs because most of the school structures are not built in consideration of the disabled. Somebody has to carry them across gutters, they need help to climb the staircase and to tackle some other challenges posed by their disability. A look at Nigerian schools will prove that most of these required services are not available. Furthermore, most school structures are not built with the comfort and convenience of the children with disabilities in minds.

5) Teachers' Inability to use Individualized Instructional Method of Teaching: The children with disabilities need special attention in many ways. They need to be allowed to proceed at their own pace and to achieve this requires diligent participation of their teachers to create more time for them using best method, and Instructional Materials to suit their conditions.

6) Expensive Nature of Inclusive Education: It was indicated earlier; a lot of resources are required for inclusive education programme to enable children with special education needs to benefit maximally. It has not been quite easy for the government to provide the needed resources in the general education system let alone inclusive education which requires extra and more expensive human and material resources.

7) Lack of Understanding on the notion of Inclusive Education: Poor understanding of what constitutes inclusive education tends to make the adoption difficult. Many people understand this notion quite differently. Some understand it to mean integration while some see it as mainstreaming. Therefore, a clear clarification of the concept is necessary for effective planning and implementation to take place.

8) Lack of Accurate statistics of Children with Disabilities: It is important to note that poor record keeping constitutes a major challenge to effective planning for the learning needs of the children with disabilities. Despite the efforts of the government in adopting interventions towards inclusive education, problems of reliable records still persist. Other challenges of inclusive education are identified as follows:

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a)   Challenges arising from its wide-based coverage in scope and practice

b)   Challenges arising from poverty and other forms of social exclusion and cultural marginalization

c)   Effects of gender concept, issues and education on inclusive education

d)   Curriculum rigidity

Implications of Inclusive Education as a Strategy for modifying school system.

It is necessary to look into how schools can be modified or changed to make sure that the education is made relevant to the local context, to include and treat all pupils with respect and is flexible so that all can participate. Garuba (2003) observed that no concrete step has been taken with regards to inclusive education in Nigeria. He pointed out that even at the policy level; integration remains the focus of planning special education programme. In support of this view, Folanke (2009) added that Nigeria is known to have some of the best laws on inclusive education in Africa but their implementation has remained the main problem due to different hindrances. This requires redirecting resources and inter-sectorial cooperation and has implications on the following areas:

a)Policy Development

In few countries, policies exist that open up a possibility for authorities not to take responsibility for certain groups of children. Often, this applies to children with severe intellectual disability, but it might also refer, for instance, to ethnic minorities or children without a birth certificate. Also, in a great number of countries, the education of some specific groups of learners might be the responsibility of another authority than the Ministry of Education. Often, this allows for a situation where these learners are not expected, or encouraged to participate in mainstream education. (Folanke, 2009)

b) Curriculum Development-The curriculum may be one of the major obstacles for inclusion within the education system. In many countries, the curriculum is extensive and demanding, and centrally designed and rigid. The curriculum can facilitate the development of more inclusive settings if it leaves for the school or teacher to make adaptations so that it makes sense in the local context and for the individual learner. Linked to this is the issue of language of instruction. In many countries it may be different from the language that students use at home, making it difficult for some of them to follow what is happening in the classroom. Bilingual education can help to address this problem.

c) Teacher Training- Often much of the teaching in the classroom is based on rote learning, meticulous following of textbooks and copying. In order to change the practices in the classroom into more child-friendly and flexible practices, teachers and schools need training for building on the existing expertise.

d) Local Capacity Building and Community Involvement- The first task in building effective support for schools is to mobilize the resources that already exist in schools and the local community. In addition, there might be need for some external support such as teams of teacher trainers or support teachers coming in on a regular basis. For instance, in

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some countries, the roles of the inspectors have changed from 'grading' schools and teachers to giving pedagogical support on a regular basis. Often this type of support can also be derived from the elders in the local community. UNESCO recognizes that separate projects for marginalized and excluded groups do not have a huge impact. Instead, UNESCO promotes inclusive approaches throughout its activities. UNESCO concentrates on how we can work together to raise the quality of Education for All students.

Emerging Security Challenges and Inclusive Education In Nigeria.

Nigerian school system has come under violent attacks that range from kidnapping of the students to outright suicide bombing which usually claim lives and destroys properties. The effect of these attacks has further exacerbated the fragile school system which is antithetical to sustainable national development. Several measures have been implemented to tackle this menace but there are still frequent attacks being experienced in the school environment. If these incessant attacks are not proactively dealt with, it will portend a longer-term danger to quality of labour force and human capital needed to drive a sustainable economy

Situations of insecurity triggers traumatic disorder and toxic stress that affect learning negatively. General school attendance and enrolment are equally affected as parents pull their children out of schools while in some extreme cases, insecurity has led to closure of schools. These attacks on schools usually lead to vandalization and outright destruction of school facilities which discourage the establishment of new schools. Consequently, government resources are depleted as funds meant for other developmental projects are channeled to tackling the aftermath of attacks. In the end, educational attainment in terms of quality of graduates and manpower suffers which impinge on overall national development aspirations (Ameh, 2015).

Issues on Post covid 19 and Its Impact on Inclusive Education

COVID-19 exacerbated marginalization, especially among the most vulnerable groups such as children with developmental disabilities. Amidst this pandemic of adversity, 'children may be at higher risk than in normal times for abuse or neglect, and with protective care agencies also working under extreme and strained conditions, recognition and intervention may be delayed' (Witt et al., 2020). Consequently, the pandemic heightens the stage for inequalities (Bešić, 2020; Brown, 2020; Davalos et al., 2020; Hansen & Yracheta, 2019; Poletti & Raballo, 2020) until the post pandemic world, as these groups have not received the support that they seriously need during this emergency. In the education sector, people with disabilities experienced the most aftermath as officials terminated the face-to-face educational activities (Daniel, 2020; Robbins et al., 2020). Likewise, among special education teachers, 'there is ambiguity and disagreement about what to teach, how to teach, the workload of teachers and students, the teaching environment, and the implications for education equity' (Zhang et al., 2020).

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Teachers experience difficulties finding the virtual strategies that are attuned to an online curriculum in dealing with learners who have developmental disabilities. As a result, students with educational needs and disabilities suffer the most educational consequences, apart from the deprivation of their health essentials during the pandemic (Jalali et al., 2020; Safta-Zecheria, 2020). These teachers managed multiple disabilities in a conventional special education class before the pandemic. They also lack the specialized training they urgently need to supervise their learners with special educational needs and disabilities as they shifted to emergency remote instruction. Apart from this, the Department of Education is eyeing on the realignment of the Special Education Fund (Medinilla, 2020) to help the government's precautionary measures against the virus. Though understandably, the government needs the finances in the fight against COVID 19.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the lives of students in different ways, depending not only on their level and course of study but also on the point they have reached in their programs. Those coming to the end of one phase of their education and moving on to another, such as those transitioning from secondary school to tertiary education, or from tertiary education to employment. The COVID-19 pandemic poses unprecedented challenges on the government, students, and parents, that will highlight and could amplify some of the cracks in the system. As the nation begins to grapple with these challenges, a key question arises: Is the Nigerian education system designed to adapt rapidly to the changing world? Given the state of affairs in the world today, the nation's ability to ensure continuation of learning will depend largely on their ability to swiftly harness available technology, provide adequate infrastructure, and mobilize stakeholders to prepare alternative learning programs.

Generally, Nigeria's education sector is not adapting, and is expected to struggle on that front for the foreseeable future. However, the consequential socio-economic burden will be borne disproportionately by students in public schools, as compared to those in private schools. While several private schools have begun to initiate distance learning programs, and taking advantage of the myriad of ICT-learning opportunities provided by the international community, the government limited by funds and persistent deficiencies in planning, is yet to announce any official plans for providing distance learning opportunities, especially for public schools.

The implication is that these students in public schools currently have no formal learning plans and could be missing learning altogether. In Nigeria, school opportunity is correlated to income level, and public schools differ from private schools in the populations they serve. While private schools serve learners from higher socio-economic backgrounds who are willing and able to pay more to access the better resources offered by private schools, public schools which are usually free, comprises students from lower socio-economic households and low-income areas. In instances where distance learning opportunities are available, uptake will be low from the students

in the public school's category, as a result of poor infrastructure such as lack of electricity, or poor/no internet connectivity, etc.

Opportunities to learn within the homes are also limited, given that a parent's ability to provide education support to their children will be shaped by their own level of educational attainment, general literacy level, and other commitments. Given the significant relationship between educational attainment and income level, and the correlation between parental income level and school choice, we can infer that the literacy level of parents in public schools in Nigeria might be lower than their private school counterparts. In instances where the parents are educated, investing the time to train their children during this time might be a luxury. Leaving more kids behind - A longer-term impact of these school closures is that deepened educational inequality. While some international development partners (UNESCO, for example) have put together and provided access to ICT-based resources to foster learning, uptake will depend largely on the level and quality of digital and internet access, and language accessibility (as most programs are available in English or other non-native Nigerian languages).

The inequity in access to ICT-based learning has the adverse effect of further intensifying the existing disparities in learning outcomes along socio-economic lines, and urban-rural divide. With over 80 percent of the adult population having access to radios and phones, it would be possible to reach most children left behind with targeted instructions via these mediums. However, while online platforms offer personalized learning, other delivery modalities require a central planner, as well coordination between the three tiers of government, and the private sector (media platform owners).

COVID-19 has highlighted a critical gap in school-based (learning) contingency planning and emergency preparedness within the education sector in Nigeria. Learning-based contingency planning is essential to ensure learning continuity during times of crisis, to protect students and educators, and to build resilience within the education sector. While the government released a COVID-19 contingency plan, the information contained within the document focused on keeping schools safe during the pandemic, and counseling and providing information to the students above preventive measures and actions to take to curb the spread. While this is beneficial information, a school-based contingency plan that does not ensure continuity of learning despite the challenge is incomplete. (Bhat el, 2020)

Perhaps this COVID-19 driven school closure is the crisis, we needed to identify some crucial sector-wide gaps. The COVID-19 pandemic is surely not the last crisis that will threaten school continuity in Nigeria, given the increase in the number of infectious diseases worldwide, or the conflict in the North East. It is therefore imperative that the government creates a holistic contingency plan that goes beyond not only addressing school-based safety measures, but also identifying ways to ensure learning continuity and provide support for both students and teachers during times of crisis. Inevitably, the

COVID-19 pandemic will be resolved, either through a breakthrough in treatment options, the development of a vaccine or with the world population developing the immunity, However, without intentional and concerted effort, its effects on education could have a lasting impact on the trajectory of education. The onus is now on us; do we allow this crisis to further deepen our educational crisis, or do we seize the opportunity to affect change that could address both pandemic-driven and pre-pandemic challenges The post-crisis period is an opportunity to invest in technology in both the private and public-school systems. To achieve this system wide, it will be important to encourage public-private educational partnerships. Various stakeholders, including the government, internet service providers, phone providers, educational professionals, among others, would need to collaborate to drive the required innovation.

Conclusion

This paper discusses the concept of Inclusive education as a strategy to ensured that all children have access to basic education of good quality. This implies creating secure environment in schools and in basic education programs in which children are both able and enabled to learn. Such an environment must be inclusive of children, effective with children, friendly and welcoming to children, healthy and protective for children and gender sensitive. The paper briefly discussed the challenges of Inclusive Education and explains the emerging security challenges that tremendously affect Inclusive Education implementation in Nigeria. As a result of insecurity, and deadly disease of Covid 19, which disrupted almost all progressive aspect of the world, Nigeria should prepare for future challenges and work towards circumventing similar or worst effects on the security and Inclusive Education. The paper gives recommendation on how to curtail these problems by changing the challenges into opportunities.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are therefore put forward:

1. Teachers should be employed in adequate numbers to cater for the differing needs of the children with disabilities. Additionally, in-service training programme could also be organized for the existing teachers to update them in the needed skills, knowledge and strategies for teaching children with disabilities. Seminars, conferences and workshops could also go a long way in updating the knowledge base of the teachers.

2. Sourcing and keeping accurate data of children with disabilities and various forms of disabilities will ensure adequate planning which should be proactive and realistic. The planning should be focused on quality and functionality.

3. There should be increased campaigns to create awareness and enlightenment for parents on the need to send their children with one form of disability or the other to school.

4. There should be adequate provision of human and material resources to cater for the immediate needs of children with disabilities in and, outside the school.

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5. School structures and facilities should be constructed or procured bearing in mind the comfort and convenience of the disabled learners.

6 The government should make sure that inclusive education should not be a matter of policy alone but be put into actual practice.

7. Teachers should teach students in Inclusive Classrooms.

8. Teacher should be mentored and trained not to discriminate against any student but with his /her professional methods, carry all of them along irrespective of their individual differences.

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