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COST IMPLICATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS IN THE FINANCING OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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***Abstract:** The main focus of this study is to investigate the cost implications and constraints in the financing of inclusive education in Nigerian. The study also examined some of the obstacles to successful implementation of the scheme. Three research questions and one hypothesis was formulated to guide the investigation. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The study population were teachers and principals of all the secondary schools, parents, ministry of education officials and the eight special schools in Lagos State. Stratified random sampling technique was employed to get the twelve (12) out of the twenty (20) Local Government Areas in the state. Two hundred and forty (240) teachers was randomly selected from the 12 LGAs. Ten parents and ten heads or principals of the eight special schools was also randomly selected bringing the total number to three hundred and forty (340). Questionnaire was developed, validated, and used for the study. Chi-square was the statistical technique employed. One of the major findings of the study was the urgent need to start planning and critical analyses of the cost implications of the inclusive education scheme since cost analysis is the main integrative part of the planning process. The study concluded by recommending that the government should start planning for inclusive education by taking the issue of costing seriously and setting the ball rolling with adequate planning for the personnel requirement facilitates and plant.*

Introduction

There has been a drive in Nigeria to ensure that every child in the country receives education because education is seen to be an instrument that can be used by any nation to achieve a rapid economic, social, political, cultural and technological development. However, this is not being vigorously pursued in the country since there are two separate schools, one for the normal children otherwise known as regular schools and another for the disable children known as special schools.

It is for this reason that the Nigerian government directed that all children, including the gifted as well as those with physical, mental and learning difficulties must be provided for under the same educational system. The idea of inclusive education was mentioned in the National Policy of Education (2004) because the government

decided that integration is the most realistic form of education since handicapped children are eventually expected to live in the society. However the extent to which the government has pursued this idea of integration or inclusion remains puzzling as regards its implementation since the federal government has remained silent to its cost implication.

The word "inclusion" has become the latest in the series of evolving strategies for special-needs education. People have defined the word in different ways. Inclusion as used by educators, generally means making a child with a disability a full part of the class. (Allington and McGill-Franzen, 1990). Inclusive education here means good education to all the children irrespective of their varying abilities. All children will be treated with respect and the educational institutions would ensure equal opportunities for the children to learn together. (Pinnell, 1991).

The idea behind inclusive education is to ensure that all students, regardless of handicap conditions or severity, will be in a regular classroom or programme full time. All services must be taken to the child in that setting (Arnold and Dodge, 1994). It has to do with commitment to educate each child to the maximum extent appropriate in the school and classroom he or she could otherwise attend. The principle of inclusive education was adopted at the world conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality, which was held in Salamanca, Spain in 1994. This principle was also echoed at the World Education Forum, which took place in Dakar, Senegal in 2000. Inclusive education was further supported by the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for persons with disabilities proclaiming participation and equality for all. However, implementing inclusive education remains a controversial concept because of the cost implications.

An essential tool for all educational planners is the knowledge of the costs alternative course of action. An understanding of the principle of costing educational programmes therefore, underlines the major part of the task which the educational planner has to undertake. The importance of checking the economic feasibility of the programme in question cannot be overemphasized. A decision to train and retrain teachers for inclusive education without prior study of the cost implications can pose a big problem. A developing nation like Nigeria that agrees to implement a laudable programme like inclusive education without considering the financial implications may later find its whole educational programme distorted.

The biggest problem is that of the funds to implement the programme which is highly capital intensive and require extensive time and resources. The problem of inadequacy of fund to be spent on inclusive education has not made things easy for the government of Nigeria and that may be partly the reason why inclusive education implementation has remained an issue for study. There is therefore the need to examine the possibilities of establishing inclusive education scheme in the country.

Statement of the Problem

It is clear that finance is the main integrative part of inclusive education planning. The problem of costing inclusive education has not been easy since the idea of integration was mentioned in the National Policy on Education of (2004). The issue of taking a critical look at personnel requirement, facilities, plant, etc has to be seriously addressed. Lack of such serious decision regarding cost of the programme leaves much to be desired with regards to the implementation of the scheme.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the cost implications and constraints in the financing of inclusive education in Nigeria. The study tried to ascertain the cost of inclusive education by determining the unit cost of the scheme. Obstacles preventing effective implementation of inclusive education were also examined.

Research Questions

1. What are the cost implications of inclusive education in Lagos State?
2. What is the unit cost of inclusive education?
3. What are the obstacles to the successful implementation of inclusive education in Lagos State?

Hypothesis

One hypothesis was formulated to guide the investigation

There is no significant relationship between the cost of normal education and inclusive education.

Methodology

Design

The research design adopted for this study was a descriptive survey. The study population included teachers and principals of all secondary schools in Lagos state, parents, ministry of education officials in the State, and teachers in eight special schools in the state were also involved in the study. The study also included use of secondary data that is documentary data from the ministry.

Sample

The total sample for the study was 340 persons drawn for the study through stratified random sampling technique in which twelve (12) out of twenty (20) Local Government Areas in the state were involved. About two hundred and forty (240) teachers and principals were randomly selected and this gives about sixty percent (60%) representation. Ten parents were randomly selected. Also ten teachers and heads/principals of the eight special schools were randomly selected bringing the

number to eighty (80). On the whole a total number of three hundred and forty (340) people were selected for the study.

Research Instrument

The questionnaire was the main research instrument used for data collection.

The instrument has two sections. Section A elicited Bio – data information of respondents. Section B comprised a 24 item Likert type statement relevant to the study. Responses from subjects is on a five-point continuum ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree with assigned values of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 in order of agreement. The study also made use of document analysis for data collection.

Validity and Reliability

The instrument was developed by the researchers and was validated through criticism and modification from colleagues in the University of Lagos. The reliability estimate of the instrument was established using test-retest method. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.75 which is relatively high. Consequently, the instrument was accepted to be stable over a period of time and appropriate for usage in this study.

Method of data Analysis

The statistical technique employed for the analysis of data was Chi-square.

Data Analysis

Research Question 1: What are the cost implications of inclusive education in Lagos State?

Table 1: Cost of some equipment for special education schools in Lagos State, 2002

No. of Special Schools	Enro- lment	Items of Capital Expenditure 2003/2004 A	Total B (Dollar)	Unit Cost C (Dollar)
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13	156	(1) Puretone body aid	607.14	3.89
		(2) Puretone behind the ear aid	1000	6.41
		(3) Tyme	178.57	1.14
		(4) ABR	285.71	1.83
		(5) Cachlear Inplant	30,000	192.31
		(6) Braille	800	5.13
		(7) Walking stic	57.14	0.37
		(8) Special clock	-	
		(9) Special computers	-	
		Total	32928.56	211.08

Source: Fieldwork: Lagos State Ministry of Education documentary data 2002

Table 1 above shows also some of the equipment that the disable students need in order to carry on like any other student in the society. Based on table one above, data on inclusive education alone is not possible to come by in Lagos State. What is available is cost data on special education for the items presented.

Table 2: Share of the Education Sector in the total Approved Budget 1999 – 2002

Financial Year	Total approved Budget (million)	Percentage Increase of states budget	Total vote For education (million)	Percentage Increase of vote for education
1999	1081.09		279.8	
2000	1400.9	2.6%	456.3	63.1%
2001	2001	42.8%	459.0	0.6%
2002	2604.8	30.2%	489.2	6.6%

Source: Fieldwork: Lagos State Ministry of Education on cost of normal Education

Table 2 shows the total approved budget, the percentage increase of state's budget, the total vote for education and the percentage increase of state's vote for education.

The total cost of equipment for special schools in Lagos State in 2002 as shown in Table 1 is \$32928.56 which when converted to Naira amounted to N4774641 while the total cost for normal education as seen in table 2 was N489.2 million for one year.

This is important for comparison in terms of costs involved in special education as shown in table 1 and normal education as shown in table 2.

Research 2:

What is the unit cost of special education/inclusive education?

The unit cost of special education in Lagos State is as shown in column C in table 1. This is based on documentary records from the ministry of education, Lagos State.

Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis stated for the study is thus: there is no significant relationship between cost of normal education and inclusive education.

Table 3 analysis the sample collected from the fieldwork. There were altogether 340 persons involved and non of these persons claimed to have had any idea about inclusive education.

Table 3: The Result of the Chi-square

Variables	No. of Respondents	\bar{X}	SD	(a) x^2	Crit x^2	DF
Cost of special schools	340	187.40	148.94	1800.64	124.00	58
Cost of normal schools	340	198.60	165.76			

P 0.05 level of significance

Data collected from the 340 participants on the study showed that non of them had heard any news about inclusive education. From the above table, the calculated Chi-square value is higher than the critical t able value at $P \leq 0.05$ level of significance. Since the calculated chi-square value is higher than the critical table value, then the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant relationship between the cost of normal education and inclusive education is therefore rejected while the alternative hypothesis which states that there is significant relationship between normal education and inclusive education is hereby accepted. The decision of this study therefore is that there is a significant relationship between the cost of normal education and inclusive education.

Discussion

Tables 1, 2, and 3 present a picture of some of the costs implications of the scheme. Based on the analysis so far, cost implications of inclusive education will run into million of naira. Table 1 shows some of the equipment used by the children with hearing impairment in order to go to school. Equipment like pure tone body aid and pure tone behind the ear aid cost \$607.14 and \$1000 respectively. The latest equipment for those with hearing impairment is Cochlear implant which cost about \$30,000 and this is very expensive (refer to table 1).

The Braille for example cost about \$800 and the walking stick about \$57.14. They also make use of special clocks which tell the time and special computers which are highly expensive.

Table 2 presents idea of the total approved budget, the percentage increase of the state's budget, total vote for education and the percentage increase of the vote for education from 1999 to 2002. In 1999 for example the total approved budget for the state was N1081.9m and in 2002 it increased to N2604.8m. In the case of the total vote for education in 1999, N279.8m was budgeted for education. The amount increased to 489.2m in 2002. The percentage increase was 63.1% between 1999 and 2002 but dropped to 6.6% in 2002 (refer to table 2).

The essence of the first three tables is to give an idea of what it will cost the government to embark on inclusive education. By the time the total costs of normal education is added to the costs of providing some of the special equipment for the children with hearing impairment and the ones for the blind, the cost of training teachers for the programme, providing other facilities and some of the other special needs of handicaps, the cost would have been so much for the government to shoulder. Hiring teachers who are not prepared professionally into classrooms without the necessary training is not the answer to educating children with disabilities (Chappell, 1998).

The unit cost of inclusive education was determined by talking a look at the unit cost of the normal schools and that of the special schools to give an idea of what the unit cost of inclusive education would be. The unit cost of inclusive education was put at about N500,000 annually and this is quite enormous if the scheme is to be properly implemented. The government would have to be financially buoyant. Most of the schools in the country are at present lacking many facilities and the fund to revamp dilapidated infrastructures is not available. The cost of inclusive education will add more to the burden of cost. It can then be seen that financial constraints have been a major issue in implementing inclusive education for all.

Investigation revealed that one of the obstacles to successful implementation of inclusive education in Lagos state was lack of fund. The Federal Government of Nigeria has not made the issue of costing the scheme a plan of action. It appears that the financial constraints has been a major issue in implementing inclusive education in the country and perhaps it is the anticipated enormity of fund that scared off the Federal Government from full implementation of the scheme.

There is also the problem of imbalance between planning for normal education and inclusive education. The imbalance in planning has had far reaching implications. This imbalance in planning has created among other things a severe shortage of teachers with the required technical training for special education.

The problem of workshop exposure to sensitize parents of handicap children and the society at large can be seen as part of the obstacles to successful implementation of inclusive education.

Conclusion and Recommendation

It is critical that any move the country is making towards considering inclusive education must start with effective planning and this has to do with serious cost analysis since finance is the main integrative part of the whole planning process. The study has helped immensely to bring into forefront the cost implications of inclusive education in the country and also serious consideration has been taken as regards some of the obstacles to successfully implementation of the inclusive education in Nigeria.

Recommendation

- The government should take a critical look at the cost of implementing the scheme and make it an important integral part of the planning of the whole education scheme. The issue of personnel requirements, facilities and plant should be seriously considered. Training and re-training of teachers for inclusive education is very important. Involving untrained teachers without the necessary resources or training will not solve the problem of educating children with disabilities. Teachers should be specially trained for the purpose of inclusive education.
- School administrators play important roles in education generally and they are the backbone of any school programme. Where the administrators are strong, the job of the teachers would be much easier. The issue of fund should be a joint venture between the Federal and State governments and also the parents because of the huge cost involved.
- There is need for family involvement one this is very critical to the success of educating the child in normal as well as special education. Parents are primarily support system.
- Private sector participation in the funding of inclusive education should be encouraged because it is a highly capital intensive venture.
- The use of local resources should be highly encouraged as well in order to reduce the cost of embarking on this programme which is enormous.

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