

The Education of Children with Special Needs in Cameroon

The Role of Teachers and Parents towards Inclusive Education

Mary Fola TUKOV



Master of Philosophy in Special Needs Education

Department of Special Needs Education

Faculty of Education

University of Oslo

Norway

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Abstract

The education of children with Special Needs is a world wide phenomenon which many international bodies, governments and organisations have come to realise its importance thereby striving for the need for inclusion. Laws, legislations and policies have been put forward to encourage the education of these children in regular schools. In most cases these laws are made without taking into consideration the training capacities of the teachers, suitable physical school environment in terms of infrastructures for accessibility, the large classroom sizes in relation to the student/teacher ratio and most importantly instructional materials and resources. The core implementers of this policy are the teachers whose role is very vital for the education of children in regular school settings. Parents on the other hand as one of the stakeholders of education have a great role to play in their children's schooling. They act as partners to the teachers and their role cannot be minimized even though schools have traditionally kept them at arm's length. What is commonly seen in most schools is that parents are been instructed with a view to the physical and moral welfare of their children without listening to what the parents have to contribute.

The purpose of this study was to investigate and explore the role of Teachers and Parents towards the education of children with disabilities in Regular Secondary Schools in the Cameroonian setting. The study was conducted in two schools in the Buea District in Cameroon. The main informants were four teachers and two parents. A case study design orientated to qualitative research approach using several research methods was used to collect empirical data. The methods include interviews as the main research method, and supportive methods such as document consultation, field notes and informal talks as additional sources.

The results obtained show that teachers' views of the understanding of the concept of inclusive education vary. Some of the teachers were aware of the theoretical understanding and meaning while others could not identify with the concept appellation. Also the study shows that generally teachers in regular schools turn to be

very slow when teaching in class so as to give room for those students with disabilities to meet up with the lessons. The teachers stated that punctuality was one of the greatest challenges children with disability face. The teachers themselves lacked the training in special education and they also expressed the challenges of insufficient funding, resources, materials and infrastructures which could accommodate students with disabilities in regular schools. Moreover, the study shows that teachers who were interviewed have a positive attitude towards inclusive education because they have the human heart to feel for those who have disabilities.

The study also indicated that parents were against the education of children with disabilities in special schools. This was because of the stereotype stigma attributed to those centres by the society. Also parents are aware of the positive gains children have from learning and playing in the same environment, thus their greatest ambition is to send their children to regular school where they could share in peer support and instil in them the spirit of motivation.

The information gotten from the study also highlight the need for financial, moral and material support to schools, children with disabilities, their parents and a review of the educational system.

The result also show that there is a lot to be done by the government of Cameroon to improve on the education of children with disabilities in regular secondary schools such as the need for the training for more teachers in special education and the adaptation of the curriculum to suit the individual needs of children with disabilities. The teachers also have to change their mentality in favour of inclusion and to see into it that the needs of the children are taken care of. Parents on the other hand have to support the teachers by acting as partners to teachers so that the education of their children will be successful in regular school settings.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my late mum Angela Bomki Tukov.

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1. CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The study investigates and explores the role of teachers and parents towards the Education of Children with Disabilities in Regular Secondary Schools in the Cameroonian setting, so that the government should realise there is the need for a strong and well implemented policy on inclusive education.

1.1.1 Cameroon Educational Policy and System

Cameroon has a national educational policy which strives for the education of Cameroonians on how to read and write in at least one of the two official languages. In the area of education, two subsystems exist in Cameroon: the Anglophone system of education based on the Anglo-Saxon model and the Francophone system based on the French model. Although the two are used side by side, a bilingual system of education is also operational at the university level where studies are carried out in both English and French. The educational system consists of early childhood education. It is not compulsory and in the Anglophone sector it is called 'nursery school' while in the Francophone sector it is called 'L'ecole maternelle'. Children attend these schools for about two or three years until the age of five or six years when they are ripe for primary education. The duration of primary education is six years (from the ages of six to eleven approximately). This is the only part of a child's education that is compulsory in Cameroon. The number of primary schools across the country is almost evenly split between Government owned and those run by various religious denominations (Catholics, Presbyterians, Baptist in the Christian parts and koranic ones in the Islamic parts). There are also lay private schools which are owned by private individuals. At the end of the studies they are entitled to write the First School Leaving Certificate and the Common Entrance Examinations which

guarantees them a place into secondary school. In addition there are Technical, Vocational and Professional examinations that allow pupils access to specific career paths.

At the secondary level, tuition at the Government Secondary Schools is less as compared to the other denominational schools and lay private schools. In the Anglophone section, secondary education takes five years from ages 11 to 16 approximately. Students specialise in the arts or sciences and at the end of the programme they must take the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary level examinations. If they pass they qualify for admission into high school which entails a two year studies and at the end they have to take the GCE Advanced Level examination. Along side, the system also has technical and vocational secondary schools. The duration is generally four years. The Francophone General education last for seven years from the ages of 11 to 18 approximately. The first cycle lasts for four years while the second cycle lasts for three years. At the end of the first cycle the students sit for the Brevete D'etude (BEPC) and later in the second cycle they sit for the Probatoire and Baccalauréat examinations.

1.1.2 The History of Education in Cameroon

The first organisation to introduce Western education in Cameroon was the British Baptist Missionary society. This was in 1844 but the number of schools remained limited with fewer Cameroonians gaining access. There came the German colonial system of education. The pattern of education was based on the interest of the German government and the Western missionaries. Their curriculum was aimed at teaching the Cameroonians to have basic skills so that they can work as clerks. The German educational system ended with the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.

During the period 1916 to 1960 the French and the British had control of the territory. The country was divided by the League of Nations as war spoils to the French and British. The French colonial educational policy was aimed at establishing the French culture with its famous policy of assimilation in the French Eastern part of Cameroon.

The British system of education was implemented indirectly through missionary societies and native authorities in the British Southern Cameroons.

After independence in 1961, the two states became Federated states and each region was allowed to practice what she acquired from the respective colonial masters. Developments towards political, economic, social and cultural heights opened the way for an attempt to harmonise the two systems into one. As such, the National Council on Education was created in 1963 to initiate educational reforms. The result was the creation of the Federal Law NO. 63/COR/5 of 1963 which reformed the primary school duration to six years studies in the whole territory. This law restructured secondary schools into a junior cycle of five years and a senior or high school cycle of two years as it is practiced today in the English system of education. With the formation of the Unitary Government in 1972, the first attempt to harmonize the two systems was to establish a National Institute of Education for Research. Harmonized programmes for the first two years of secondary schools were tried in a few schools though the implementation failed a few years later. These reforms also made some primary and secondary schools to become bilingual educational institutions. Based on University reforms in 1993, further attempts towards harmonization were seen in the creation of Bilingual, Francophone and Anglo-Saxon Universities in some parts of the country.

1.1.3 Special Needs Education in Cameroon

Special Needs Education is a system of education for children with disabilities within ordinary schools or out of the ordinary settings. Special Needs Education in Cameroon actually started in informal settings especially in the family circle where parents could teach their local dialects, use local currency in buying and selling as it was one of the main occupations in the early days (Shey 2003). Customs, beliefs and attitudes practiced by various ethnic groups in Cameroon have for a very long period of time influenced the education of children with special needs. In some areas children with disabilities were denied their basic rights; they were almost excluded in

the domains of education and professional training. They were treated as 'in-valid' or inferiors and in need of very special protection. With the arrival of Christianity by the Western Missionaries, consideration was given to persons with disabilities. They started recruiting children with disabilities alongside other children in their mission schools and classes. Before the creation of the Ministry of Social Affairs in 1975, formal education for children with disabilities was mostly done in special institutions which were mostly privately owned and with fewer children attending regular schools. The first centres were created in 1972 called Ecole Specialisee pour les enfants Deficients Auditif-ESEDA. (Special school for children with hearing impairments). And L'externat Medico Pedagoque- LA COLOMBE (Special school for the mentally Handicapped children). These centres were run and managed by religious groups and parents of children with disabilities. Another centre was created in 1975 called PROMHANDICAM. It was a centre for the vocational training of children with disabilities of both sexes for their eventual socio- economic integration in to the society.

It is worth mentioning that before 1975 the Cameroon Government did little or nothing to help children with disabilities as concerns education. The children's welfare was catered for by a unit in the Ministry of Public Health. Disability was seen as a disease which was sometimes incurable. The responsibility for special education is shared between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Affairs. There is no administrative structure that deals specifically with special education. The legislation allows for various grants concerned with the support for schools, special pedagogical assistance, training of specialised staff and the development of curriculum materials.

With the creation of a Ministry of Social Affairs in 1975 a Department of national Solidarity was created to oversee the well-being of persons with disabilities. This Department in collaboration with the Ministry of National Education has put in some efforts to the education of children with disabilities. The Ministry of Social Affairs in order to train young handicapped Cameroonians with visual impairments in arts and

crafts, created the Rehabilitation Institute for the Blind in Buea called Bulu Blind Centre (MINAS, 1990). This was the first institution created under the control of this ministry. With the willingness of the Cameroon government to give state subventions to schools for the training of children and young adults with disabilities, many more centres have been created. Most of these centres are owned by private individuals such as churches, Non Governmental organisations and they are mostly found in the urban centres with few of them in the rural areas.

From the initiative and adoption of the United Nations Frame work for Action in which Cameroon took part, and the Standard Rules on the Equalisation of opportunities for people with disability, there has been a slight positive change towards the education of children with disabilities in Cameroon. As an accord to this, the Cameroon National Assembly deliberated and adopted Law No 83/013 of July 21st 1983 relative to the protection of persons with disabilities. This law was supported by Decree No 90/1516 of 26th November 1990 text of application to support the modalities and protection of persons with disability (Biya 1990). It can be said that the 1983 Law on disability laid the foundation stone for a stronger government policy towards the education of children and young adults with disabilities in Cameroon. With the help of the special schools and some regular schools having children with disabilities, there has been a great development in enhancing positive attitudes, and also training disability adults to become self-reliant for the socio-economic integration in to the community. It is also worth mentioning that, there is the lack of government encouragement towards the establishment of training centres for special education teachers which can lead to an improvement in the level of education of children with disabilities.

1.1.4 Inclusive Education in Cameroon

Inclusive education which has its origin in Special education, originally set out to meet the needs of learners who were being traditionally excluded from the school and were other wise marginalised within the classroom. Since the adoption of the 1983

law and its 1990 texts of application, the government has intervened in some occasions to encourage the education of children with disabilities in regular schools. Credit also goes to the World Conference on Education for All (1990) which has made the government of Cameroon under the ministry of National Education to make education free and compulsory at the primary level irrespective of the disabilities. To facilitate the easy access of children with disabilities in regular schools, the law calls on all ordinary schools enrolling children with disabilities to adopt the physical, learning and moral environment to suit the needs of all children. In order to foster inclusion, Cameroon took part in the deliberations leading to and adopted the 1994 Salamanca Declaration that called upon all government to put in place laws and policies for the total enrolment of children with special needs in regular schools and classrooms unless there are compelling reasons for doing other wise (Shey 2003). Due to the difficulties experienced by children with disabilities in regular secondary schools in Cameroon, most parents still enrol their children in these schools. Most of the schools either consciously or unconsciously accept these children and they study along side with normal children.

1.2 THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to investigate and explore the role of teachers and parents towards the education of children with disabilities in Regular Secondary Schools in the Cameroonian setting.

1.3 THE BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The concept of Inclusion is a world wide discussion in the 21st Century. International bodies, governments, organizations have come to realise the importance of the education of each and every child irrespective of their needs and disabilities. The World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien (1990) talked of getting all children to school and giving them the suitable education even though, practically, it

did not involve children with special needs but in 1993 the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities For persons with disabilities came with a bright future for disability persons. It was not long in 1994 when the Salamanca Statement on Inclusive Education called for the education of each and every child irrespective of the disability, to be included in school and consideration was made as regards their individual need (UNESCO 1994).

Many researches have been carried out internationally on the implementation of the policy on inclusive education. Literature has shown that the success of inclusive education depends to a large extent on the willingness and the ability of teachers to make accommodation for individuals with special needs (Heiman 2004), and (Vaughn et al. 1996). Some studies also show that teachers who are aware of inclusive policy are willing to be part of the inclusive team while other studies found out that teachers agree that inclusion is important but many find it difficult to apply. (Danne & Beirne-Smith (2000). Looking at Inclusive education on the part of the teachers and parents in Cameroon, one realises that there is not much research on these areas particularly on the role of teachers as to what is expected of them irrespective of the diverse nature of the classrooms.

Parents on the other hand are also important as regards the education of their children thus they should not be left out. They are considered as equal partners. And research has shown that parents who provide active support for their children's education contribute more to their children's success than those that provide passive support (Watson, Brown & Swick (1983). Against this background, therefore, I will be looking at inclusive education in the Cameroonian setting in respect to the role of teachers and parents.

1.4 JUSTIFICATION (REASONS FOR THE STUDY)

The education of children with disabilities is not well catered for by the present educational system of Cameroon. There is basically the lack of trained teachers or

professionals in this field alongside insufficient and lack of special learning devices for the learners. The government policy and emphasis is on the training of regular or general education teachers who lack the basic skills of special education. Most of the special schools in Cameroon are owned by private individuals and Non Governmental Organizations. But the government sometimes grants subventions to these private bodies. Parents who cannot afford to send their children to these schools are forced to send their children to ordinary schools which are fees free and less expensive. Regular teachers themselves lack the special skills in teaching children with disabilities, coupled with the class size of 1:60 teacher-students ratio or more that makes class management and interaction difficult. For these reasons, I am looking forward to investigate the role of teachers and to explore their views, understanding and challenges as teachers in an inclusive setting. Also focusing on parents' role is because they have a fundamental part to play in the education of their children. Most of the researches done so far on disability have neglected the role of parents. I am interested in raising their profile so that professionals can see them as equal partners in the education of their children.

1.5 RESEARCH PROBLEM

How do teachers and parents perceive the Education of Children with Disabilities in Regular Secondary Schools in Cameroon? What roles do teachers and parents play towards Inclusive Education?

1.5.1 Sub-Questions

How do teachers and parents understand the term of inclusive education?

How is inclusive education implemented in school?

What roles do teachers and parents play towards inclusive education?

What challenges do teachers and parents face towards educating children with disabilities?

1.6 OPERATIONALISATION OF TERMS

1.6.1 Disability

Ministry of Social Affairs, (1990) defines disability as involving someone who lacks the potentials of using his or her normal routine effectively, and finds it difficult to carry out major roles in life. It also involves a limitation on a person's functioning that restricts the individual's abilities.

1.6.2 Types of disabilities

The categories of disabilities that the study focuses on included amputation, paralysis, audio impairment, visual impairment, behaviour/ emotional challenges and intellectual challenges.

1.6.3 Special Needs Education

It is defined as a situation where by children require special educational provisions because they have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of their age and also because they suffer from a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided for children of their age.

1.6.4 Inclusive Education

Inclusion is a process that addresses and responds to the diversity of needs of all learners through participation in learning, in culture and in the communities. It entails a change in the modification of context, teaching approaches, structures and strategies with a common vision that covers all children of the appropriate age range and the

responsibility of the regular system to educate all children (Savolainen et al 2006). Inclusive education contributes towards the ultimate goal of promoting an inclusive society which enables all children/adults, what ever their gender, age ability, impairments, to participate in and contribute to the society (UNESCO 1994). Also, every child in school is included in the feeling of belonging among friends, teachers and to the support staff of that school.

1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This work is made up of five Chapters. Chapter one serves as a background to the study. Chapter two titled Theoretical frameworks highlight the relevant literature, concepts and models related to the study. Chapter three includes Research Methodology. In this chapter the methodological approach that was used to carry out the research will be the focus. Chapter four will present the results of the findings while Chapter five discusses the findings, proposes recommendations and draws a conclusion that will include areas for further academic pursuits.

Chapter one: Introduction

Chapter two: Theoretical Framework

Chapter Three: Methodology

Chapter Four: Presentation of Results

Chapter Five; Discussion, Recommendation, Conclusion

2. CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the relevant literature, researches and models related to the study will be presented. The main topics discussed in this chapter include Disability, Education for All, Inclusion, and the role of teachers and parents towards inclusive education in Cameroon.

2.2 THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to investigate and explore the role of teachers and parents towards the education of children with disabilities in Regular Secondary Schools in the Cameroonian settings. What motivated the choice of theoretical framework was:

- To look at the concept of disability so as to better explain the education of children with special needs in Cameroon.
- To discuss the concept of Education for All, Inclusion with regards to, researchers view, international standards, models and its importance.
- To look at the role of teachers and parents towards the education of children with disabilities.

2.3 CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The term ‘children with special needs’ is professionally preferred and widely used by experts and professionals when talking about the issues of barriers to learning, participation and development. Some studies have used ‘disabled children’, or ‘children with disabilities’ (Bigge et al. 1999, Smith 1998 & Johnsen 2001), while

others prefer the term ‘children with special needs’ (Ainscow & Haile-Giorgis 1998), or ‘children with disability and special needs’ (Opdal et al. 2001). However, the difference in words and understanding does not change the conceptual reference that these children are more or less different from the majority. They all refer to children with barriers to learning, participation and development. In Cameroon, the concept ‘children with special needs’ is not commonly used as to ‘children with disabilities’. Due to the traditional and cultural context together with the economic condition of the country, educators, social workers, and policy makers pay attention mostly to disabilities such as physical/movement, visual, hearing impairments, speech and language problems, intellectual and developmental disabilities. Therefore, to confirm the topic which talks of the education of children with special needs in Cameroon, the concept of disability which is the commonly used terminology to describe special needs will be defined and discussed below.

2.4 CONCEPT OF DISABILITY

The concept of disability was used to define and explain what it means in relation to the education of children with disabilities. Several authors have written about this topic and a lot of research has been carried out in relation to this phenomenon.

The Ministry of Social Affairs (1990) defines disability as involving someone who lacks the potentials of using his or her normal routine effectively, and finds it difficult to carry out major roles in life. Children who cannot carry out functions and duties because they lack the potentials to do so should be treated as special cases and their needs should be considered during the teaching and learning process. According to Skjørten (2001), disability is any lack or restriction (caused by impairment) to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being. The restriction is influenced by the environment in which an individual with disability lives. For some environments which are suitable and adapted, a person with disability can go along with his life without help from able persons.

Cosins and Hales (1997) suggested that disability is a loss of capacity or function due to physical, sensory, neurological, intellectual or emotional impairment. They view the cause as being determined (though not necessarily rectified) and it may be possible to measure the degree of impairment in relation to what is considered to be normal. The education of children with disabilities should be planned to help children come in terms with their disabilities so that they can shape their goals and ambitions to areas where the disability is not a handicap. This will help them enjoy the normal life that any normal person is enjoying.

Oliver (1990) commented that:

All disabled persons experience disability as social restrictions, whether these restrictions occur as a consequence of inaccessible built environment, questionable notions of intelligence and social competence, the inability of the general public to use sign language, the lack of reading materials in Braille, or hostile public attitudes to people with non-visible disabilities (Oliver 1990, p.14).

Persons with disabilities who happened to have some of the above described qualities are often treated in a dehumanising way. They are perceived and looked upon as inferior because of their disability and this can be termed social oppression.

2.5 EDUCATION FOR ALL

The concept of Education for All (EFA) was initiated by the Jomtien World Conference on Education for All (1990). It strives for the education of every child in the elementary and fundamental stage. UNESCO, along side other UN agencies, and a number of International and National Non-Governmental Organizations have been working towards the achievement of this goal. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states that everyone has the right to education and education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages, and elementary education shall be compulsory. This supports the fact that the concept of education for all has long been previewed and it was already in the pipe line waiting for the right moment so that its objectives can be put forward for its realisation by the year 2015.

Education for all as viewed by UNESCO (2005) ensures that every child has access to basic education and of good quality. This means creating a welcoming and conducive environment in schools and in basic education programmes which will captivate children to be able and enable them to learn. The development and the need of such child-friendly learning environment is an essential part of the overall efforts by countries around the world to increase access to, and improve the quality of their schools (UNESCO 2005). In order for EFA to be realised, children with disabilities, who are among the most marginalized and are at the risk for inclusion, must be ensured access to quality education.

2.5.1 Its Challenges

The first challenge is to meet up with the goal of Education for All by the year 2015. It is estimated that 140 million children who are out of school are relatively discriminated upon due to their sexes, cultures and because they have disabilities (UNESCO 2005). Thus, there will be a need for serious measures to be taken to ensure that these children who have a right to education are not left behind.

Secondly, the concept entails accommodation such as infrastructures, resources, finances and the recruitment of trained teachers so as to benefit its goals and objectives. Most of the schools in Cameroon cannot meet up with the demands of the concept because of insufficient and lack of the above facilities.

The concept also faces a challenge due to its implementation. Many countries in Africa and the World have signed the policy documents which strive for the implementation but the practical aspect of it is left out due to the socio-economic and financial situations of these countries.

2.5.2 The situation in Cameroon

In Cameroon, there has been a great concern about basic education. Many primary schools are opened every year so as to enable every child to acquire basic education.

The 1998 Education Law declares primary education to be compulsory and not just free. By so doing, the state makes a commitment to ensure access to education for all. The guarantee of education for all at the primary level meets to a large extent the expectations contained in the Jomtien Declaration (1990). Unfortunately, this is just at the policy level because there are still many children who are not going to school especially in the rural areas. At the secondary level, education is not compulsory. The government has decided to reduce the fees so that parents can afford to send their children to government secondary schools which attend to both normal and special needs children. There are parents who cannot afford sending their children to secondary school due to their socio-economic background. Consequently, the children drop out from school. Children with special needs are also given due opportunity to attend the same schools with their normal peers of the same age. Following the disposition lay down by Degree No.90/1516 of November 26, 1990 in accordance with the protection of persons with disabilities, article 1 states that, the education of children with disabilities will be taken care of by the government (Biya 1990).

In that regard, the Ministry of Social Affairs takes the responsibility of assisting children with special needs in regular secondary schools in Cameroon. Some students are assisted with tri-cycles, wheel chairs and a validity card is issued to them with benefits as exemption from paying school fees and medical facilities. Actually it is not every handicapped person that enjoys these facilities. Priority goes to those who have severe disabilities.

2.6 THE CONCEPT OF INCLUSION

The concept of inclusion seems extremely difficult to explicitly define from the works of other researchers as it is used in many ways. Inclusion when referred to education means a wide diversity of pupils and differentiates education in response to this diversity. It means that together with others, pupils with special educational needs are entitled to have their special needs met in regular classes by implementing a

curriculum for all. This requires teacher's education that will teach them to relate to such flexibility, parents partnership and cooperation with the teachers so as to promote the education of children and policy maker's decisions to provide all the necessary resources.

The basic idea of inclusion can be found in many previous international policy documents. Some of the most prominent documents are the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), The Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All (1990), The Standard Rules on the Equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities (1993), and the Salamanca statement and framework for action adopted at the World conference on Special Needs Education (1994). This framework turns out to reinforce the principles expressed in the Jomtien Declaration and Standard Rules which emphasised on schools to accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social and emotional disabilities.

The meeting point of the above regulatory document is that inclusive education is a process of addressing and responding to the learning needs of all children by using child centred flexible and effective teaching-learning methods in an inclusive educational system. Also it is a process that addresses and responds to the diversity of needs of all learners through participation in learning, in culture and in the communities which entails a change in the modification in context, teaching approaches, structures and strategies with a common vision that covers all children of the appropriate age range and the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children (Savolainen et al. 2006).

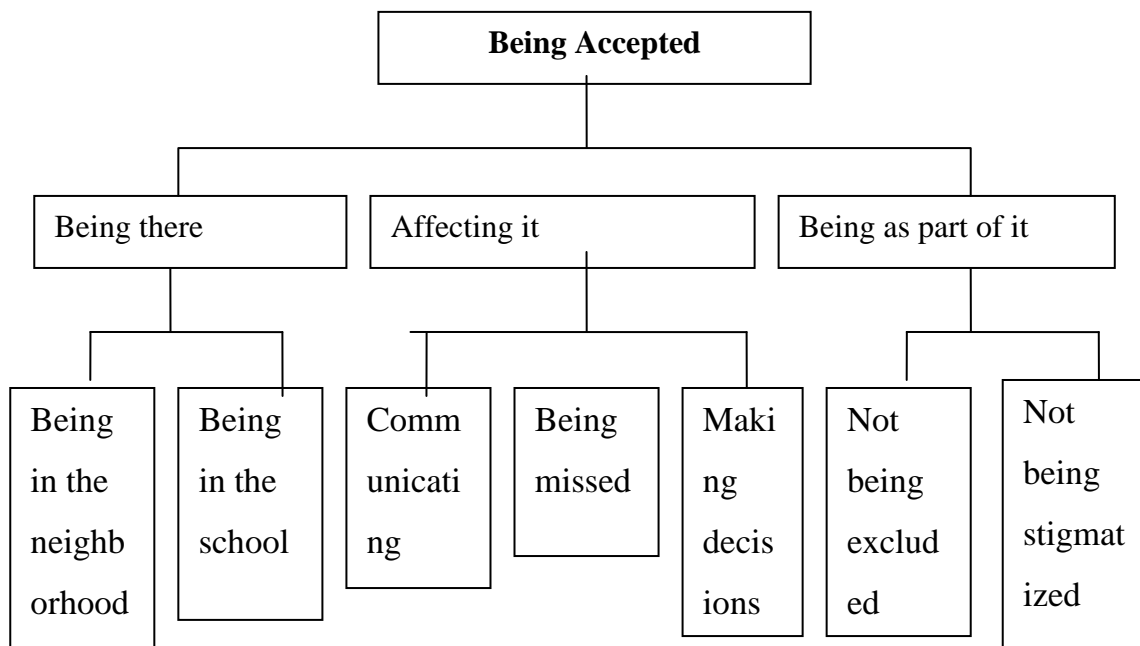
UNESCO (2005) defines inclusion as a measure that rejects exclusion of learners for any reason and maximizing the participation of learners making learning more meaningful for all children, rethinking and restructuring school policies, curricular and practices so that all learners needs can be met. Mittler (2000) argues that inclusion involves a radical change of a school in terms of curriculum, teaching and the assessment of students based on their diversities which arises from their gender, nationality, race, social background and the levels of their abilities or disabilities.

This involves a process of reforms and restructuring of the school as a whole, to ensure each and every child to have access to the whole range of educational and social opportunities offered by the school. This can be done as he named it through curriculum, recording and reporting of pupils' achievements, and the decisions that are taken on the group of pupils in the classroom and in school.

Booth and Ainscow (1998) suggest that inclusion involves a process of increasing participation of learner and reducing their exclusion from their curricular, cultures and communities of neighbourhood mainstream centres of learning. They further state that inclusion overcomes barriers to participation that may be experienced by any student.

According to Hall (1997), inclusion means to learn and share opportunities of learning and discovering new things as children interact socially; being a full member of an appropriate class in the school, and doing the same lesson with others. He came up with a model called "Being Accepted Model". This is to explain the deeper meaning of inclusion as shown in the figure below.

Figure 1: Being Accepted Model



(Source: Ritchie 1988)

Hall's (1997) thinking in terms of children's learning is related to teacher's efforts in search for knowledge and skills to improve on their professional capacities to handle children with special needs in regular schools.

According to Skjørten (2001), Inclusion focuses on the adjustment of homes, schools and the society at large so that all individuals can have the opportunity to interact, play, learn, experience the feeling of belonging and develop in accordance with their potentials and difficulties. It also means recognising individual differences and providing for those differences by enabling those individuals to obtain a good quality of life within their natural environment.

Skjørten (2001) continues that for the process of inclusion to be successful, the following among others are important:

- Legislation and regulation- implementation must be secure through allocated financial provision.
- There should be change in heart and attitudes
- Reorientation related to assessment, teaching methods, classroom management, including adjusting of the environment
- Redefinition of teacher's roles and reallocation of human resources.
- Reorientation of teacher education so that new teachers can contribute to the process towards inclusion.
- In-service orientation and upgrading of teachers, head teachers so that they will be able to contribute to the process towards inclusion.
- Establishment, improvement and further development of partnership between teachers and parents.

-
- Inclusion will also require flexible educational systems including flexible curriculum and examination systems.

Today, inclusive education is a conceptual approach aimed at achieving quality education by making changes to accommodate all learners regardless of their physical, social or psychological differences. Moving towards inclusion is not merely about conceptual changes but it involves processes that couple theoretical changes with legislative and practical changes at the classroom levels.

2.7 THE MOVES TOWARDS INCLUSION

UNESCO (2003) affirms inclusion as a dynamic approach of responding to children's diversities and to view individual differences not as a problem but as a means to help them overcome these differences thus enriching their learning. This explains the fact that inclusion stresses on how to transform educational systems and other learning environments in response to the diversities of learners. Therefore, the move towards inclusion is not simply a technical or organisational change but a movement with a clear philosophy and focus. At the core of inclusive education are the Human Rights to education, which stresses on the right of every child to education at least in the elementary and fundamental stage (Article 26-Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948:12).

Equally important are the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN 1989). Article 23 stipulates that children with disabilities should have access to education, training, health care services which can prepare them for future employment and also give them the fullest possible integration and individual development in to the society.

The Jomtien World Conference on Education for All (1990) set the goal for Education for All along side other UN agencies which later fought for the concept of inclusion in schools. Inclusive education has undergone a series of changes both in the classroom and societal levels that has been accompanied by the elaboration of

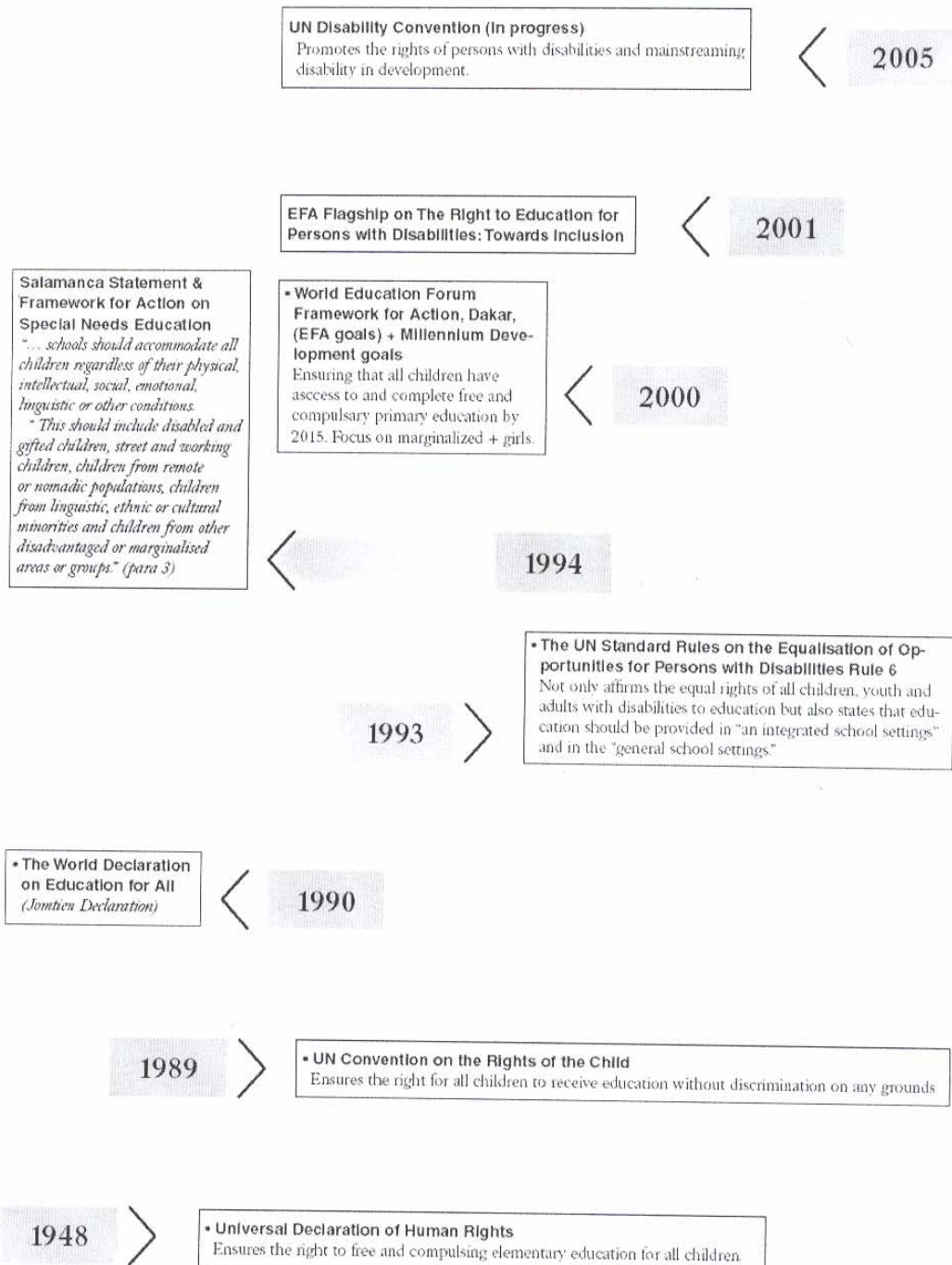
numerous legal instruments at the international levels. The Salamanca Statement and the Framework for Action (1994) asserts that:

Regular schools with inclusive orientations are the most effective means of combating discrimination, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all (Salamanca Statement, Article 2, p.13).

The Dakar Framework for Action (2000) has continued to provide a valuable reference point for all those involved in lobbying for inclusive education. The Framework so far is the most significant international document that has ever appeared in special education. It argues that regular schools with an inclusive orientation are the most effective institutions of fighting against discriminatory attitudes and it helps in building an inclusive society and achieving the goal of education for all.

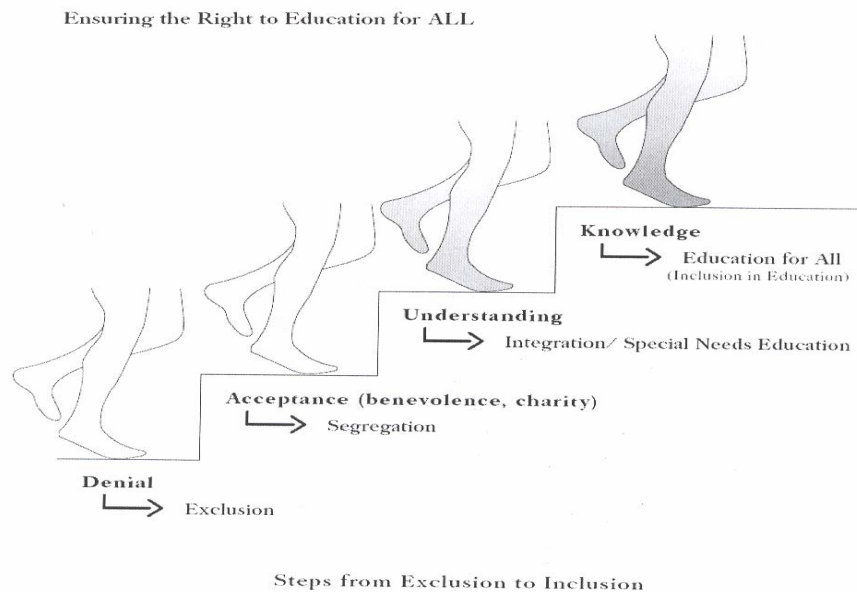
The figures below demonstrate the fact that inclusive education is rooted in various human right instruments which together provide a framework to support the implementation of inclusive approaches.

Figure 2: The Rights Framework for Inclusion



Source :(UNESCO 2005).

Figure 3 Understanding the Process of Inclusion



Source: (UNESCO 2005).

2.8 THE IMPORTANCE OF INCLUSION

In this section the importance of inclusion will be discussed along the following sub-heading such as social acceptance, equal opportunity, preparation for life, building self esteem, belongingness, social skills, cognitive development, academic achievement, peer support and friendship. There are other benefits to inclusion but for the purpose of the study the researcher is going to focus on the above listed points.

2.8.1 Social Acceptance

Smith(1998) and Alderson (1999) made mention of the fact that, one of the basic assumption of inclusion is that student with disabilities once they are placed in general education classroom they will become less stigmatised and they will be accepted by their friends without special needs. This is possibly the reason why Hall (1997) pointed out that pupils most fundamental needs in their development is to be known, accepted and valued as important members among their friends. There seem to be a possibility that students with special educational needs and those without interact as classmates and this will likely increase the opportunity for social acceptance. Looking at the need for peer acceptance, Samter (1997) observed that children who are accepted by their classmates enjoy a number of outcomes, while those who are rejected suffer a host of negative consequences. Some of the positive outcomes include playing together, learning, sharing experiences, which helps to bring about enrichment and the negative consequences include stigmatisation and depression. From my experience so far I have come to learn that children, who learn together, learn to live together and they socialise in different school activities thus eventually accepts each other. It is the teacher's duty to ensure favourable interactions, friendly and love sharing social atmosphere in his classroom.

2.8.2 Equal opportunity

According to UNESCO (1994) inclusive schools should provide all children with the opportunity to learn together without discrimination and it brings together children who may differ in terms of physical, social and academic abilities. Smith (1998) makes mention of the fact that students with disabilities have the right to be educated with their peers in integrated settings, to deny them their right is a form of discrimination. Wilson (2000) observed that students who are educated in separate classes often feel unmotivated, rejected, worthless, inferior, frustrated and isolated. He further states isolation cripples a child social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development. As equal rights is concern children with special needs are considered

first as human beings and secondly they are member of the community where they belong thus they have the right to share and benefit from what ever opportunity available in their disposal. In the western world were adequate finances and resources are allocated to school inclusive practices can well be put in place whereas in the African context and in Cameroon in particular were resources are very limited inclusion can take a very long period of time to succeed. There will always be a problem of equal opportunity as regard the education of children with disabilities.

2.8.3 Preparation for life and social skills

According to Smith (1998) and Skjørten (2001), inclusion prepares children for life in the community this comes as a result when students from diverse background and abilities learn together in the same classroom setting. Lipsky and Gartner (1989) found out that majority of children with special educational needs in segregated settings fail to master skills or appropriate behaviours and they always remain socially isolated through out their school year. There is the possibility that being in an inclusive classroom gives learners with special needs the opportunity to interact with ordinary peers thus preparing them for life in the real world. Also they learn to support each other that bring a change in the society. Bandura (1977) argues that children learn social behaviour from their peers and this can be learnt in two ways through response consequences and through models. With response consequences children take note of the negative and positive effects of what they experience and through models he suggest that children learn new behaviours by observing other people's behaviour this will increase the opportunity for them to learn from one another through class task and interactions with one another.

2.8.4 Development of self esteem

Samter (1997) point out the fact that, the approval that children have for one another if it happens it is likely to influence a positive self-esteem in them. And children who feel good about themselves learn more easily and retain more information and they

do well in every way. This idea seems to conform to the ideas of Maslow (1954) who claims that the need for self esteem can be through mastery or achievement in a given field or through gaining respect or recognition from others. Having an inclusive setting is requisite for the development of self esteem and self confidence that is why Maslow presents self esteem as one of the top requirements in his hierarchy. This can only be realised when the entire school system and the teachers play an important role in developing children's self esteem.

2.8.5 Belongingness

Abraham Maslow (1970), in his discussions of hierarchy of human needs pointed out the fact that belongingness was an essential and prerequisite human need that had to be met before one could ever achieve a sense of worth. Inclusive education stands for the idea that all students in a school regardless of their strengths or weaknesses in any area are termed as part of that school. In so doing they are included in the feeling of belonging among other students. When students are given the right to belong they are given the right to their diversity. And this is one of the fundamental principles of inclusive education of valuing the diversity within the human community (UNESCO 1994).

2.8.6 Cognitive Development and academic achievements

Vygotsky (1978) describes the zone of proximal development as the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under the adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. According to him children can imitate a variety of actions that go well beyond the limits of their own capabilities. They are capable of doing much more in collective activities or under the guidance of adults. This concept is vital because in inclusive schools students engaged in different activities that involves problem solving and they have the possibility to develop their cognitive competence. Lipsky and Gartner (1996) in their study found out that

children with special needs in general education setting improved academically and most of them turn to study hard.

2.8.7 Peer support and friendship

According to Smith (1998) and Alderson (1999) inclusion affords children with and without disabilities opportunities to become friends with one another. All students need people to talk to, touch, laugh with and smile at and to get response from. The lack of attention makes the child unhappy and a neglected child loses interest in life and can fail to grow normally in mind and body thus children with special needs has to have friends with who they could share their fears, hope and joy.

2.9 SOME RELEVANT RESEARCHES ON INCLUSION

A wide range of studies have been conducted on inclusive education, but relatively few have be conducted on Teachers and Parents role towards the education of children with disabilities. Shey (2003) in his study on parents perspective on the education of children with disabilities in regular schools in Cameroon revealed that parents are interested in the well being of their children and it is a matter of important to them that their children are happy at school.

Another study carried out in Cameroon by Ekema (2005), on the exploration of primary school teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards Inclusive Education in Fako Division reveals negative attitudes towards inclusion due to the lack of knowledge about disabilities experience and training in teaching these children. This has influenced the teachers' beliefs and attitudes.

In a comprehensive study conducted by Hay, Smith and Paulsen (2001) in South Africa, the study reveals that teachers in South Africa have a definite lack of knowledge about issues relating to inclusive education. This is because the teachers felt unprepared and unequipped to teach in inclusive classrooms as a result of their

lack of training, lack of time, large students –teacher ratio and the lack of teacher experience.

Heiman (2004) conducted a study designed to examine and compare British and Israeli teacher's perceptions, expectations and needs regarding the inclusion process. The findings suggest that although the teachers evaluated the inclusion process in different ways and intended to implement it differently, most of the teachers in both countries support inclusion.

2.10 TEACHERS ROLE IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Teaching involves a great deal of management of student instructional goals and performance records, especially when instruction is individualised. Teachers create the net through which knowledge and skills are transferred to pupils which lead to their development. Teachers have the key responsibility for providing children with the chance for a proper type and quality education that helps them to cope with the challenges of themselves and of the society. This is because teachers are considered as the most direct and significant implementers of any educational programs (Johnsen 2001). The main roles played by teachers include:

2.10.1 Mediation

Teachers play the role of mediation during the teaching and learning process of children at school. They teach children to think, to learn and solve problems and most importantly they help children to move to the next level of understanding and development. Vygotsky (1978) in his theory of development, points out the fact that teaching is most effective in what he called the Zone of Proximal Development of the child. This involves the distance between what a child can do independently and what he or she can do better with the help of adults or more capable peers. To help children move forward to this zone, teachers are expected to place the teaching close enough to the children's current ability and knowledge. In normal situations, children learn in

respect to their developmental ages. This comes spontaneous as they grow but when they are assisted by their teachers in school or at home, the level of their understanding increases and they now perform tasks in a greater level of understanding.

Teachers with children with special needs play more important role when their responsibilities are multifaceted. They identify the special education needs of their disabled students and create a responsible and supportive network around the child. The progress of the child is monitored and reviewed by them. Classroom teachers are definitely the most decisive persons to build a friendly learning environment where every child is supported to function independently and experiences success (Johnsen 2005 & Wormnæs 2001). In inclusive setting, teachers are required to teach all students regardless of their circumstances and abilities.

Inclusive education and philosophy works on the premise that the school is better for all when it includes children in the community. Relative to this aspect, the teachers become better teachers when they have the responsibility for all the children. By so doing, they become more active, innovative, and creative and learned to see the needs of the children especially those with disabilities. What ever the case, teachers have been left to face the enormous task of achieving quality education. They are faced with multiple professional difficulties no matter what is done in terms of assigning policy priority, mobilizing resources or streamlining administrative structures (Johnsen 2001& Skjørten 2001).

2.11 PARENTAL ROLES IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Parent's involvement has a great influence on the effective education of children with disabilities on the way children learn. And research has shown that parents who provide active support for their children's education contribute more to their children's success than those that provide passive support (Watson, Brown, & Swick 1983). Today the concept of parental involvement is somewhat remarkable, giving

that the home is the centre for teaching and learning. Boyer (1991) states that: “Home was the first classroom while parents are the first and most essential teachers”.

Governments are introducing policies encouraging parents and families to be more involved in the educational process thereby shifting their role from fund-raising to more concrete ones like being partners to teachers (Wolfendale 1983). Parents have also realized that, for children to grow up and be responsible and contributing citizens to the community and society, they have a greater contribution to make in their upbringing and in the educational process.

Rye (2001) explains that when parents are actively involved in the education of children with disabilities, they (children) tend to know that school and home are not two different worlds and that other adults, not only the teachers are interested in schooling. This better explains to the parents the relationship and link between the home and the school. He further makes parents aware that what they can do, alone and together with their children is important for the child’s learning and development both at home and at school. He also argues the fact that, an active role played by the parents will have a positive impact on the education of their children leading to an improvement in grades and test scores. And that participation will have a great impact on teachers and the school in general and the outcome will be the teachers and school’s insight into the children’s daily life both inside and outside school thereby creating a better foundation for contacts.

Dean (1996) explains that parents who have children with disability have generally been found to welcome the idea that their children should be educated in the mainstream or regular schools. This gives them the feelings that their children are nearer to normality and they get a better preparation for adult life in a non-handicapped environment than would be in a special school setting.

Sloane (1991) argues on the influence of parents on children’s learning performance. She explains that the home plays an important role in children learning process and achievements, as they learn values, attitudes, skills, and behaviour, in the home that

prepare them well for the task of schooling. This explains the fact that families or parents are essential vis-a vis their children's performance.

The main roles played by parents include:

2.11.1 Child Rearing.

The first primary role of a parent to a child is to be a parent to that child. This has a great impact on that child's moral, social, physical and cognitive development. The child is expected to experience mutual love, care and security protection from the parents. Rye (2001) argues that this inborn premise for creating social attachment and developing meaningful contacts is not only important but it acts as a prerequisite in the development of the child as well. It is also important when parents take up their responsibility in raising the child, providing care and helping the child with his school work back at home.

2.11.2 Parents as partners to teachers

Parents of children with disabilities play an important role in their education when working with teachers as partners. When this relationship is built in partnership of mutual respect (parents and teachers listening to each other) the outcome will enhance their relationship thereby increasing the chances of children to learn.

Hornby (1995) argues to the fact that the most appropriate model for the relationship between teachers and parents is the one where teachers are seen as experts on education and parents are seen as experts on their children. He also mentions that the relationship between teachers and parents can then be a partnership which involves the sharing of expertise and control in order to provide the optimum education for children with special needs. Parents and teachers contribute with different strengths to their relationship, thereby increasing the potency of their partnership. An essential aspect of the partnership is that it must be based on mutual respect where by both parties listen to each other and give due consideration to each other's views.

According to Rye (2001):

Parents, who in addition to care providing, are active participant in school work, cooperate with teachers regarding school work and home work, child rearing and the child's social life in and out of school (...) This form of cooperation has a demonstrable positive impact on the child's well being, learning and development, and helps prevent difficulties in learning and adjustment (Rye 2001, p. 21).

This further explains the fact that parents can contribute to their children's schooling by coming in to help the teachers with particular skills like music, computer studies, ensuring their children to do their home work behave in an acceptable way and support the school if there are any problems with their children. On the other hand teachers may also visit the homes of children and advice parents on child rearing and how to help children back at home with their home work.

Co-operation between parents and teachers can lead to a positive effect as regard child learning and social development. Parents can tell the teachers about the child social relationship with siblings and others back home. How the child uses his time, problems faced by the child and what the child likes or dislikes. The teachers on the other hand, should make parents to be aware of the positive effect they have with their children and what they should do together at home so as to ease the child learning in school.

3. CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the methodological approach which was used to carry out the research will be discussed. The study is exploratory because its purpose was to investigate and explore the role of teachers and parents on the education of children with special needs in regular secondary schools in Cameroon. In order for the data to be collected, a well-suited methodology had to be used. This chapter describes the design, methods and the procedures as well as personal experiences encountered during the field work.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

A qualitative case study design was used for the research in accordance with the nature of the study. Yin (1994) defines research design as:

An action plan for getting from here to there, where here may be defined as the initial set of questions to be answered, and there some set of conclusions (answers) about these questions. Between 'here' and 'there' may be found a number of major steps, including the collection and analyses of relevant data (Yin 1994, p.19).

The choice of choosing a qualitative research approach is to provide a deep insight into the phenomenon and also to provide a possible explanation and understanding as perceived by the informants that is teachers and parents. As regard the design of the study, the researcher came up with the development of the interview guide, selecting the informants, and a pilot study was done to test the instruments. There was some adjustment made to the interview guide and finally the main interview was carried out. Analyses were made to the answers gotten from the teachers and parents.

Yin (1994) defined case study as:

An empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and it relies on multiple sources of evidence (Yin 1994, p.13).

The study actually focuses on the in-depth understanding of the phenomenon and its context as to the way 'you see it', empirical investigations and the use of other sources of data. Taking into consideration its disadvantages as stated by Yin, who argues that designing and scoping a case study research in order to ensure that the research questions can be adequately answered can be difficult and data collection for case study research can be time-consuming and tedious. Despite Yin's argument the study was still carried on. The cases involved two selected schools from the Fako Division in Buea. A case is a particular instance of a phenomenon and it is mostly selected once the phenomenon of interest has been clarified, thus a case is selected for an intensive study.

The phenomenon of the study is inclusion and the role of teachers and parents towards the education of children with special needs in regular secondary schools in Cameroon. The main focus is to look at the role teachers and parents play towards the education of children with disabilities in regular secondary schools.

Following the study, a main method of data collection was used along side supportive methods. The main method includes qualitative interviews. Consultation of documents, field notes, and informal talk were used as supportive methods. Gall, Gall and Borg (1996) defines triangulations as:

It is a process of using multiple data-collection methods, data sources, analysis, or theories to check the validity of case study findings. Triangulation helps to eliminate biases that might result from relying exclusively on any one data- collection method, sources, analyst, or theory (Gall, Gall & Borg 1996, p.574).

The findings were based on informant's point of view.

3.3 Method Of Data Collection

The main research method which was used in collecting the data was the qualitative interview with semi-structure questions. Other supportive methods include: consultation of documents for guiding background information, field notes and informal talks as additional sources.

3.3.1 Interview

Cohen and Manion (1989) made mention of the fact that an interview is a conversation initiated by the interviewer for a specific purpose of obtaining research relevant information and focus by him on content specified by the research objectives of specific description. Interviews, according to Yin (1994), are one of the most important sources of gaining case study information in qualitative method. This method is very helpful because it gives the opportunity to the interviewer to clarify any question which is of doubt to the respondent and it can draw the attention of the respondent to the right direction if he or she is going out of the question. The interview guides (See Appendix 1 and 2) were formulated on the basis of the research question and sub questions.

A semi-structure interview guide was used as the main instrument so as to encourage the respondent to answer the questions. It was also advantageous because it helped to collect standard data across informants and of greater depth than can be obtained from a structure interview. It also offered the opportunity to use probes and prompts to obtain more information from teachers and parents during the interview.

Semi-structure interview even though it was the main instrument of data collection, it also has its flaws in a research process. Taylor (1984) gave a detailed criticism of this method based on the idea that it does not provide first hand information on how people act in their daily life. Prior to this criticism, the method was still used as the main instrument of the study in order to find out an in-depth perspective of the role of teachers and parents towards the education of children with disabilities in Cameroon.

3.3.2 Document Consultation

Consultation of documents was another supportive method which was use for the data collection process as addition to the main method. Yin (1994) made mention of the fact that document consultation could provide other specific details to check and verify if the information from other sources is true. In this study, international documents, administrative documents, and other relevant documentations were reviewed. The purpose of looking at these documents was to find out the international views of the concept of inclusive education and the developments which led to its initiation. Along side the background history of the education of children with special needs and inclusion in Cameroon.

Even though the consultation of documents as a source of data collection have proven its grounds, many critics are in doubt of its potentiality over the reliance on documents in case study research because they feel that the researcher may not know the exact documents to consult (Yin 1994) states that some of the documents might be deliberately blocked. What ever the case, the consultation of documents grants easy access and it is stable and can be reviewed several times.

3.3.3 Field notes

Field notes were also another supportive method used along side the main method for data collection. This included information that could be seen while conducting the interview, difficulties encountered, and special comments were all taken down. Field notes was also used to investigate what was not well understood during the interview process.

3.3.4 Informal talks

Informal discussion was also another supportive method use in the field during the data collection. Valuable information was received from teachers, principals, parents

and disability student themselves based on their condition because some were reluctant to express their views when they saw the tape recorder.

3.4 SAMPLING

A purposeful sampling was used to select the interviewees. Gall, Gall and Borg (1996) write:

The purpose of selecting the case, or cases, is to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied (...) in purposeful sampling the goal is to select cases that are likely to be 'information rich' with respect to the study (Gall, Gall & Borg 1996, p.217).

The sample consisted of teachers who teach in regular secondary schools and who have students with disabilities in their classes, also Parents who had children with disabilities in regular secondary schools. In this case, out of the total number of children with disabilities enrolled in the regular classes, four of the teachers and two of their parents, who were willing to take part in the study, were interviewed.

3.4.1 Selection Criteria

A-Schools

Two secondary schools, both in the Fako Division were selected. Taking into consideration the fact that there were many other government and private secondary schools in this division, the two schools were selected following the reasons below: The two schools were Anglophone secondary schools; which had children with disabilities; the teachers were regular class room teachers; and the schools were easily accessible in relation to transportation.

The sample consisted of teachers in the above mentioned secondary schools who were regular teachers and who had students with disabilities in their class. The reason for selecting the teachers as informants is because the teachers are the sole proprietors

of the teaching and learning process in the classroom. They face the actual realities and their role is very important for the effective teaching and learning process.

B-Classes

The reasons for choosing these classes in each of the schools include: The easy identification of students with disabilities; the large class size handled by one teacher; and the number of children with disabilities.

The following table presents the chosen classes and their population at the time of the visit to the schools:

Table 1: Selected Classes in School 1

The level of the class	Number of students with disabilities	Number of students per class	Number of Teachers per subject
Forms Five	6	150	1
Forms Two	3	130	1

Table 2: Selected Classes in School 2

The level of the class	Number of students with disabilities	Number of students per class	Number of Teachers per subject
Forms Three	8	95	1
Forms Five	4	105	1

As presented in the table above, in school 1 which consisted of classes five and two (Forms five and Forms two) they were selected and identified with children with disabilities. The total number of students in these classes was two hundred and eighty (280) and out of this number nine of the students have disabilities. The classes have one regular teacher per subject who handles these classes. Two classes were also selected in school 2 which included classes three and five. The total number of

students in these classes was (200) and out of this number (12) of the students have disabilities.

The criteria for the selection of parents as informants include: The knowledge of their children's condition, the availability of the parents, and the willingness of the parents to be interviewed. The sample consisted of parents who had children with disabilities in the above mention regular schools. The parents were selected when the school and the students had been identified, then two of the students with disabilities were contacted and their parents sorted out especially those who were willing to participate.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

3.5.1 Obtaining permission

The study was carried out in Fako Division precisely in Buea. A letter of application to carry out field work was written to the Divisional Officer for Buea and to the Delegate in charged of Secondary Education for Fako Division (see appendix 3 and 4). Thus, permission was granted by the Divisional Officer of Buea and the Delegate in charge of Secondary Education. (See appendix 6 and 7). Attached to these applications were the following documents, an introductory letter from the Department of Special Needs Education University of Oslo (see appendix 3) a research proposal and also an interview guide (see appendix 1 and 2).

3.5.2 Visits to schools

Visits were made to schools situated in the Buea district. The aim was to meet the principals and to explain to them the reasons and purpose of the visit and to seek their permission and collaborations in identifying children with disabilities enrolled in their institutions and also in identifying the teachers who teach these students. Also to meet with some teachers who will be able to take part in the research as informants.

Still in the schools, it was possible to sort out the children and get to know their parents.

3.5.3 Contacts with teachers

Contacts were made with teachers who were willing to take part in the interviews. The researcher had to wait for them in school so that we could have some time off after class. Some teachers gave the researcher appointments which were never fulfilled. Some contacts were made through home visits and telephone calls.

3.5.4 Contacts with parents

Contacts were made to parents through their children, home addresses and telephone calls. Some parents who were teachers themselves were contacted in school and appointments were made to meet at home.

3.5.5 A pilot study

A pilot study was carried out with four teachers from one Private Secondary School in the Buea district who had children with disabilities in their classes. Two of the students Parents were also interviewed. This was to test the instruments for the purpose of validity and to find out if the questions were rightly framed so that necessary changes could be made before conducting the main study. Gall, Gall and Borg (1996) argue that during the pilot interviews, note should be taken of communication problem, evidence of inadequate motivation on the part of the respondents. They warn researchers who devise their own tools and apply them straight forward without doing a pilot study that they may run the risk of not only wasting the time of their informants but also theirs because the tools might not bring out the expected results.

After administering the pilot study, there were some adjustments to be made to the interview guide for the teachers and also that for the parents. This is because the

researcher realised that some questions were not well-framed relative to the responses gotten from the respondents. The researcher had to re-structure some questions by cutting them short and giving room for more discussions. This ensured reframing the question for the main interview as well as enhanced my accuracy and speed.

Problems encountered during the pilot study:

The first problem was to have a suitable time for the interview to be conducted with the respondents (4 teachers and 2 parents). Apart from this, one of the parents was not cooperative to talk to the researcher because she said people had been coming for similar information on the conditions of their children, yet nothing has ever been done to improve the condition of their children. This on willingness was particularly fuelled by the belief that the researcher was coming to give some help. On the other hand there were problems at this preliminary stage to probe and prompt when necessary. This was compounded by other difficulties in the interview guide, where by it was realised that the respondent were not responding to the questions as expected.

Possible Adjustment

There were some possible adjustments made to the interview guide after the pilot study the reasons for these adjustments were to ensure that the intended outcome or results could be realised. A stronger rapport was made with the respondents or interviewees. Further, Probes and prompts were used when necessary in the main study in order to motivate the teachers and parents so that more information could be gotten from them which is necessary for the study.

3.6 THE MAIN STUDY

In the main study varied methods of data collection were used. Yin (1994) made mention of the fact that a major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use varied sources of information. He went further to state that:

However, the most important advantages presented by using multiple sources of evidence is the development of converging lines of inquiry (...) thus any findings or conclusion in a case study is likely to be much more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information, following a corroboratory mode (Yin 1994, p. 92).

3.6.1 Interviews

The interviews were based on sub-questions related to six themes namely:

- Educational background.
- Knowledge of the concept of EFA/ Inclusive Education
- The implementation and experiences of teachers/ parents about inclusion
- The types of disabilities and role played by teachers/ parents.
- The support and challenges faced.
- Views to improve the educational system.

These themes were chosen from the literature review and from the research questions. Verbal permission was sought from teachers and parents to use a tape recorder during and in conducting the interviews. They were promised confidentiality and anonymity. Four teachers were interviewed all together and three of the interviews were done in school and one out of the school premises. For the two parents the interviews were conducted at their respective homes. Questions were asked to the teachers and parents and they gave their own opinions and views to the questions. In situations where the answers were not satisfactory, probes and prompts were used to motivate them so that they could provide more information. In situations where they felt they could not answer some question because they thought they were personal to them no force was used to persuade them.

At the end of each interview, I expressed my sincere thanks to the interviewer or respondent for having taken some time off from their busy schedule to take part in the

study. I also told them that I will not fail to come back if there is anything I find not clear to seek for more clarification. All of them accepted and promised their availability any time need be. Revisits were made on different occasions to be clarified on what was not understood. The main study could not be successful without some setbacks. There were some difficulties which include:

- The delay in obtaining permission from the Divisional Officer (D.O.)
- The delay in obtaining permission from the principals of some secondary schools who were not available to identify the various classes that have children with disabilities so that the researcher could identify and meet with the teachers who are teaching those particular classes.
- There were also some difficulties using the tape recorder. At some point it stopped working and I was forced to postpone the interview and come back on a later date when the teacher was free. So this took the researcher much time.

Despite the above difficulties and with the collaboration of the four teachers and two parents the interviews were conducted.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

After the collection of data, organisation and analysis of the information collected were taken into consideration. Morse (1994) highlights the fact that a qualitative analysis is difficult, complex, lengthy and time consuming. Each interview was transcribed. Transcription was made by listening to the tapes and writing down carefully every word that was used by the teachers and parents. The writing and listening process was done several times to avoid leaving out some vital and important information. The transcribed interviews were typed in a tabular form, printed out and read as many times as possible to crosscheck if there was any useful information left out. Comments and field notes which resulted from informal talks

with the teachers and some parents were organised and looked at together with the interviews.

The data collected was categorised into six themes that came up from the research questions and the statement of purpose. This was to find out answers to my research questions which include, how do teachers and parents perceive the education of children with disabilities in regular Secondary Schools in Cameroon? And what role do teachers and parents play towards Inclusive Education?

3.8 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

The concept of 'Validity' is defined as the degree to which evidence and theory support the interpretation of the scores entailed by proposed uses of instruments (Gall, Gall & Borg 2003). Validity investigates what it intends to investigate. This is to explain if the findings are meaningful, relevant, and true to the research question. Reliability refers to the degree of consistency of results through the use of data collecting instruments; checked and controlled, undistorted by personal bias and prejudice (Gall, Gall & Borg 1996). Reliability actually is the ability of a tool to consistently measure the phenomenon it is designed to measure. Yin (1994) holds the view that the goals of reliability is to minimise errors and bias in a study.

Since statistical measures are not used in this study, questions about validity and reliability will be discussed simultaneously taking into consideration the focus of the study which tries to answer the main research question (how do teachers and parents perceive the education of children with disabilities in regular Secondary Schools in Cameroon? And what role does teachers and parents play towards Inclusive Education?).

During the preparation of the interview guide which was to be used for the study, friends, course mates and my supervisor helped to prove read and comment on the content of the interview guide, this was to check if the questions were okay to be asked to the interviewees. It also checked whether the questions were relevant from

the other people's point of view and to see that the questions were easily comprehensive to the interviewees. After several discussions, a pilot study was carried out to gain experience, confidence and feedbacks. This also was to test the validity of the instrument. Even though some changes were made to the interview guide after the pilot study, the changes helped to improve interview techniques and speed. Triangulation was also used as a means to strengthen validity. In the study, many other supportive methods were used along side the main method. Semi-structure interviews, document consultation, field notes and informal talks were also used.

The same questions were asked to all the informants during the interview, this was to make sure that all the informants were treated equally. Consideration was also given to the level of understanding and temperaments of each informant. Those teachers and parents who had difficulties in understanding the questions were given further explanations so that they could understand better.

The teachers and parents were also assured of confidentiality of the information they were providing. They were told to feel free and answer any question they wish to and also free to ask questions when ever they needed clarification. This acted as a guarantee to the freedom of their speeches. Also visits were made to clarify certain points that were not well understood by the writer.

At the start of each visit to and interview in the selected schools, the permission granted by the Provincial Delegate of Secondary Education was shown to the school authorities and to the interviewee (teachers).

Even though some minor difficulties were realised in the process of reviewing document consultation from some provincial libraries, archives, resource centres and persons, this did not very much affect the validity of the study. A thorough and explicit explanation of the purpose and necessity of the study was given to the persons and authorities concerned to ensure that necessary documentation was obtained from them. The researcher also tried at all cost to maintain neutrality so as

not to lead the informants with information. Thus, the interviewer allowed them to express their point of views on the information needed. The exact words from the informants were transcribed as it was in the tape recorder. The analyses are based on the information gotten from the informants.

The responses gotten from the teachers and the parents could have affected the validity and reliability of the study because some teachers gave responses which were not actually what was happening. One of the parents also went to extremes to present the difficulties she has been facing all along with the child and hiding some information's.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Robson (1993) a research should ensure that relevant persons and authorities are consulted and informed, and the necessary permission obtained and applied. Bearing in mind the above statement, the following ethical considerations were carried out. Firstly, the consent of the school, teachers and parents were sought through school visits, telephone calls and home visits. Detailed explanations of the purpose and the procedures of the study were all revealed to them and their consent sought.

The issue of confidentiality was raised and explained to the informants (Teachers and Parents) so as to build a bridge of trust between them and the interviewer. Along side permission was sought from the informants to use a tape recorder and to take down notes when necessary. This was to avoid misquotation in future. No force was used on the informants to take part in the study. They were given the option to withdraw when ever they felt like or when they felt uncomfortable. Further, appointments were made at the convenient and disposer of the interviewee taking into greater consideration their teaching and busy schedules. The writer tried not to give promises to the respondent which will not be fulfilled such as deceiving them and promising

them of material and financial assistants. At the end of each interview each interviewee was promised to receive a summary of the findings of the study.

3.10 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study was carried out in Fako Division with head-quarters at Buea. The views of the teachers and parents in the other parts of the country might have been different from those presented if the study was conducted nation wide. Due to time factor and financial constrained other towns or provinces could not be included in the study.

Even though this study reveals to some extent the situation of children with special needs in regular secondary schools and the perception and role of teachers and parents towards inclusive education, it is important to note that only four teachers and two parents were interviewed. Consequently, the ideas of four teachers and two parents cannot be used to represent the view point of all the teachers and parents in Cameroon who have children with disabilities in their class rooms and homes but their views have attempted to paint a picture of the type of education and assistance these children can have in a normal school setting.

Mindful of all the limitations above, much effort, energy, resources and strength were put together for the success of the study.

4. CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to investigate and explore the role of teachers and parents towards the Education of Children with Disabilities in Regular Secondary Schools in the Cameroonian setting. The study was carried out with four teachers and two parents as informants. The main themes and in relation to research questions include:

- Educational background.
- Knowledge of the concept of EFA/ Inclusive Education
- The experiences of teachers about inclusion
- The types of disabilities and role played by teachers
- The support and challenges faced.
- Views to improve the educational system.

The above categories and themes were later identified from the findings and they formed the basis of the analysis and presentation of the data in this chapter.

4.2 Presentation of Paul and Kate (Disability Students in Inclusive Settings)

Paul and Kate were two students selected from the chosen schools as examples of children with disabilities in inclusive class room settings in Cameroon. Their Parent's also took part in the study as the main informants. Their background and history explains some of the situations which children with disability face in an inclusive setting.

PAUL

Paul is sixteen years old without his sight. He was attacked by a severe measles at the age of seven when he was in primary three. This illness had a defect in his eyes. Prior to his predicament he was carried to many hospitals in Cameroon, Nigeria and England by his parents. He was taken to some eye specialists (ophthalmologists). Both eyes were operated upon and he was told his illness had been very acute and it has destroyed his nerves in the eyes. He was asked to come back for another check up after three years and even when they did, a better outcome could not be reached, gradually from then the situation became worst and he finally lost his sight. He has been blind for nine years now and he has gradually learned to cope with his studies. He later went to the school for the blind to study Braille for two years and later enrolled in an ordinary school setting. He is one of the best students in his class and presently he is in the examination class to write his ordinary levels. He writes and reads Braille and he is enrolled in a regular secondary school. The Braille material is provided by his parents because the school does not have sufficient funds to provide for these services.

He expresses his feelings of joy and the hospitality and indifferent treatment he receives from his class mates and from his teachers. He acknowledges the fact that he is not left out during class activities and participation but he feels disappointed sometimes when he can not meet up with the rest of the student especially when notes are dictated in class because he writes in Braille which makes him to be very slow. In order to help him in class, the teachers always place him on one of the first seats and frequently they have to check if he is doing the right things. And they try to spell out the difficult words so that he can also benefit as they write on the board. In Paul's class there are two visually impaired students. The teachers always asked both to sit on the same desk at the front so that when they are dictating notes both of them could be copying from each other. This facilitates the teacher's job because when Paul did not get a word the other friend will tell him or he can copy from the friend since both of them are using the same writing material.

Along side, during exams or class test, their scripts are taken to an interpreter who transcribes their scripts and then send them to the school so that the teachers can mark and give their scores. This process is time consuming and it delays the distribution of scripts for corrections to be made. This is because the interpreters are not in the school thus they work in a recreational centre for the blind called 'Bulu Blind Centre' and it takes a lot of time for them to mark and send the papers back to the school, whereas the teachers could have marked those of the other students and could not give out the scripts because they are not complete. They have to wait for Paul's paper with that of his friend to be corrected before all the papers are distributed out and corrections are made. One of Paul's teachers told the researcher he some times asked Paul to read out the script of the friend while another student copy it out and then the friend reads the script of Paul and the same person copies it out and then the teacher will collect the copied scripts and correct them. This helps him to save time. Paul is very ambitious and he finds his studies very interesting even though challenging because he spends a lot of money buying his Braille materials and coping with his learning style. He says he will like to be a teacher in future and he will want to teach Braille for those who want to study Braille. He is ambitious and also he wants to become a musician.

KATE

Kate is thirteen years old and she is also one of the Special Needs students in a regular classroom setting. She is physically handicapped and crippled with both legs. She had a serious attack of meningitis (a disease which attacks the spinal cord and it offend leads to paralysis) when she was two years old. And the right part of her body was affected and is not functioning well. This makes her to suffer from a partial stroke.

It all started when Kate was two years old and she was attacked by a severe fever and she was taken to the hospital. The doctor gave her some prescriptions and asked the mother to come back after two weeks for check up. One week later Kate was still sick and the mother realized that the baby was getting hotter as each day passes and the

drugs that were prescribed were for two weeks so she thought may be it was normal since the child had to take the drugs for two weeks and it was not up to two weeks so she went back to the hospital and the doctor had to change the drugs but unfortunately for Kate she could not resist any longer as the fever became more intense and it led to meningitis. Her body became weaker and weaker and her legs became numb, she became paralyzed and the mother realized that her body was not functioning as before it was too late for her. At the age of four her two legs were operated upon. She now moves with crutches and wears an iron designed shoes attached to her waist to support the two sections of her body. Without the crutches she cannot move. She also owns a tri-cycle which sometimes she takes to school. She lives with the parents and some times she is being carried to school. She also has a lot of support from the parents who tries to assist her in what ever function or task she want to perform both physically and materially.

She is in grade three and she is doing well with her studies. She writes with the left hand and this makes her to be slow in class as compare to the rest of the students who uses their right hand to write. The teachers normally and sometimes slow their pace to let her meet up with the other peers when dictating notes in class. Apart from this she has no problem because she can see, read but cannot move from her sit all the times in class. The teachers allow her to always sit down and ask or answer questions in class. She seats in one of the first desk in the class near to the door. This is because she sometimes comes late to class and when ever she is coming inn the other students are distracted so a comfortable position is keep for her besides the door for her free access to the classroom. The school is aware of her predicament thus they have always places her on the first floor of every class. She has her path way accessible for her and for her tri-cycle to be packed in front of the class so that she can use her crutches to move in to the class. Kate is very inquisitive in class and she always want to know more about things. She is also one of the best students in her class in terms of academics. She is loved by her teachers and by her friends because she always has something to say in class and crake's jokes which helps to relief sometimes the tense atmosphere of the class. She has an invalidity card from the Ministry of Social

Welfare which exempts her from the payment of school fees and other school requirements. She also has a talent in arts work. She can draw, design and paint portraits and pictures. So apart from her academic skills she also has a creative talent that makes her to earn some money.

In the next phase I will give a brief presentation of the background of Paul and Kate's teachers and the other teachers in the study.

4.3 EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

The teachers were also referred to in the text as Teacher1 (John), Teacher 2 (Susan), Teacher 3 (Thomas) and Teacher 4(Sarah) while the Parents were also referred to as Parent1 (Lucy) and Parent 2 (Rose) respectively. The educational background is aimed at knowing the educational levels of the teachers and also to know how long they have been in the teaching field.

Table 3: Teachers' Background

Teachers	Class	Formal Education	Teaching Experience
Teacher1 John	Forms two	Diploma from National Higher Teachers Training College(DIPES1)	4 years
Teacher2 Susan	Forms three	Bachelors Degree	25years
Teacher3 Thomas	Forms five	DIPES2 and a Masters Degree in Mathematics	15years
Teacher4 Sarah	Forms five	DIPES1 and a masters Degree in History	16years

Three of the teachers John, Thomas and Sarah have a diploma from the National Higher Teachers Training College (DIPES 1 and 2) ENS Yaoundé and Bambili. They are trained teachers with experience. In addition Teacher 3 and teacher 4 have a master's degree in Mathematics and History respectively. Susan has a bachelor degree and has taught for 25years in ordinary school settings. Teacher 1 has four

years teaching experience and both teachers 3 and 4 have taught for fifteen and sixteen years respectively in ordinary school settings.

4.4 KNOWLEDGE OF THE CONCEPT OF EFA/INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

4.4.1 Education for All

This theme is aimed at presenting the teachers views, knowledge and understanding of the above concepts. And also to know if inclusive education has been discussed in school.

John the first teacher to be interviewed acknowledges the fact that he has heard about the concept and to him it means every child should have a minimum level of education. Which means every child should go to school and learn something. He admits the fact that the concept has been discussed in school and that they as teachers tries to ensure that these children acquire the skills and knowledge. Teacher 2 also refers to the fact that every child should be sent to school and that Education for All means, all children should be given the opportunity to go to school even those with disabilities and they should study along side their classmates who are able. She further referred to the fact that teachers have been discussing it in school as regard to the advantages of children going to school and the benefit it will bring to the society in the future. Thomas understanding and view of the concept of Education for All embraces every child. He states that everyone should be given the chance to learn something and go to school. That children should not be left at home, they should come to school, meet their friends and try to learn something that can help them in future. He tells that the concept of EFA has been discussed in school and they sometimes discussed it in the staff room during staff meetings and they encouraged parents to bring their children to school during parent's teachers meetings (PTA). The last teacher Sarah says education for all entails everyone to go to school and attained some level of education. That children and adults should be literates and by so doing

they should go to school and attained a minimum level of education that is why the government has made primary education free for every one.

From the views presented above it indicates that teachers have a theoretical understanding of what is Education for All as they have been discussing it in school or in staff meetings, thus they as teachers are trying to maintained the policy and they also encourage parents to send their children to school as it is the primordial goal to be achieved by 2015.

4.4.2 Inclusive Education

This theme highlights the perspectives of the teachers as to what they understand is the concept of inclusion. It also expresses the views for the implementation in their institutions and if they have been discussing it in school with the principal and what they know about the implementations in other schools. John the first teacher defines inclusive education as:

a concept or an idea where student with special needs and normal student of the same age brackets study together in the same class and all their needs are being taken care of by the teacher.

He further expresses the view that they have been discussing it in school with the principal in school meetings and they as teachers are trying to include everybody even though it is very difficult for them because they lack the resources to maintain the standards. He says:

It is implemented but not to standards because of the lack of resources and many students have been recommended by the government to be admitted in schools, for example the Ministry of Social Welfare has intervene to exempt students with disabilities from paying school fees. And I have three students in my class with disabilities.

He also acknowledges the fact that the students with disabilities in his class are aided both by teachers and their class mates and he has no idea if this is the same in other schools. The second teacher's opinion about inclusive education involves the

education of both children with disabilities and their normal peers in the same class setting. She says, it means trying to bring the able and the disable into one class setting. She also makes mention of the fact that the concept to a large extent has not been discussed in school but she has heard the principal mentioned it in passing but not as elaborate. She accepts the admission of children with disabilities in the school and points out the fact that the principal has been admitting students with disabilities in the school and it is a practice that is common in other school. But they as the teachers lack the teaching experience and resources to accommodate these students.

Thomas the third teacher has this to say:

We have been teaching children with disabilities in ordinary school but I had no idea of the practice being called as inclusive education. This concept or word is new to me but we have been teaching children with disabilities and normal students together in the same class.

He further explains that they have children with disabilities in their school and the principal had mentioned in many occasions the equal satisfaction the teachers have to give to these children along side their able peers. So teachers work hard to make sure students have equal rights and they study in the same classroom since they have no specific secondary school for them. Teacher 4 Sarah defines inclusive education as:

A system of education which involves no distinction based on the handicapped, special disabilities and the ordinary students. They are all students and they all belong to the same class thus their needs should be taking care of as individuals and as a class.

She expressed the view that the principal has been making some efforts to talk about the concept of inclusive education even though they do not term it as inclusive education. The concept is new to them but the practice has always been there since students with special needs do not have specific secondary schools or special Government schools. She further agrees to the fact that they have children with disabilities and she thinks they are also admitted in other schools.

The concept of inclusive education is a practice that had been taking hold in the Cameroonian secondary schools even though some of the informants (Teachers) were not so versed with the concepts appellation. From the interviews conducted one can say the teachers have varied views of inclusion and of educating every child to ensure equal learning opportunities for the learners even though they lack the resources and teaching aids to fully implement this policy as it is defined by the authorities.

4.5 THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS ABOUT INCLUSION.

This theme is aimed at presenting the teachers experiences in teaching in an inclusive classroom and also to show how they try to deal with all the diversities.

4.5.1 Experiences

As mentioned above four teachers were interviewed and each of the teachers gave a different account of their experience in teaching in an inclusive classroom. John the first teacher to be interviewed said:

It is a little bit complicated because one needs to slow down, spell out the words so that the visually impaired students could write it out. The visually impaired students needs to sit in front so that he could be monitor, and also that his needs could easily be identify and responded to immediately.

As expressed by teacher 1 inclusive classrooms makes teaching to be slow in relation to the amount of time which the teacher is expected to teacher for his period which is usually 45 minutes per a subject. This is because the teacher takes a lot of time to spell out difficult words for the students who are visually impaired and at the same time the teacher is writing on the board so that the normal students can also copy out the right spelling. This to him is time consuming and some times it affects the teacher's lessons plan. He also maintained that, disability is not inability. This is because the visually impaired students work hard and they perform better as compare

to some normal student, so according to him students with disabilities are not burden especially when the due attention is given to them as required. He also noted that since there is no specialist amongst them who could read Braille they have difficulties in transcribing test and exams and this makes the return of scripts to delay. Thus they sometimes call upon some students to write out what a visually impaired student have written while he reads it out in Braille. The second Teacher expresses the fact that the students behave normally and since the school could not provide for the basic didactic materials necessary to accommodate these student the teaching process becomes difficult. She went further to note that these students are excluded from manual labour and sporting activities, which in effect means they are excluded and not being included in some class activities. Thomas the third teacher had this to say:

Since I am not able to read Braille there is the need for transcription after the boy has to write a test or an exams, and I also allow the friends to discuss with him so as to assist him when he needs help.

As mentioned earlier this process makes the teaching and learning process to be slow in order that the teachers have to satisfy the needs of the entire student. Sarah the fourth teachers also reduces her speed when dictating notes in class in order to accommodate the visually impaired students. Sometimes she ask the visually impaired students to use a tape recorder to record what she is saying especially when she is dictating notes in class.

4.6 THE TYPES OF DISABILITIES AND ROLE PLAY BY TEACHERS

This theme will highlight the various types of disabilities which students have in the various schools where the study was carried out and also it will present the role of the teachers in promoting inclusive education.

John teaches forms five and he has visually impaired students in his class. He tries to create a sense of understanding and usually he let them know that disability is not

inability and they should not rely on the advantages and special treatment given to them and relent their efforts, they should work hard so that they will be integrated into the society. So he mediates and ensures that each student has maximum satisfaction in what ever activity done in class. He further states:

I always try to move them from their isolation so that they should not feel frustrated and abandoned; from time to time I try to move to their seats to check if they are doing the right thing and if they are okay and ask their friends to help.

He makes mention of the fact that he has no training in special needs education but he uses his knowledge from child psychology to teach and satisfy the needs of his students. Susan the second teacher has students who are physically handicapped. She is Kate's teacher and couple with her large class size of 1:90 students she tries to ensure that the needs of the students are meet with that of Kate. She makes mention of the fact that she use's a convenient pace while teaching so that all the students may follow up and she access them by giving class test to identify their levels of abilities so that she can give special care to those that needs help and attention. She has no training in special education and she says she uses her basic psychological knowledge and understanding to relate with her inclusive class. Thomas has a student with behaviour problems and visually impaired students in his class. He described him as being:

Stubborn, full with truancy behaviour and has never settle in class. He rejoices when being punished and does not do assignment, which always provoke me to let go some students for crimes committed with him.

With the situation at hand he tries to set class rules and policies so as to maintain peace and order where the needs of the students will be met in a calm and not chaotic atmosphere. He gives students the opportunity to always stop him for questions when something is not clear to them and he makes sure he is not too fast and too slow so that students can catch up with the lessons. He has no training in special needs education and he states, "I discuss with colleagues and I have been attending

seminars on special education and this has helped me in teaching students with disabilities in my class”.

Sarah the fourth teacher has students who are physically handicapped and an epileptic case. The student usually collapses in class and here sensitisation becomes imperative for accommodation. As a teacher she tries to explain and sensitised the students about the illness of their colleague and let them to understand its something normal and the student should not feel stigmatised. She further explains “I am putting extra sacrifices to follow the performance of particular students with or without disabilities to the end of the term so as to ensure continuity for the student’s success”.

Thus as a teacher he cannot relent his effort she must ensure her student achieve and reach the level of the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky 1978). She has no training in special education and she gives credit to the knowledge gained in the teachers training college which guided them with some studies on abnormalities and abnormal children. Thus she is using this experience to relate it in the inclusive class.

The four teachers all have students with disabilities in their classes and they have made mentioned of the fact that they face some difficulties when teaching in class to ensure individual satisfaction in learning. They do not have special needs educational training but they use their pass knowledge of psychology and daily experience to solve some of their difficulties encounter in the class room.

4.7 THE SUPPORT AND CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS

This theme presents the challenges which teachers face in teaching in an inclusive classroom and also the support they get from colleague and from the parents who act as their partners to promote education. John the first teacher had this to say:

Most of them came late to class and they serve as distraction to the other students so punctuality is our main challenge here for with the limited time you have to teach you cannot sit and wait for them all the time.

Usually the visually impaired student cannot find their way to class this makes them to be late for class and it poses a problem to the teachers and to the students. The teachers have limited time periods and the students are distracted. The second teacher also made mention of late coming as their major challenge and she says they normally encourage those who bring these students to class to respect time. Thomas expresses the challenge of handling the large class size to ensure that student's needs are taken care of. He states:

It is not easy for one teacher to cater for the needs and to handle and take care of ninety students in class A and eighty seven students in class B altogether one hundred and seventy seven students in class three and this is not only the classes we teach in the school.

To him it is very difficult to attend to all students and this makes inclusive education difficult to implement and some students do not indicate their disabilities such as those with low vision who need to sit in front of the class thus the teacher cannot determine their specific needs. Sarah in order to express her challenges states:

We have the task of completing the syllabus and if we have to follow the pace of the students with disabilities then we may not complete the syllabus because they are very slow in writing and in retaining information. For this reason we tend to be slow to give them the room for understanding.

This makes the teaching process very difficult to handle as she sometimes works with the pace of the students with disabilities. She further states:

Our school lacks the necessary learning devices such as Braille materials, with rough and unblackened chalk boards, no availability of accessible path for student using the wheelchair, this makes accommodation very difficult for them.

The teachers gained support from the parents and from colleagues who in one point sympathised, empathised and place themselves in to the student's position. John expresses the view that he encourages the students and sometimes he gives them financial and moral support. The second teacher acknowledges the fact that there is a general understanding amongst colleagues for the need to help these students some

time parents come to school to give report on their children's progress and they explain the specific disabilities of these children. This helps the teachers to know the weaknesses of the student and tries to provide for the students needs. Thomas expresses the view that they usually have support from colleagues especially from member of the counselling department who always assist students with behaviour problems and Sarah acknowledges the fact that there is a general consensus amongst teachers on how to handle children with disabilities. These views always come up in staff meetings.

4.8 VIEWS TO IMPROVE THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

This theme highlights the perspectives of teachers on ways to improve the educational system by the administrators in order to ameliorate the learning conditions of children with disabilities in ordinary school settings. John the first teacher expresses that, the government should train more teachers and these teachers should be given courses on special needs education so that they can better fit in inclusive classrooms. Further he mentioned that the authorities should provide teachers with enough didactic materials such as black boards, Braille materials for the students and they should create more facilities like pavements for easy accessibility for the visually impaired students. Susan the second teacher states that;

The government should institute a means for transportation such as buses for these students to school; this could ease their plight of late coming and will encourage early arrivals in school.

Couple with this, the class sizes should be reduce so that the teachers can have a full attention of the student and can better provide for their individual and specific needs. Thomas the third teacher expresses the view that some students do not know the degree of their disabilities thus the Ministry of Social Welfare should intervene and create awareness and sensitization centres which could help to identify the particular disabilities in student. Accommodation should be put in place so as to ease the displacement of the students.

4.9 PARENTS BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The parents were given pseudonym names such as Lucy and Rose. Paul's mother is named Lucy. She is a trained teacher and she teaches in a secondary school. Kate's mother is named Rose and she is a house wife.

Table 4 Parents' Background Information

Parent name	Age	Child	Age	Parent Occupation	Disability of the children
Lucy	40	Paul	16	Trained teacher	Visually Impaired
Rose	37	Kate	13	House wife	Physically Impairment

4.9.1 Parents realisation of disability

This theme goes to highlight the parent's views as to when and how they discovered that their child had a disability. Lucy expresses the fact that Paul was attacked by a severe measles at the age of seven when he was in primary three which caused a defect in his both eyes. She state:

He found it difficult reading what was on the board after his illness, it deteriorated a year later and his eyes became watery, he started locking himself in side the room to avoid sunlight and that was all. He could not see, read, and find his way to the classroom or even to identify his books.

Lucy could not believe her eyes that her son was getting blind. She felt so depressed, confused, worried and helpless about the boy's future and how he was going to cope with the new situation. Rose, the mother of Kate mentioned that the child was attacked by meningitis when she was two years old, this affected her both legs and she could not walk, also her right arm is paralysed and she uses a wheel chair and crushes to move. The situation to her was unbelievable but she finally accepted and offers it to the hands of God to take control.

4.9.2 Parents understanding of the concept of EFA/Inclusive Education

This theme presents Parents understanding of the concept of Education for all and also what inclusive education entails. Education for all and inclusive education is a very nice policy and there is the need to pay attention and to have interest in the child's needs stated Lucy. She further explains that this gives the opportunity for children with or without disabilities to go to school and learn with their peers of the same age and in the same class. The teachers have to consider the needs of the children and see into it that these needs are taken care of during the process of teaching. Rose see's EFA and inclusion as a way to include every child into the educational system and she feels it makes the handicapped children to feel free and be equal with their peers as they integrate them selves into the same classroom and study together, because to her they are God's creation and they should not be treated as separate human beings. Lucy, the mother of Paul gave reasons why she chose to enrol Paul in a regular secondary school, she state:

I know he is normal, he thinks himself normal and he is very hard working, enthusiastic and loves peer groups. His experience of belonging to a regular class and proofs of his conviction and academic upright did not warrant him to be separated from his friend.

Rose made mention of the fact that Kate's brothers, sisters and friends accepted her and they could carry her to school thus she did not see any reason for her not being enrolled into a regular school and she herself wanted kate to feel equal with her peers and integrate herself to the class and later to the society. The both parents see's peer support and interaction as a vital aspect to their children life which motivate them to feel equal as their peers and it also helps them to integrated themselves.

The both parents also stated some reasons why they decided to enrol their children in to regular secondary school. Lucy the mother to Paul state's that:

I did not want Paul to be a point of focus in a special school because people think special schools are meant for the foolish and stupid children. He was in a regular school before

his predicament so that is where he belongs and he should be given some considerations especially that of being able to study like others.

She further states that sending a child to a special school will call for public attention on the child and this will lead to stigmatisation as to what people regard special school to be like. She also added the fact that children who graduate from special schools do not have any future as they are left to fend for themselves.

Rose the mother to Kate says she loves her daughter and she wants the child to succeed like other children there by she has to be in the same class and school like other children. Her physical disability has nothing to do with her brain so she can study well like other students do.

4.9.3 Parents views on the advantages and disadvantages in sending their children to regular schools

This theme goes to present the views of parents on some of the advantages and the disadvantages their children face in regular class room settings. Lucy state's as one of the advantages Paul is having:

He feels the belonging and not being despised by his fellow mates, and he grows up to be part of the society, so there is the need for early integration and inclusion and most importantly he has learnt to do things as others.

The mother further made mention of the fact that she feels proud of his son and the son has proved his worth as he has always been the best in all and academically he is very brilliant. He has always topped the first three positions in his class. Rose the mother to Kate state:

She has been exposed to the society and she has made a lot of friends while in school. The sympathy she receives from other people has made her to be sympathetic too thus she has that human heart towards people she meets.

She also has a positive impression about the child because the child is coping against all odds to make her life worthy. The idea of including her into a regular school is

advantageous to her because it has expose her to the society and she has also made new friends who sympathised with her condition and have turned to help her with her needs. The disadvantages as stated by Paul's mother is that due to the poor school set up there are no special materials available for his son's needs to enable him develop as expected. Thus she is forced to go extra mile herself to provide all the necessary learning materials which he needs in school.

Lucy expresses that she has experience some changes in his son as from when he was enrolled in a regular school and she also sighted some of his problems. She state:

He has accepted the situation because initially it was very traumatising and he was always hiding himself in the room. The problem he is facing now is to get some one to transcribe his writing. He has to type what he has writing in Braille so that the teacher can read his scripts, and this makes his work double. He also has a problem with time because he is slow and does not have enough time for his test and he is graded like the others.

Rose the mother of Kate also stated that her daughter feels comfortable than before when she was depressed and could sit on a single spot without moving around. Thus sending she to a regular school has made her more flexible and she feels more comfortable in belonging with a group of friends.

4.9.4 Parents role and support

This theme presents parent's role in relation to their children's daily lives, education and the support they give to ensure that these children are comfortable while in school or at home. Lucy the mother to Paul remarked that:

I have accepted my son's condition as I know it is God's will. I always make him feel he is normal and can do everything like others. Personally I have had to study Braille and master it for the sake of the boy so that I can assist him back at home with his school work.

She further states that Paul's physiological needs is well taken care of as she always make sure that the boy has something to eat before going to school and she normally

assist him in packing his school bag to ensure that all his writing materials are in tact before he leaves for school. Rose the mother to Kate expresses her view saying:

I provide my daughter with food, shelter, clothing and her school needs and sometimes I personally carry her to school when there is a break down with her wheel chair. I try to provide her with the basic needs even though it can not be satisfactory with the limited resources that I have.

Fortunately for the both parents they satisfy their children's physiological and safety needs by ensuring that their basic needs are taking care of back at home. Parents as partners to teachers also assist the teachers to see in to it that they have a follow up in their children's education. Paul's mother state that:

I some times assist his teacher who happens to be my colleague to transcribe what Paul has written in front of him and hand the script to the teacher so that it can be corrected and feed back given to the students without taking much time of the teacher and that of the students.

She further expresses the fact that sometimes she explains to the teacher about the progress and development of his son and she receives feedback from the teacher, this help her to better ameliorate and follow up the boy's progress back at home. She has also consulted the Ministry of Social Welfare for assistance but as of now no help has been gotten. Rose the mother of Kate also stated that:

I have been going to school to explain and throw more light on my daughter's condition and progress to her teachers. The feedbacks I get from the teachers have also helped me to assist her back at home both academically and socially. I think she is doing well with her studies.

She has also sought and had aid from a Non Governmental Organisation named National Handicapped Protection Association CIG, who gave her a wheel chair after having sponsored her operation. She also has an invalidity card which exempts her from paying school fees and this was gotten from the Ministry of Social Welfare.

Lucy also stated some suggestions of what she thinks the school needs in order to help these children. She feels the school needs electricity which will help for

illumination so that students who have low vision and those who are visually impaired can have access to light which can help them to see the chalk board easily. Further she talked of the need for Braille machines which could help students who are visually impaired. She says the unavailability of these materials have made students to change their aspirations and career objective as she state:

Paul was a science student but has switched to the arts because there was the lack of special equipments for him to interpret and analysed diagrams, this made him to give up the sciences for art where there are no complications as to interpret and read diagrams. This has a negative effect on his future plans and career objectives.

Rose also sited the fact that there should be the need for infrastructural accessibilities to accommodate those students who are physically handicapped and their needs should be taken care of because they are generally slower than the other children.

4.9.5 Challenges which parents face in sending their children to regular secondary schools.

This theme presents the challenges which parents face in sending their children with disabilities in to regular schools. Lucy makes mention of the fact she is faced with the challenge to build up the morals of his son and she says there is the need to educate people to accept him as he is restricted in doing some activities which makes him to be isolated. For example the boy is exempted from sporting activities because he is visually impaired. He is exempted from sciences because of lack of equipments necessary for his adaptation in to sciences. Moreover, she is faced with the challenge of financial assistant. She has sought help from the ministry concern but has not received any reply. She and her family take's care of everything which the son needs for his education.

Rose also stated that transportation has remained a major challenge to her so that Kate can be in school and at the right time. This is because sometimes they have to carry her to school, she use's her wheel chair and at times she has to take the public transport of which the drivers are not patient enough to let her take her time to get

into the cap. Most offend she comes late to class. She also thinks there should be sensitisation of the population at large and also in school on the concept of disability because to her there is a lot of stigmatisation from friend and peers and this makes her to feel uncomfortable in school. More so, she is faced with financial challenges in order to satisfy the needs of her daughter.

4.9.6 Parents views to improve the learning conditions of children with disabilities in regular secondary schools.

This theme presents parents opinions on what can be done to the educational system as a whole to improve on the learning conditions of children with disabilities in regular secondary schools. Lucy the mother to Paul state that:

The system should realised they have special needs students and their needs should be taken care of, by so doing giving the teachers special training to cope with the children's condition, and providing them with the necessary materials in preparation for inclusion.

She further tells that they should create infrastructural accessibilities such as pavements where these students could move freely. And also they should allocate funds and resources for these students so that the basic necessary learning materials could be put in place for their use. She added that the government should try as much as possible to put in place the implementation of the policies he is signing.

Rose the mother to Kate stated that the government should not abandon children with disabilities with their parent or guardian they should come to their assistance and try to help these children to achieve their aims. She is also of the opinion that the government or educational system should grant scholarships to these student to motivate and facilitate their studies.

5. CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of the study is inclusion and the role of teachers and parents towards the education of children with special needs in regular secondary schools in Cameroon. The main focus is to look at the role teachers and parents play towards the education of children with disabilities in regular secondary schools in the Cameroonian Setting. The study was carried out with four teachers and two parents as informants. And the research analysis was based on some themes derived from the research questions and the statement of purpose.

This chapter is going to constitute a discussion on the findings in chapter four in relation to the research questions, themes and the theoretical framework discussed in chapter two. Concluding remarks and recommendations will also follow the discussion.

5.2 DISCUSSION

As presented in section 4.3 in the study, the teachers that were interviewed were experienced teachers who had training to teach only in ordinary secondary school settings. Their background information is presented in Table 3. Section 4.4.1 made mentioned of the teachers views and understanding about the concept of Education for All. From the views of the teachers who took part in the study it is indicated that they have a theoretical understanding of the concept of education for all and this can be justify in section 2.5 the Jomtien World Conference on Education for All (1990) which strives for providing basic education for all children, youths and adults to meet the learning needs of all by the year 2015.

5.2.1 Inclusive education and teachers views of the concept.

As indicated in section 1.1.4 law No.83/013 of July 21st 1983 (Chapter 3, Article 1 and 3) outline some dispositions laid down by the government for the protection of persons with disabilities in Cameroon. It stipulates that:

The education of children and young adults with disabilities shall take place in regular and special schools(...)In case of necessity, regular schools enrolling children with disabilities shall be provided with special teachers and didactic materials adapted to the children's needs. To ease access of pupils and students with disabilities into various classes in ordinary schools, these schools shall make the necessary adjustments to suit the needs of all children (MINAS 1990).

In regards to the disposition stated above, one will say it is not actually what is on the ground. Looking at some Cameroonian schools it is clear that there is the placement of students with disabilities into ordinary school setting but there is that lack of attention being given to them as regards their academic and social needs by the government or the school. And there is also the lack of regular checks and visits to schools by the authorities to ensure that the needs of the students are being taken care of. The available resources are not there for the schools and these makes the teaching and learning process difficult for the teachers. As shown in section 2.9 Hay, Smit and Paulsen (2001) in their study reveal the fact that teachers felt unprepared and unequipped to teach in inclusive classrooms due to lack of training, time, large class size and teaching experience.

As shown in section 4.4.2 the teachers views of the understanding of the concept of inclusive education varies. Some of the teachers were aware of the theoretical understanding and meaning of the concept while the study also shows that others could not identify with the concept appellation. (Thomas) the third teacher stated that he has been teaching children with disabilities in ordinary classroom settings but he had no idea that the practiced had a name called inclusive education. Danne and Beirne-Smith (2000) in their study shows that teachers who are aware of inclusive policies are willing to be part of the inclusive team, they also found out that teachers

agree that inclusion is important but they find it difficult to apply. Same in the study, the teachers expressed the views that student with disabilities are included or integrated into the normal classroom settings but the implementation of inclusive education is difficult because they lack the resources available to maintain the policy in regards to the standards. Literature has also shown that the success of inclusive education depends to a large extent on the willingness and the ability of teachers to make accommodation for individuals with special needs (Heiman 2004) and Vaughn et al. (1996). This supports the views of teacher two who explained that they lack the special teaching experience to teach students with special needs and the resources to accommodate these students which makes the implementation of the policy very difficult to take effect as to the standards demanded by UNESCO. Ekema (2005) in section 2.9 in his study also revealed a negative attitude towards inclusion by teachers due to the lack of knowledge and training in teaching children with disabilities.

5.2.2 The experience of teachers about inclusion

As mentioned in section 4.5.1 the teachers commented on the practical experience they have to go through in order to satisfy the needs of all the students. The study indicates that generally the teachers were very slow in class so that students with disabilities could meet up with the lessons. And this is at the detriment of the syllabus and course work which they have to cover for that academic year. UNESCO (2003) affirms that inclusion is a dynamic approach of responding positively to the student's diversities and of seeing individual differences not as a problem but as a means for enriching learning.

(Susan) the second teacher mentions that students with disabilities are excluded from some activities such as sporting activities and manual labour because of their impairments. In section 2.8.3 Lipsky and Gartner (1989) in their study found out that majority of children with special educational needs in segregated settings fails to master skills or appropriate behaviours because they are excluded from some activities with their peers. Wilson (2000) observed that children who are educated in

separate classes often feel unmotivated, rejected and isolated. And isolation cripples a child's social, emotional, intellectual and physical development. Thus in regards to the UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (UN 1994) students with disabilities have equal rights as human beings to share in the benefits from what ever opportunity which is available at their disposal.

5.2.3 Teachers' Role

The study indicated that the teachers in the selected schools most important role in the teaching and learning process in ordinary schools was that of mediation.

Vygotsky (1978) in his theory of development, points out the fact that teaching is most effective in what he calls the zone of proximal development of the child. This involves the distance between what a child can do independently and what he or she can do better with the help of adults or more capable peers. So the teachers are there to assist the students and to increase their levels of understanding so that they can perform in a greater level. In section 4.6 in the study John made mention of the fact that he tries to create a sense of understanding and usually he let the students to know that disability is not 'Inability' and they should not rely on the advantages given to them to relent their efforts in working hard. Cosin and Hales (1997) suggest that teachers should help students shape their goals and ambitions to areas where the disability is not a handicap, by so doing the students with disabilities can also benefits from a variety of experience which can help them integrate fully in life.

The study also revealed that teachers in the chosen secondary schools did not have training in special education thus they were faced with the problems of satisfying the needs of students with disabilities. Section 4.5 made mentions of the views of the four teachers who generally accepted the fact that they use their basic psychological knowledge and experience to teach students with disabilities. Heiman (2004) in his study reveal that although teachers evaluate and implement inclusion differently most of the teachers are in support of inclusion. Johnson (2001) affirms the view that teachers are the most direct and significant implementers of any educational

programme. By so doing they had to improvise a teaching and learning strategies which will suit the varied needs of the students. As explained in Section 2.6 and in figure.1 Hall (1997) in his Being Accepted model emphasis the thinking that children's learning is related to teachers efforts in search for knowledge and skills to improve on their professional capacities to handle children with special needs in regular schools. In reaction to his model teachers experience and professional skills have an upper hand in teaching students with disabilities. The students also have to be involved and be part of it in all aspect.

5.2.4 Support and challenges faced by teachers

As mention in section 4.7 some of the teachers in the study expressed the challenge of the lack of necessary learning devices such as Braille materials and other adaptive resources which could help student with disabilities to accommodate themselves in the classroom. Skjørten (2001) support the fact that for inclusion to be successful the legislation, regulation and implementation must be secure through allocated financial provisions this will help to put in place the available necessary materials. She further states that children with disabilities can only learn well when the environment is suitable and adapted to them. That is to say if they have all the necessary learning materials at their disposals they can go along with life and studies without the help of others.

The study also shows that punctuality was a problem for students with disability in the chosen regular secondary schools. Most of the students who were physically handicapped found it sometimes difficult to be on time either because they were neglected by taxi drivers who were also in a haste to pick up other passengers in the rush hours or because they had to drive by themselves to school. Oliver (1990) commented that all disable persons experience disability as social restrictions and these restrictions occur as a consequence of hostile public attitudes. Skjørten (2001) made mention of the fact that for inclusion to be successful there should be a change of heart and attitudes. The community should see disability as a normal phenomenon

and accepts people that have disabilities this will in effect build a positive self esteem within them as human being. And Maslow (1954) agrees that the need for self esteem can be through mastery or achievement in a given field or through gaining respect or recognition from others. Thus as explained in section 2.8.4 Samter (1997) argues that children who feel good about themselves learn more easily and retain more information and they do well in every day life.

5.2.5 Views to improve the Educational System

As mention in section 4.8 the study reveals that regular teachers in the chosen secondary schools lacked the training of special needs education and for this reason they are asking the authorities to intensify in-service training so that inclusion can be well implemented. Skjørten (2001) in section 2.6 supports the view that inclusion should involved in-service reorientation and upgrading of the teachers so that they will be able to contribute and relate to the flexibility that inclusion entails. The class sizes have to be reduced so that effective follow up, class management and effective teaching can take place in the classroom which will be geared towards looking at the needs of all the students. The teachers mentioned that they lack the available resources and materials to help facilitate the teaching process for the students with disabilities. They are asking the authorities to put this in place which could help to accommodate the student and cater for their needs in inclusive settings. In Figure1 the Being Accepted Model by Hall (1997) he argues that inclusion means children have to take part in the activities in the class and not be excluded, missed, or stigmatised. Thus there should be full participation and this can be satisfactory if only the available materials and resources are put in place for them so that they could be fully included.

5.3 PARENTS' VIEWS

5.3.1 Parents realisation of the disability

As indicated from the study and as mention in section 4.9.1 the parents were shocked and depressed after they realised that their children illness will lead to a negative consequences or out come that will go a long way to handicapped then for life. Lucy expressed that she was confused and could not believe her eyes on what she was seeing. Hornby (2000) points out the fact that parent's initial reaction to this realisation is that of shock, confusion and helplessness as they are not able to digest the information when it is told to them by the practitioners. Rose on her part was also confused and she finally accepts the situation and offers it to God.

5.3.2 Parents understanding of concept EFA/ Inclusion

From the study it is evident that the parents have a theoretical understanding of the meaning of EFA/ Inclusive Education. As mention in section 4.9.2 the parents explained that EFA/ Inclusion give opportunity for children with or without disabilities to go to school and to learn with their peers of the same age and in the same class. This supports what Hall (1997) expressed as the meaning of inclusion. He argues the fact that inclusion means children being a full member if an age appropriate class in the school where they study together, play together as a group and they care for each other. Also as mention in section 2.7 on the moves to inclusion Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Right (1948) supports the fact that everyone has the right to education and inclusion shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship amongst all children.

The study also reveals that parents were aware of special education but did not want their children to be a point of focus as stated by Lucy in section 4.9.2. To her children with disabilities in the special schools were looked upon as being foolish and stupid. Since Paul has proved his worth that disability is not inability the parents see him normal thus he could not be sent to a special school. Skjørten (2001) in section 2.6

supports the fact that for inclusion to be effective there should be a change in heart and attitudes. People should not look at children with disabilities as being different and that they cannot do anything for themselves and for the society. They should be accepted and this will help them integrate in to the society.

The study also indicates that parent's greatest ambition of sending their children with disabilities into regular schools is to lead their children share in peer support and interaction which helps in motivating the children and it gives the feeling of equality. Lipsky and Gartner (1989) found out that majority of children with special educational needs in segregated settings fail to master skills or appropriate behaviours and they always remain socially isolated through out their school year. There is the possibility that being in an inclusive classroom gives learners with special needs the opportunity to interact with ordinary peers thus preparing them for life in the real world. Shey (2003) as shown in section 2.9 in his study reveal the interest which parents have for the well being of their children and it is a matter of importance to them that their children are happy at school.

5.3.3 Parents views of the advantages and disadvantages in sending their children to regular schools.

As revealed from the study parents were found to welcome the idea of sending their children to regular secondary schools. They also noted that no matter their individual differences the children gain a lot when learning and playing together. Lucy in section 4.9.3 made mention of the fact that his son feels the sense of belonging and as part of a team and he has made a lot of friends with other normal students. Dean (1996) writing about a study that was carried out by Howarth (1987) state:

Parents noted the development of friendships with non-handicapped children the personal development and increase maturity and independence of their, children, an increase in their self-esteem and ability to take the rough with the smooth (Dean 1996, p. 6).

Rose also acknowledges the fact that her daughter being as part of an inclusive classroom has drawn the sympathy of other children and this has made her to be

sympathetic too. In section 2.8.5, Maslow (1970), in his discussions of hierarchy of human needs pointed out the fact that belongingness was an essential and prerequisite human need that had to be met before one could ever achieve a sense of worth thus being as part of an inclusive classroom children with disabilities have a lot to gain from friends.

5.3.4 Parents Role and Support

As indicated in section 2.11.1 Rye (2001) argues that the first primary role of a parent to a child is to be a parent to that child, and this have a great impact to that child's moral, social, physical and cognitive development. The study reveals that parents accepted their role as being parents to these children. They gave their mutual love, care, assistance and security to their children with disabilities. As a major fact the children's physiological and safety needs were taken care of by their parents as explained in section 4.9.4. Lucy ensures that Paul had enough food and she checks if his school materials are in tact before he leaves for school. Rose also provides her daughter with enough food and sometimes carries her to school to protect her safety.

The parents also act as partners to the teachers as seen in section 4.9.4 Lucy explains that she sometimes assist Paul's teacher to transcribe what he has written so as to ease the teachers work who needed to send the scripts to a translator and that cause him a lot of time and a delay in giving feed backs. (Watson, Brown & Swick 1983) in their study shows that parents who provide active support for their children's education contribute more to their children's success than those that provide passive support. This is also in confirmation with Hornby (1995) he argues that the most appropriate model for the relationship between teachers and parents is when the teachers are view as experts on education and parents are view as experts on their own children.

Rye (2001) in section 2.11.2 argues that cooperation between teachers and parents has a demonstrable positive impact on a child well being, learning and development of that child. Rose the mother to Kate expressed the fact that she sometimes carry forward Kate's academic difficulties to her teachers and they try to seek for solutions

there by giving her feed back and this cooperation tie has helped the child's progress at school.

The study also shows that parents receive minimal support from the government to help children with disabilities. This support is insignificant if compared to the total number of person's with disabilities through out the country. Parents who happen to gain from such supports must have fought so hard to gain some access in to the Ministry of Social Affairs. Following Law No.83/013/of July 21st 1983, it is clearly stated in Article 8 of chapter IV that:

Individual and collective support shall be given to handicapped persons and their families. This aid is part of government support for the integration of handicapped persons in the Cameroonian society (MINAS 1990, p. 30).

In line with the study Rose the mother to Kate had support from the government which restricted her from paying school fees. Lucy even though she has applied for help from the Ministry no reply has been given to her. If one looks at the meagre resources at the disposal of the government a positive conclusion can be drawn from the efforts the government is making towards helping children with disabilities.

5.3.5 Challenges parents face

The study reveals that parents are faced with the challenge to build up the morals of their children. In section 4.9.5 Lucy expressed the fact that she has always tried to make Paul feel he is the same with his peers and have encouraged him to carry on with life despite his disability. Samter (1997) supports the fact that when children feel good about themselves they turn to learn more easily and they retained more information thus their self esteem is raised. The parents are also faced with financial difficulties good enough the government is trying to help in his capacity.

5.3.6 Views to Improve the Learning Conditions of Children with Disabilities

As mention in section 2.6 and section 2.8 some scholars argue that many learners especially children with disabilities face problems in school because of limited learning resources such as Braille materials, blacken chalk boards, illumination, inaccessible buildings and commitment and attitudes of teachers. The above listed facts are not different in the Cameroonian society. Most of the school buildings where designed mainly for children without special needs, this makes it difficult for a student with severe physical disabilities to have access to the buildings. The fact that teachers in regular schools have no training in special education and the large class size makes it very difficult for them to come up with an individualised programme for a child with special needs. As shown in section 4.9.6 Parents are aware of the difficulties their children are facing in other to have a sound education and they are asking the authorities to redress some issues such as putting in place infrastructural accessibilities, in- service training of teachers as regards special education and the availability of resources so that their children can benefit in an inclusive setting.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The study was to investigate and explore the role and perspectives of teachers and parents on the Education of Children with Special Needs in Regular Secondary Schools in Cameroon. Inclusion has been a discussion for a long standing debate in many countries and there have been contrary views and opinions as to what it is all about. UNESCO, International Agencies and policy makers have strived for the implementation of inclusive education yet the implementation is still a call for concern in the Cameroonian setting.

The history of education in Cameroon reveals that some children with disabilities as old as the arrival of the missionaries were educated in regular school settings alongside their peers. It is an irony to state that their needs were taken into consideration as demanded by the standards of the Jomtien Declaration and Standard

Rules. Thus, the study looked at the role of teachers in teaching children with disabilities in regular secondary school setting. The parents on the other hand were not left out because they are seen as one of the stakeholders and they are deeply concerned about their children's education.

The study indicates that the teacher's in the study face a lot of challenges in teaching children with disabilities in the regular school settings. Some of the difficulties include lack of resources, didactic materials, the population size and experience in special needs education. Majority of the teachers who participated in the study expressed the needs for change in regular school in order to meet the needs of children with disabilities and particularly they emphasized the importance of increased knowledge and skills in special education that could empower them as professionals.

The study also reveals the need for a suitable physical school environment, equipment, furniture and materials to facilitate the access of children with disabilities in the both selected schools. Moreover, the teacher's are in need of support services and personnel resources such as psychologists or special education teachers who can provide information and assistance on the children with specific disabilities, behavior management, teaching techniques and possibly instill a positive spirit in teachers towards inclusion.

Parents on the other hand were given the opportunity to express their views in relation to the education of their children in regular secondary school. From the study, it is seen that parents have a great role to play on their children's education and they try to invest more energy and resources in supporting their children's education in whatever way they feel is appropriate whether by helping with school work at home, by involving themselves in school activities, assisting teachers as partners, or by making their dissatisfaction felt. It should be pointed out that the home is the center for teaching and learning and parents are the children's first and most enduring educators. This supports what Boyer (1991) states that, home is the first classroom and parents are the first and most essential teachers. Parents should be considered in

decisions concerning the education of their children even though there is no government clear-cut policy to that effect. The study also indicates a positive view from parents towards inclusion.

Inclusion as I can say is a gradual process which is unending. Thus the policy makers, teachers and parents have to come together to see that the needs of children with disabilities should be met in regular school settings.

I would therefore call on researchers interested in the field of education to look deeply at the implementation of the above phenomenon in relation to the teaching strategies.

5.5 RECOMMENDATION

In light of the findings of this study taking into consideration the results from the two selected schools, and in relevance to other schools in the district, when looking at children with disabilities and their education as presented by the teachers and their parents it is evident that certain changes have to be made before these children will have to enjoy equal educational opportunities like their peers without disabilities. The following recommendations should be taken into considerations.

- 1) Although inclusion calls for additional funds in the schools, the chosen schools were found to be under funded thus it is recommended that the government should ally with donors to ensure extra funding. These extra funding would for instance help in the construction of more modern and adaptable schools and purchase equipment for children with special educational needs.
- 2) Most of the teachers in the study lacked training in special needs education. It is therefore recommended that the government should create an institution which could help in the training of teachers in special needs education this will go a long way to increase the personnel's in the field. Also special needs

education courses should be offered as a component in the initial stage of the training of all the student teachers.

- 3) Teachers' training should emphasise the need to make the curriculum flexible and allows teachers to give additional time and instructional support to children who have special learning needs especially those with disabilities. In addition teachers should be provided with adequate instructional or curricular materials suitable for the adaptation to the varying needs of the learners.
- 4) The study found out that most of the classrooms were over crowded with students. In this effect it is recommended that more teachers should be trained and classrooms built in order to decongest the large class size and give the teachers more time and space to concentrate on each and every child. The teachers should change their attitudes and accepts children with disabilities in their classrooms this will be in favour of inclusion. The school environment should be restructured such as the buildings, classroom layouts; pavements should be accessible for all learners. The school authorities should take it as a duty to sensitise the students against disabilities so that students with disabilities will not feel stigmatised by the student population.
- 5) The study shows that parents played a vital role in inclusive education. The study therefore recommends that the policy and decision makers should also give room for the stakeholders such as the parents to contribute to the education and well being of their children either at home or at school. On their part parents should be fully committed and act as partners to teachers in order to enhance the education of their children.
- 6) In general, the existing laws and policies as regard to the education of children with disabilities should be reviewed in relation to the standards laid by the governing authorities.

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Appendix 1: Interview Guide for Teachers teaching Children with Disabilities in Regular Secondary Schools in Fako Division.

Class levels-----

Name of school-----

My name is **MARY FOLA TUKOV**. I am a student at the University of Oslo in Norway taking a degree in Special Needs Education. I am carrying out a study on, The Education of Children with Special Needs in Cameroon and on the Role of Teachers and parents towards Inclusive education.

I wish to ask you questions and to know your opinions about teaching children with disabilities in ordinary school and what you understand best as of the concept inclusive education. Further, I will like to know your role as a teacher and the challenges you face in teaching in such a classroom environment.

Please feel free to answer any questions you wish to and you are also free to ask questions when ever you need clarification. The information you give will be treated confidentially. Can we proceed please?

A- TEACHERS BACKGROUND

1-What is your educational background?

2-How long have you been teaching?

B- FORMAL EDUCATION

3-In your opinion what do you understand by the term Education For All?

Have you been discussing it in school?

4-What do you think about the concept of inclusive education?

5-Can you please explained to me your understanding of this concept and what it entails? Has the principal being talking about this issue?

6-What is your opinion about the idea of teaching children with disabilities along side normal peers, and how do you feel it?

C- TEACHERS EXPERIENCE

7-What is your experience in teaching in such an environment?

8-Is the concept inclusive education a practiced that is commonly implemented in schools?

9-Could you tell me more about the types of disabilities your student have? And explained how you try to deal with these diversities in the classroom?

10- In your opinion what is your role as a teacher to ensure that all the needs of the students are met equally?

11- Can you explained to me if you had special training before teaching in such a classroom environment? And if not how do you cope.

D- CHALLENGES FACED BY THE TEACHER

12- Can you tell me some of the challenges you face in teaching in such a classroom?

13-Can you tell me more about your relationship and collaboration from colleagues to help these disability students.

14- Do you get support from teachers, parents and principal?

15- What do you think can be done to the educational system as a whole to improve on the learning conditions of children with disabilities?

Is there anything you would like to add or you want us to talk about concerning this topic? Thank you for taking some time off to participate for the interview. I will wish to comeback if there is anything I don't understand and need some clarification.

Appendix 2: Interview Guide for Parents of Children with Disabilities enrolled in the selected Regular Secondary Schools in Fako Division.

Occupation of parent----

Age of the child-----

I am called **MARY FOLA TUKOV**. I am a student at the University of Oslo in Norway taking a degree in special Needs Education. I am carrying out a study on The Education of Children with Special Needs in Cameroon and especially on the role of teachers and parents towards inclusive education.

I would like to ask you questions and to know your opinion on the education of your child in regular school setting. I very much believe Parents have an important role to play as regards the education of their children, your kind explanations and ideas will go further to address some of the problems faced by children with disabilities in regular schools.

Please feel free to answer any question you wish to and you are also free to ask questions when ever you need clarification. The information you give will be treated confidentially. Please can we begin?

A- PARENTS BACKGROUND

- 1- Can you please introduce your self?
- 2- Explained when and how your child was discovered with disability?
- 3- What type of disability does your child have? How does it affect your child?

B- FORMAL EDUCATION

4- There is an out cry of sending every child of the same age to the same class no matter their individual learning problems and it has a name called inclusive education, what is your opinion about this?

5- What prompted you to enrol your child in a normal school?

6- To your opinion what are the advantages and disadvantages for your child being with other children in the same class and school?

7- What type of impression do you have so far seeing your child with special needs learning along side with the other students?

C- PARENTS EXPERIENCE

8- What changes have you experience since your child was enrolled in the regular school?

9- You as a parent what is your role to ensure that the needs of your child are being taking care of?

10- In what ways do you as a parent try to support the efforts of the teachers in the education of your child with special need?

D- CHALLENGES PARENT'S FACE

11-What support do you think the school need in order to meet the learning needs of your child?

12- Explain to me what type of challenges you face in educating your child with special needs?

13- What do you think can be done to the educational system as a whole to improve on the learning conditions of children with disabilities?

Is there anything you would like to add or you want us to talk about concerning this topic? Thank you for taking some time off to participate for the interview. I will wish to comeback if there is anything I don't understand and need some clarifications.

Appendix 3: Introductory Letter from the University of Oslo



UNIVERSITY
OF OSLO

Department of Special Needs Education

P.O.Box 1140, Blindern
N-0318 Oslo
NORWAY

Your ref:
Our ref: 26/07 ST/db
Contact person: Denese Brittain d.a.brittain@isp.uio.no

Visiting address:
Helga Eng's Building
3rd and 4th floor

Date: June 12. 2007

Telephone: + 47 22 85 80 59
Telefax: + 47 22 85 80 21

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is to certify that **TUKOV, Mary**, date of birth 09.05.1978, is a full-time student pursuing a course of study at the Department of Special Needs Education at the University of Oslo, Norway, leading to the degree of Master of Philosophy in Special Needs Education (M. Phil. SNE).

This is a continuous two-year programme run on the "sandwich" principle, which involves periods of study and field work/research in both Norway and the home country. The student has concluded the initial study period in Norway and will be working on the collection of data and the writing of a thesis during the autumn semester 2007. This involves a period of field work in Cameroon from 1 October to 31 December 2007. The student will then return to Norway for the final part of the degree. The period of study will be completed at the end of May 2008.

The main responsibility for supervising the research, developmental work and thesis remains with the Department of Special Needs Education, University of Oslo, Norway. However, we would kindly request that the relevant authorities give the student the access required to the schools and educational establishments necessary in order to undertake field work and research. We would also be most grateful for any assistance that is afforded to the student which enables her to carry out this work, particularly the use of facilities such as access to telephone, fax, e-mail, computer services and libraries at the various educational establishments.

Yours sincerely

Ass. Professor Steinar Theie
Academic Head of International Master's Programme
Department of Special Needs Education

Department of Special Needs Education
Faculty of Education
University of Oslo, Norway

Institutt for spesialpedagogikk
Det utdanningsvitenskapelige fakultet
Universitetet i Oslo
Norge

Appendix 4: Letter of Application to the Divisional Officer of Fako Division.

Mary Fola Tukov
P.O.box 531 Buea
S.W.P.Cameroon.
6th November 2007

The Divisional Officer
of Fako Division,
Buea, Cameroon.
6th November 2007

Dear Sir,

AN APPLICATION TO CARRY OUT FIELD WORK IN BUEA

I am a Cameroonian student pursuing a Masters of Philosophy degree programme in Special Needs Education at the University of Oslo in Norway. I wish to ask for permission to undertake research work in Buea and as part of the requirement for the award of the degree mentioned above.

The title of my research study is –The education of Children with Special Needs in Cameroon, the role of teachers and parents towards Inclusive Education. The time frame for the field work is the 1st of November to the 15th of December 2007.

Attached to this application are the following:

- An introductory letter from the University of Oslo
- My research proposal

While waiting for your response Sir, I remained,

Sincerely Yours.

Mary Fola Tukov



Appendix 5: Letter of application to the Delegate of Secondary Education (Buea)

Mary Fola Tukov
P.O.box 531 Buea
S.W.P.Cameroon.
6th November 2007

The Provincial Delegate of
Secondary Education,
South West Province,
Buea, Cameroon.
6th November 2007

Dear Sir,

AN APPLICATION TO CARRY OUT FIELD WORK IN BUEA

I am a Cameroonian student pursuing a Masters of Philosophy degree programme in Special Needs Education at the University of Oslo in Norway. I wish to ask for permission to undertake research work in Buea and as part of the requirement for the award of the degree mentioned above.

The title of my research study is –The education of Children with Special Needs in Cameroon, the role of teachers and parents towards inclusive education. The time frame for the research is 1st of November to the 15th of December 2007.

Attached to this application are the following:

- An introductory letter from the University of Oslo
- My research proposal

While waiting for your response Sir, I remained.

Sincerely Yours.

Mary Fola Tukov



Appendix 6: Permission granted by the Divisional Officer of Fako Division

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix-Travail-Patrie

 MINISTRE DE L'ADMINISTRATION
 TERRITORIALE ET DE LA DECENTRALISATION

PROVINCE DU SUD-OUEST

 DEPARTEMENT DU FAKO

 SOUS-PREFECTURE DE BUEA

Ref. N°

010/6.37/04/512/PS

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace-Work- Fatherland

 MINISTRY OF TERRITORIAL
 ADMINISTRATION AND OF DECENTRALISATION

SOUTH WEST PROVINCE

 FAKO DIVISION

 SUB-DIVISIONAL OFFICE BUEA

Buea, the.....
 le

01 NOV 2007

THE DIVISIONAL OFFICER

TO: WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

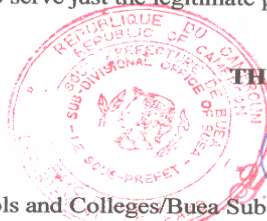
Subject: Authorisation to Carry-out a Research Programme.

I, the undersigned, J. B. Awoumfac Alioussa
Administrateur Civil, Divisional Officer for Buea
 Sub-Division, hereby, in accordance with an application dated 6th November, 2007 authorise
 Miss Mary FOLA TUKOV, a post-graduate student in the Department of Special Needs
 Education at the University of OSLO in Norway, to carry-out a research programme on The
 Education of Children with Special Needs in Cameroon, including the role of teachers and
 parents towards inclusive Education. These studies shall be carried out in Buea Sub Division
 from the 1st of November to the 15th of December 2007.

During this period, the concerned shall be required to visit and interview some
 teachers and parents.

Consequently, the concerned are highly requested, each in his area of jurisdiction, to
 give maximum support and collaboration to this young Researcher.

In Testimony Whereof the present authorization, which does not exempt the
 concerned from her civil responsibility resulting from any unfortunate incident registered
 thereof, has been issued to serve just the legitimate purpose for which it is intended.



THE DIVISIONAL OFFICER

c.c.

- SDO/Fako/Limbe
- FLO/Buea
- Principals of Schools and Colleges/Buea Sub Division

Above for your information and necessary assistance, please.

Appendix 7: Permission granted by the Delegate of Secondary Education Fako

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix – Travail – Patrie

MINISTERE DES ENSEIGNEMENTS SECONDAIRES

DELEGATION PROVINCIALE
DU SUD-OUEST
P.M.B. 15 BUEA

Ref. *G2014/638* /MINESEC/PDSW/SPS *FB*

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace – Work – Fatherland

MINISTRY OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

PROVINCIAL DELEGATION
FOR THE SOUTH WEST
P.M.B 15 BUEA

Buea, the 7th November 2007

The Provincial Delegate
Le Délégué Provincial

To:
Principals of Secondary Schools,
In Fako Division.

AUTHORISATION TO MISS MARY FOLA TUKOV TO VISIT YOUR INSTITUTION

Miss **MARY FOLA TUKOV** from the University of OSLO in Norway is carrying out a Masters of Philosophy Degree programme in special Needs Education and wishes to do some research in your Institution from 8th November to 15th December 2007.

Please give her the necessary assistance wherever and whenever needed.



NGUNDU FRANCIS MOKOMBA
NGUNDU FRANCIS MOKOMBA
PROVINCIAL DELEGATE

Appendix 8: Map of Cameroon showing the Jurisdiction of Buea (Fako Division)

