

Regular Schools' Needs for Creating an Inclusive Learning-Friendly Environment

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Abstract

An inclusive learning-friendly environment is a prerequisite for effective inclusive education. Inclusive education is not just about bringing in children with special needs into regular school classrooms, it calls for a carefully planned environment that will recognize, exploit and stimulate the potentials of such children for maximum benefit from school experiences. This study therefore, sought to ascertain the regular schools needs for creating an inclusive learning-friendly environment. It adopted a descriptive survey design and was guided by four research questions. A total of 240 primary school head teachers, 720 teachers in the primary schools in Enugu State and 17 special educators from the tertiary institutions in Enugu State were used for the study. An Inclusive Learning-Friendly Environment Questionnaire(ILFEQ) and Regular Primary Schools' Physical and Psychological Environments Need Questionnaire(RPSPPENQ) were developed, validated and used for data collection. Means and standard deviations were used to analyze the data. Findings indicate that the psychological and physical learning environments in Enugu State are not inclusive learner friendly and therefore not suitable for inclusive education. The findings also showed the need for the provision of relevant facilities that will cater for pupils with special needs. It was recommended that government should make efforts to restructure the schools and provide relevant facilities to make schools inclusive learner friendly.

Introduction

In this time and age, great emphasis is placed on the education of children with special needs in inclusive rather than segregated schools not just as a government policy but also in practice. Inclusion of children with special needs into the regular schools is not just about merging the students with disabilities and those without disabilities in the same classroom. It calls for a carefully planned environment that will recognize, explore and stimulate the potentials of the children with special needs to benefit maximally from the programmes provided in the regular schools. UNESCO (2004) succinctly puts it that inclusion is about practical changes that can be made so that children with diverse backgrounds and abilities, can succeed in the regular classrooms and schools.

There has been a global move to educate children with special needs in an inclusive classroom instead of putting them in special schools where they are excluded not only from their parents and siblings but also from society. The Nigerian government

in response to the global trend, stressed in the National Policy on Education that special needs children be educated in inclusive classroom (FGN, 2004). However, in Enugu state it seems that only a limited integrated educational programmes are provided at the primary and secondary schools.

Creating a productive learning environment is a major factor that ensures effective inclusive education. A learner-friendly physical and psychological environment is a prerequisite for a successful educational experience by both children with special educational needs and those without special educational needs (Nwazuoke, 2004). Okeke (2001) states that the environment in which a child finds him/herself play an important role in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor development of the child. For a special needs child to make an optimal achievement, he/she needs an inclusive learning-friendly environment in which all children experience security, affection, acceptance and a feeling of comfort to learn without any form of discrimination.

Inclusive Learning Friendly Environment

A learning-friendly environment is a safe and welcoming environment where children have the right to explore and exploit their potentials to their fullest. It is an environment that is both learner-friendly and teacher-friendly. It is a child-centred learning environment which focuses on the needs, abilities, interests and learning style of the child. The child actively participates in the learning while the teacher serves as the facilitator. In this environment, the learners are encouraged to learn actively while the teachers can teach more effectively and enjoy teaching (UNESCO, 2004). An inclusive learning-friendly environment implies that the physical and psychological atmosphere is friendly to the child with special needs. It is an environment where the physical facilities are safe, accessible and geared towards the needs of every child and where the psychological atmosphere makes for mutual understanding between learners and the teachers.

UNESCO (2004) described the characteristics of an inclusive, learning-friendly environment as an environment that includes all children: girls and boys, those from different cultural or linguistic background and those with special abilities and learning needs. This is an environment that is safe and protects all children from harm, violence and abuse. This environment celebrates differences and stimulates all children, promotes participation, cooperation, collaboration, healthy lifestyle, provides opportunities for teachers to learn and benefit from learning, provides variety of materials for all school subjects and engage in authentic assessments such as children's work samples. It is gender fair, nondiscriminatory and provides learning that is relevant to children's daily lives. In this environment, children take responsibility for their learning.

The UNICEF Monitoring of Learning Achievement study (2011) conducted in UNICEF 'A' Field states in Nigeria (including Enugu State) indicates that one of the greatest impediments to children attaining literacy and numeracy in Basic Education is lack of suitable learning environment. The report showed that there were inadequate classrooms, furniture, equipment and learning materials.

Studies conducted by Avisar, Reiter & Leyser, (2003); Talmor, Reiter & Feigin (2005) indicate that most national governments had not adequately prepared for the inclusion of special needs persons into their regular classrooms. Though parents are

encouraged to send their special needs children to regular schools, it seems that little or no effort has been made especially in Enugu state to ensure that the learning environment is inclusive learner-friendly. Nwazuoke (2004) noted that inclusive education can only thrive where there is supportive environment. The special educators who are specialists in special education have the expert knowledge on what is actually required in the regular schools for an inclusive learning friendly environment. For instance Lere, (2004) noted that ambulatory devices like wheel chairs, walkers, arm and leg prostheses that will enable the children with physical impairment to function effectively in an inclusive classroom ought to be available. The architectural structures of school buildings should be user-friendly to persons with physical impairment. Opportunities for individualized attention to special needs learners, availability of resource centres and school libraries with Braille materials and other specialized materials enhance learning for special needs persons. For special needs children to benefit from inclusive schools in Enugu state, adequate provisions to meet their needs should be put in place if meaning must be given to the policy of equalizing educational opportunities for all children irrespective of their disability (FGN, 2004).

The psychological environment in which a child learns should be of utmost importance if the child is to benefit maximally from the school. A positive psychological environment according to Eze (2002) is an atmosphere of learning that facilitates learner-learner interaction, teacher-learner interactions as well as the nature of the rules that positively guide behaviour in the class environment. It is an environment that makes the child feel secure and free and makes learning a priority (Brand, Felner, Shim, Seitsiger & Duman, 2003). Research has shown that the quality of teacher-student relationship is one of the most important factors affecting students' motivation, emotional well being and achievement (Ormrod, 2006).

The attitude of teachers toward special needs children could affect their performance. Swart, Engelbrecht, Eloff and Pettipher (2001) opined that the attitude of the teacher is a more important predictor of successful inclusion than the teachers preparatory institutions. Every child wants to be socially and emotionally accepted in the class. The child wants to be cared for and accepted as an individual. A classroom where derogatory statements and uncomplimentary remarks are made when a child fails to respond appropriately to a task will certainly demoralize the child and provoke negative reactions. Ormrod (2006) noted that the teacher who physically arranges the classroom space in such a way that minimizes distractions and facilitates positive teacher-student interaction enhances learners' opportunities to learn. Such a teacher plans activities that encourage on-task behaviour, continually monitors what the learners are doing and also modifies strategies as appropriate.

Changing from the traditional setting to an inclusive learning friendly environment is a challenging task though very beneficial to teachers, parents, community and most importantly to the children when achieved. Considering the fact that inclusive education is relatively new and that special needs children benefit maximally in an inclusive learning friendly environment, there is need to ascertain how learner friendly the public primary schools in Enugu state are for inclusive education and what the schools need to achieve an inclusive learning-friendly environment.

To guide this study, four research questions were generated.

Research Questions

1. How learning-friendly are the primary school environment in Enugu state for inclusive education?
2. What are the basic environmental needs of primary schools in Enugu state for achieving inclusive learning friendly environment.?
3. What are the challenges in creating an inclusive learning friendly environment in the primary schools in Enugu state?
4. What measures could be adopted to overcome the challenges of creating an inclusive learning friendly environment in public primary schools in Enugu state?

Method

The study adopted a descriptive survey design with the aim of eliciting the views of respondents on the regular schools' needs for creating an inclusive learning-friendly environment.

Population

The population for the study comprised all the 1221 public primary schools in Enugu state and 17 special educators that teach special education in the tertiary institutions in Enugu State. The special educators who are specialists in special education have the expert knowledge on what is actually required in the regular schools for an inclusive learning friendly environment. Data from the State Universal Basic Education Board indicate that there are a total of one thousand two hundred and twenty one (1221) public primary schools in Enugu State with 1221 head teachers and thirteen thousand two hundred and sixty one (13,261) classroom teachers.

Sample and Sampling Technique: The sample for this study was 977 respondents comprising 240 head teachers, 720 teachers and 17 special educators who teach special education in the tertiary institutions in Enugu State. Based on the population of schools 20% of the primary schools (240 schools) in the state were randomly sampled This is in line with the work of Nwana (1992) who suggested that 5% could be used as a representative sample for population that is up to 10,000 or more, 10% could be used when the population is up to 5,000 and 20% can be used when the population is less than 5,000. Therefore, all the 240 head teachers in the sampled schools as well as the 720 teachers in the schools and all the 17 lecturers that specialized in special needs education who teach in the tertiary institutions in Enugu State were used for the study.

Instrument for Data Collection

Two instruments were used for data collection. They are:

- i. Inclusive Learning-Friendly Environment Questionnaire (ILEQ)
- ii. Regular Primary Schools' Physical and Psychological Environment Need Questionnaire (RPSPPENQ)

The instruments were developed by the researchers, validated and used for data collection. ILEQ is a forty six item questionnaire designed for the head teachers and

classroom teachers. It is organized in two sections. Section A deals with such variables as name and location of school. Section B is divided into three clusters. Cluster A sought for information on the condition of school environment (physical and psychological) in the state public primary schools, Cluster B sought for information on the challenges of making the regular classrooms inclusive learning- friendly environments. Cluster C sought for information on measures to be taken to overcome the challenges of making the regular classrooms inclusive learning-friendly environments. Clusters A, B and C of the questionnaire adopted a four point rating scale of strongly agree (4-points), agree (3-points), disagree (2-points) and strongly disagree (1-point).

RPSPPENQ is a 25 item questionnaire designed for special educators who are experts in special needs education and who have an expert knowledge on what is required for an inclusive learning friendly environment. The instrument sought for information on school environmental needs of the state public primary schools for creating an inclusive learning friendly environment. It adopted a four point rating scale of highly needed (4-points), moderately needed (3-points), sometimes needed (2-points) and not needed (1-point).

Validation of Instruments:

The researchers subjected the instruments for this study to peer review. They sent a set of the instruments to one peer reviewer each from Special education, Psychology and Measurement and Evaluation. They were requested to check for clarity of language and the suitability of the items. The suggestions of the reviewers were used in modifying the instruments.

Reliability of the Instrument: The ILEQ were trial tested among 20 head teachers and 20 classroom teachers in Anambra State whereas RPSPPENQ was trial tested among 10 special educators in two tertiary institutions in Anambra state. Cronbach alpha method was used to test for the internal consistency reliability index of the instruments and the following indices: 0.86, 0.90, and 0.78 for clusters A, B, and C were obtained for ILEQ respectively. A reliability index of 0.84 was obtained for RPSPPENQ using the same procedure. .

Method of Data Collection

Copies of the instrument were administered by the researchers to the respondents with the help of three research assistants.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (mean scores and standard deviation) were used to analyze the data from the questionnaire Interpretation of data was based on real limits of number. The mean score of 0.5-1.49 was interpreted as strongly disagree or not needed, 1.50-2.49 means disagree or sometimes needed, 2.50-3.49 means agree or moderately needed while 3.50-4.00 means strongly agree or highly needed

Results

Table 1: State of School learning environment in Enugu state public schools N=960

S/no	Items	X	SD	Dec
1.	There are libraries with variety of textbooks and specialized materials as brailled books.	2.20	0.86	D
2	Posters, charts and pictures are pasted in the classrooms Variety o teaching aids that are multi-sensory are used in teaching	1.25	0.46	SD
3	Classroom seating arrangements are sometimes altered to suit a particular learning need	2.16	0.38	D
4	Teachers sit very close to the pupils Schools have facilities such as ramps for children with physical disabilities	2.89	0.24	A
5		3.45	0.62	A
6	Beautiful flowers and gardens are in the school compound Schools have enough classrooms with chairs	1.19	0.58	D
7	There is constant supply of good and safe drinking water in the school Teachers, parents and other professionals work together to assess and plan programmes for special needs children	2.28	0.88	D
8		1.27	0.59	SD
9	There are specialized staff such as counselors , sign language interpreters who can help pupils with special learning needs	1.49	0.47	SD
10	There is teamwork among teachers and other professionals Schools collaborate with health authorities who organize periodic health examinations for children	1.86	0.66	SD
11	Resource rooms are made available in schools Children are active participants in the learning process Teachers use and adapt teaching methods that meet the needs of diverse learners in the class	2.15	0.83	D
12		2.16	0.28	D
13	Parents and community members are actively encouraged to participate in helping their children learn Boys and girls sit together to learn on the same desk Children are discriminated against on the basis of disability	1.31	0.62	SD
14	Students individual differences and abilities are respected and celebrated	1.98	0.65	D
15	Different forms of corporal punishment are used on learners	3.12	0.77	A
16	All children are given equal opportunities to learn in the classroom irrespective of disability Children receive positive feedback from friends, teachers and parents	2.12	0.98	D
17	Teachers serve as information givers instead of facilitators All learners are made to feel confident comfortable in the class	2.72	0.96	A
18		2.63	0.64	A
19		2.70	0.67	A
20		1.96	0.35	D
21		3.60	0.65	SA
22		2.23	0.71	D
23		2.36	0.42	D

24	3.58	0.86	SA
25	2.17	0.28	D

Data on Table 1 shows that the head teachers and teachers in Enugu State agree with item statements 4, 5, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21, 24 as existing state of school environment (physical and psychological) in the state public primary schools. These items have mean ratings ranging from 2.63- 3.87. The data on the Table further revealed that the respondents disagreed with item statements 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 20, 22, 23, and 25 as existing state of school environment (physical and psychological) in the state public primary schools.. These item statements have mean ratings ranging from 1.19 - 2.36.

Table 2: Environmental Improvement Needs of State Public Primary Schools for Creating an Inclusive Learning Friendly Environment N=17

S/no	School environmental needs for ILFE are	X	SD	Dec
1	Libraries with variety of textbooks and specialized materials as brailled books	3.57	1.06	HN
2	Posters, charts and pictures pasted in the classrooms	3.22	0.91	MN
3	Variety of teaching aids that are multi-sensory for teaching the learners	3.56	0.74	HN
4	Classroom seating arrangements that are sometimes altered to suit a particular lesson	3.58	0.54	HN
5	Teachers sitting very close to the pupils	3.84	0.83	HN
6	Facilities such as ramps for children with physical disabilities	3.62	0.42	HN
7	Beautiful flowers and gardens are in the school compound	3.14	0.52	MN
8	Enough classrooms with chairs	3.71	0.38	HN
9	Constant supply of good safe drinking water in the school	3.29	0.43	MN
10	Teachers, parents and other professionals work together to assess and plan programmes for special needs children	2.82	0.98	HN
11	Specialized staff such as counselors, sign language interpreters who can help pupils with special learning needs	3.65	0.43	HN
12	Teamwork among teachers and other professionals	3.77	1.19	HN
13	Collaboration with health workers who organizes periodic health examinations for children	3.64	0.82	HN
14	Resource rooms	3.76	0.58	HN
15	Children being active participants in the learning process	3.58	0.78	HN
16	Teachers using and adapting teaching methods to meet the	3.62	1.15	HN

	needs of diverse learners in the class			
17	Parents and community members actively participate in helping their children to learn	3.69	0.61	HN
18	Boys and girls sitting together to learn on the same desk	3.63	0.59	HN
19	Children being discriminated against on the basis of disability	1.17	0.72	NN
20	Students' individual differences and abilities being respected and celebrated	3.66	0.64	HN
21	Cane and corporal punishment being used on learners	1.27	0.58	NN
22	Giving equal opportunities to all children to learn in the classrooms irrespective of disability	3.78	0.65	HN
23	Children receiving positive feedback from friends, teachers and parents	3.42	0.73	MN
24	Teachers serving as information givers instead of facilitators	1.04	0.72	NN
25	Making learners feel confident and comfortable in the class	3.56	0.67	HN

*HN-Highly Needed, MN- Moderately Needed, NN- Not Needed

Data on Table 2 indicate that the special educators agreed that item statements 1-18, 20, 22, 23 and 25 above reflect the environmental needs required to create an effective physical and psychological inclusive learning friendly environment in the state public schools. The items have mean ratings ranging from 2.78 -3.84. Items 19, 21 and 24 which had mean ratings of 1.17, 1.27 and 1.04 respectively were not considered as regular school needs for an effective physical and psychosocial inclusive learning friendly environment.

Table 3: Mean And Standard Deviation of The Primary Schools Head Teachers and Teachers on The Challenges of Making the Regular Schools an Inclusive Learning Friendly Environment N= 960

S/No	Challenges of making the regular schools an inclusive learning friendly environment	X	SD	Dec
1	Government policies are not duly implemented	3.19	0.46	SA
2	Teachers are not aware of what a learning friendly environment entails	2.83	0.53	A
3	Teachers are not interested	2.26	0.43	D
4	Teachers are not willing to make a change	2.06	0.21	D
5	Teachers responsibilities are so many that they do not have the time	3.66	0.48	SA
6	Resources needed to make the schools learner friendly are not available	3.54	0.26	SA
7		2.63	0.35	A

8	Parents do not want their children to attend the same schools or to seat together with a child with disabilities	3.52	0.77	SA
9	Specialized personnel who can serve as support staff such as sign-language interpreters and braillists are no available in schools	3.44	0.52	A
10	Textbooks and learning needs that match children learning needs as brailled books are not available	2.84	1.18	A
11	Teachers are skeptical that all children can learn in the inclusive classroom Teachers lack the skills to teach children with disabilities	3.16	0.76	A

Results in Table 3 show the opinion of head teachers and teachers on the challenges of creating a learning-friendly environment for inclusion education. The respondents agreed with items 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11. These item statements had mean ratings ranging from 2.63-3.66 indicating that head teachers agree that they are challenges for making the regular schools inclusive learning friendly environments. The respondents did not agree with items 3 and 4 as they have mean ratings of 2.26 and 2.06 respectively.

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses of Primary Schools Head Teachers and teachers On Measures to Overcome the Challenges of Making the Regular Schools an Inclusive Learning Friendly Environment N= 960

S/No	Measures to be taken to overcome the challenges	X	SD	Dec
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1.	Provision of facilities and equipments that will meet the need of all in schools irrespective of any disability	3.22	0.65	A
2	Teachers attending workshops on inclusive learning friendly environment	3.42	0.37	A
3	Including Inclusive learning friendly environment as part of the teacher training curriculum	2.86	0.59	A
4	Develop "model" inclusive learning friendly schools in each local government			
4	Government removing the architectural barriers to make it learning friendly	3.75	0.41	SA
5	Partitioning the classrooms so as to reduce noise interference especially in schools that use halls as classroom	3.63	0.72	SA
6	Responding to needs of teachers so as to motivate them	2.94	0.36	A
	Constant supervision of teachers			
7	Providing head teachers with intensive leadership training on inclusive learner friendly environment so that they become interested and committed	3.55	1.13	SA
8	Good collaboration among teachers, professionals, parents and community members	3.21	0.58	A
9		2.81	0.60	A
10		3.44	0.36	A

Data on Table 4 show the opinion of head teachers and teachers on measures to be adopted in Enugu State public schools to create a learning friendly school environment. These item statements have mean ratings ranging from 2.81-3.75 implying that the head teachers agreed that they are measures that could ensure an inclusive learning friendly environment if implemented.

Discussion

Data on Table 1 show the opinions of the head teachers and teachers in Enugu state on the state of the schools learning environment (physical and psychological) in the public primary schools in the state. It is their opinion that classroom seating arrangements are sometimes altered to suit a particular lesson, teachers sit very close to the pupils, children are active participants in the learning process, parents and community members are actively encouraged to participate in helping their children to learn, boys and girls sit together to learn on the same desk, children are discriminated against on the basis of disability, cane and corporal punishment are used on learners, and teachers serve as information givers instead of facilitators. These items have mean ratings ranging from 2.63- 3.87 .

The findings of this study also indicate that the critical factors that make for an inclusive learning friendly environment in state of public primary schools Enugu State

are lacking. The architectural structures of school buildings do not meet the needs of diverse learners. There are no ramps for children with physical disabilities, libraries with variety of textbooks and specialized materials such as brailled books are lacking. Good and safe drinking water, variety of teaching aids and enough classrooms with chairs are also lacking in schools. The study further showed that teachers do not use and adapt teaching methods that meet the needs of diverse learners in the class, there is no team spirit among teachers and other professionals. Specialized staff such as special educators, psychologists and counselors who can identify and help pupils with special learning needs are not found in schools. The use of cane and corporal punishment is common in schools, children with diverse needs are not given equal opportunities to learn and teachers serve as information givers rather than facilitators of learning. These views expressed by the head teachers and teachers with mean ratings ranging from 1.19 - 2.36 show that the state of the primary schools negates what UNESCO (2004) requires for an inclusive learning-friendly school environment. The study confirms the findings of Avisar, Reiter & Leyser, (2003); Talmor, Reiter & Feigin (2005) which indicate that most governments have not adequately prepared for the inclusion of special needs persons into regular classrooms. This is an indication that the physical and psychological learning environment does not support inclusive education. this may not promote the academic achievement of the children with special needs. When schools are not yet adequately prepared for inclusive education, the children with special needs are very likely to be neglected by the teachers. They may be in the classroom physically without benefitting as they should academically if they were adequately prepared for. Such an environment may not promote their participation, their self-esteem as well as their psycho-social well being.

Data on Table 2 indicate the views of the special educators on environmental improvement needs required to create an effective physical and psychological inclusive learning friendly environment in the public primary schools in Enugu state. The data show that the special educators' agreed on the need for libraries with variety of textbooks and specialized materials such as brailled books, Teachers, parents and other professionals should work together to assess and plan programmes for special needs children, posters, charts and pictures should be pasted in the classrooms, variety of teaching aids that are multi-sensory, and architectural designs that meet the needs of all children such as ramps for children with physical disabilities should be available. Attractive physical environment with beautiful flowers and gardens, enough classrooms with chairs and constant supply of good safe drinking water should also be made available. They further observed that the regular public primary schools should not be institutions where children are discriminated against on the basis of disability, where cane and corporal punishment are used on learners and where teachers serve merely as supplier of information instead of facilitators of instruction. This finding is in conformity with the assertion by Nwazuoke (2004) that for children with special needs to benefit maximally in school they need an inclusive learning-friendly environment that is conducive to learning where they can experience security, affection and acceptance without any form of discrimination. Such an environment will enhance the overall (cognitive, affective and psychomotor) development of the child.

In an inclusive learning environment, children are active participants in the learning process, teachers use and adapt teaching methods that meet the needs of diverse learners, boys and girls sit together to learn, pupils' individual differences and abilities are respected and celebrated, children with diverse needs are given equal opportunities to learn and express themselves in the classrooms, children receive positive feedback from friends, teachers and parents and all learners are made to feel confident and comfortable in the class. This is in line with the assertion of UNESCO (2004) that inclusion is really about practical changes that can be made so that children with diverse backgrounds and abilities can succeed in the regular classrooms. Such an environment, according to Brand, Felner, Shim, Seitsiger & Duman, (2003) will make learners feel free and secure to learn without fear of being discriminated against. It is only when this is done that the objective of equalizing educational opportunities for all as stated in the National Policy on Education (FGN,2004) will be realized. These conditions are yet to be met and the regular primary schools in Enugu state require the creation of these environmental conditions to ensure effective inclusion of special needs learners into regular classrooms.

Results in Table 3 show the opinion of head teachers and teachers on the challenges for creating a learning-friendly environment for inclusive education. The head teachers perceived as challenges, inability to duly implement government policies, lack of awareness of what constitute a learning-friendly environment by some teachers and lack of the skills to create learning-friendly environments in schools. Poorly motivated and over loaded teachers, unavailability of resources needed to make the schools learner-friendly, lack of specialized personnel, discrimination against children with special needs, unavailability of required reading materials and relevant teaching and learning material/equipment required for effective teaching are also part of the challenges identified by the head teachers. The resources needed to make the schools learner friendly such as textbooks that match children's learning needs are not available and specialized personnel who can serve as support staff such as sign-language interpreters and braillists are too few. The respondents further observed that teachers lack the skills to teach children with disabilities. These item statements had mean ratings ranging from 2.63-3.66 indicating that the respondents agree that these are challenges in creating an inclusive learning friendly environment in regular primary schools in Enugu state. The findings also indicate that poor motivation of teachers affect interaction pattern with children with special needs and their overall productivity. This finding supports the assertion of Swart, Engelbrecht, Eloff and Pettipher(2001) that the teacher's attitude is an important predictor of successful inclusion. With the challenges noted above, the school environment may not stimulate the children's enthusiasm and creativity. The challenges may not promote both the physical and psychological well being of the children with special needs in the school.

Data on Table 4 show the opinion of head teachers and teachers on measures to adopt in public primary schools to create a learning friendly school environment. Such measures include provision of facilities and equipment that will meet the needs of all in schools irrespective of any disability, attendance to workshops on inclusive learning-friendly environment by teachers, incorporating inclusive learning-friendly environment

into the teacher training curriculum, developing “model” inclusive learning-friendly schools in each local government, removal of architectural barriers in schools to make them learning friendly, partitioning the classrooms to reduce noise, responding to the needs of teachers so as to motivate them as well as constant supervision and monitoring of teachers. The respondents further suggested that learning friendly environment could be achieved through provision of intensive leadership training for teachers on inclusive learning friendly-environment so that they become interested and committed to their task. They further agreed on the need for collaboration through team work among teachers, professionals, parents and community members. These item statements have mean ratings ranging from 2.81-3.75 implying that they agreed that they are measures that could ensure an inclusive learning friendly environment if implemented. The findings further indicate that a major step in putting inclusion policy into practice is staff development. Teachers can only be effective if they have adequate knowledge and skills for implementing inclusive education. Improving the working condition of teachers and provision of relevant learning materials were viewed as important factors for teachers to be effective in handling children with special education needs in inclusive classrooms.

Recommendations: Based on these findings, it was recommended that:

1. The physical environment should be restructured and that adequate infrastructural facilities should be provided.
2. Government in their budget should increase the allocation given to the education sector so as to make provision for proper and effective implementation of inclusive education policy in Enugu State.
3. Training and retraining programmes should be organized for teachers and school supervisors on regular basis to keep them abreast with the tenets of inclusion and inclusive learning-friendly environment

Conclusions

The results of this study show that the regular primary schools in Enugu State do not have a learning-friendly environment required for inclusive education. Most of the public schools are inadequately equipped with the necessary infrastructural facilities and resources that promote inclusive learning-friendly environments. It also showed the basic school environmental needs of regular schools for inclusive learning-friendly environments. Some of the challenges of the regular schools in creating inclusive learning-friendly environments include government’s reluctance in policy implementation and teachers’ lack of awareness of what an inclusive learning friendly environment entails.

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