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BASIC SCHOOL TEACHERS´ ATTITUDES TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN GHANA

ABSTRACT

Attitudes towards Inclusive Education are extremely complex and vary from one teacher to another. This is because traditionally, children with Special Education Needs (SEN) have been segregated into separate learning environments. This practice is now being questioned by teachers who believe it is an infringement of the rights of children with SEN. The proponents of Inclusive Education (IE) are of the opinion that including students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms would maximise their learning experiences.

The present study examined the attitudes of basic school teachers in mainstream classrooms towards Inclusive Education in Ghana. It also assessed the best learning environment for children with different levels of disabilities. In all, 400 mainstream classroom teachers in urban, peri-urban and rural areas were sampled. The instrument titled Moberg Scale (Moberg & Hannu, 2003) was used to collect data for this study.

The results of the study showed that teachers generally have little experiences and knowledge of SEN. The study further revealed that teachers largely do not support Inclusive Education. It was also discovered from the study that teacher background variables such as age, gender, teaching experience, location of school, level of school, and teacher qualification influence teachers' attitudes towards IE.
The type and severity of disability affected the preferred educational environment teachers recommended for children with SEN. Generally, pupils with severe disabilities were thought to be best educated in segregated schools whereas their counterparts with moderate disability were recommended to receive education in mainstream classrooms. However, teachers were ready to receive children with severe specific learning difficulties (in writing, spelling, mathematics, reading etc) in mainstream classrooms.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Special Education Needs, mainstream classrooms, attitudes.

AKNOWLEDGEMENT

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ACRONYMES AND ABBREVIATIONS

ATIES	Attitudes towards Inclusive Education Scale
B.Ed.	Bachelor of Education
BCTF	British Columbia Teachers´ Federation
CRC	Committee of the Right of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DFID	Department for International Development
EADSEN	European Agency for Development in Special Education Needs
EFA	Education for All
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
G E S	Ghana Education Service
I E	Inclusive Education
IEP	Integrated Education Programme
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SpED	Special Education Division
SEN	Special Education Needs
UNESCO	United Nations Education science and Cultural Organisation
UNO	United Nations Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund

1   INTRODUCTION

One problem which our world faces today is the growing number of persons who are denied access to education in their communities. Despite encouraging moves by governments in several countries to provide children with education, it is estimated that about 72 million children around the world do not have access to basic education (UNESCO, 2010). It is against this background that the Jomtien World Conference on Education For All (1996) set the goal for the education of all children of school–going age. This was further given prominence in goal (2) of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which aims at achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE) for all children everywhere (UN, 2000). The framework for action adopted by the world's declaration of Education For All (EFA) in 2000 aims at providing every boy and girl with primary school education by 2015. It also identifies Inclusive Education (IE) as a key strategy for the development of EFA (UNESCO, 2008). The inclusion of persons with barriers to learning and development in mainstream schools and classrooms has thus become part of global human rights movement. The idea of Inclusive Education was earlier on the centre stage of the United Nations during the UNESCO World Conference on Special Education held in Salamanca, Spain. At the conference, the idea of Inclusive Education was given a more vivid focus and understanding (UNESCO, 1994).

The concept of Inclusive Education is also contained implicitly in Article 23 of the Convention of the Right of the Child (CRC). The Convention speaks against discrimination against individuals with disabilities on the basis of accessing education, healthcare and rehabilitation services. Rather, the Convention supports the fullest development of the child for easy integration into the society. Article 29 of the Convention further emphasises that education should allow children to reach their fullest potential in cognitive, emotional and creative developments. The CRC has been ratified by 192 countries and it insists on both universal access to education and the right to quality education. In addition, the Convention stresses that the diverse needs of all children and their interest must be taken into consideration when planning to meet their needs. (UN, 1989). There is currently a high level political consensus on inclusion of all children into mainstream education as a goal by UNESCO and United Nations. This is indicated by internationally agreed

declarations which stipulates that ´´those with Special Education Needs (SEN) must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them with child centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs`` (UNESCO, 1994; United Nations, 1994).

The recent instrument backing the concept of IE is the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) which was adopted by the UN in 2006. This convention seeks to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of rights and freedoms of all persons with disabilities as well as promoting respect for their inherent dignity. Specifically on education, the Convention implores nations to ensure inclusion at all levels of the education system (UN, 2008).

Inclusive schooling is seen as a means of promoting school success and social integration for persons with and without disabilities (Cowne, 2003). Therefore, for the Ghanaian child, like any other child in the world with disability to access education just as his non disable colleague, inclusive practices in education must be encouraged. Sands et al, (2000, 26), cited in Pottas (2005) believe that mainstream classrooms have become the basic context within which inclusive education policies could be implemented. In Ghana, integrating people with disabilities in mainstream societal activities is a big challenge because of the negative attitudes of the public towards people with disabilities. Indeed, results from studies undertaken by Avoke (2002) and Agbenyega (2005) indicate that many Ghanaians still attribute the causes of disability to curses from the gods. This is not far from the revelation of a study conducted by Obeng (2005) that most teachers in their thirties in Ghana attribute disability to unexplainable occurrences from the spirits rather than natural occurrences and accidents. This view is also held in Ghana's West African neighbour, Nigeria. According to Dada and Odeku (1970) Nigerians, believe that some diseases are caused by spirits and that includes disability. This widely held notion is believed to influence a number of Ghanaians´ attitudes and prejudices towards children with special needs.

Teachers make up a substantial grouping in the Ghanaian public sector and are seen as agents of change in the educational setup. Weiner (2003, 13) and Reynolds (2001, 466) argue that ``Change ´´ is difficult to bring in classrooms and schools because it calls for reforms in professional development, curricular and learner support services, classroom management as well as a change in teacher attitudes, beliefs and values. Teachers are those who translate educational philosophy and objectives into

knowledgeable skills which are transferred to students in the classroom. The teacher commands and emits the image of one who improves knowledge and the physical conditions of the classroom through orderliness, discipline and control. It is therefore not surprising to find that teachers have many concerns about the implementation of new educational policies. As such, their views and concerns must be sought whenever educational policies and initiatives such as Inclusive Education are being implemented.

According to Heflin and Bullock (1999), a number of studies to investigate teachers´ attitudes and concerns about IE have taken place in Western countries. A handful of these studies have also taken place in Ghana. These studies include those undertaken by Agbeke in 2005 and Agbenyaga in 2007. Although these studies may provide significant information and scaffolding for inclusive practices in developing countries such as Ghana, these studies do not specifically and adequately address issues that are relevant to educational environments needed for children with varying degrees of disabilities. This makes it imperative for a comprehensive study to be carried out to examine the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education and to seek their views on the best placement for pupils with varied levels of impairments.

The overall purpose of the study was to explore and explain basic school teachers´ attitudes towards inclusive education in some selected public schools in three districts in the Ashanti region of Ghana. The primary objective was to examine some factors that may influence teachers´ attitudes towards IE and find out the most suitable educational environment for pupils with moderate to severe levels of disabilities.

The relevance of this study may be seen in the perspective of inclusive education practices in basic schools within the Ashanti region and Ghana as a whole. Information from this study would also provide a guide to improve teachers´ competence and strategies to deal with inclusive practices in the classrooms in basic schools. The outcomes and recommendations from the research can be used to influence government policies on the implementation of inclusive education practices and provide guidelines which can be used to promote the development of special education in Ghana.

1.1   The Provision of Basic Education in Ghana

The government of Ghana since independence regards education as a fundamental human right for all her citizens and has enshrined this in her legal framework of education. The 1961 Education Act which is the principal legislation concerning the right to education for all children in Ghana states that;

´´Every child who has attained the school going age as determined by the Minister shall attend a course of instruction as laid down by the Minister in a school recognised for the purpose by the minister´´ (GES, 2004, P.2).

The 1992 Republican Constitution of Ghana reaffirms education as a basic human right for all Ghanaian children.

Article 38 (2) states:

´The government shall within two years after parliament first meets after coming into force of this constitution draw up a programme for the implementation within the following ten years for the provision of a free, compulsory, universal basic education´´ (The Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992: 35).

The Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) programme was introduced in 1996. The policy aims at increasing educational access to all children and it has three main themes: Improving the quality of teaching and learning, improving management efficiency and increasing access and participation (GES, 2003). In 2004, the government of Ghana as a means of meeting goals 1and 2 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) introduced the Capitation Grant and the School Feeding Programme in Ghanaian basic schools. These policies have abolished payment of levies that are charged as means of raising funds to run the schools and provide free feeding for vulnerable children in primary schools. The policies aim at reinforcing the existing fCUBE policy of attracting and retaining children in Ghanaian schools. The government of Ghana is providing an amount of US 2.70 dollars for boys and US 3.88 dollars for girls to provide for the fees of children in Ghanaian public schools (UNICEF, World Bank, 2009).

1.2   Existing Special Education Needs (SEN) provision in Ghana

The education of children with disabilities in Ghana is linked to the General Education Policy (Act) of 1961 which entitles all children of Ghana to access

education and this includes those with impairments. The Act provided for the establishment of special schools for disabled children. To ensure that disabled children in particular enjoy education, the 1962 Education Amendment Act was introduced to enable the Special Education Division of the Ghana Education Service to provide for people with Special Education Needs. This was followed with the Dzobo Committee Report of 1972, which was limited in scope and mentioned only slow learners and the gifted. In 1995, the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare of Ghana commissioned the national advisory committee on employment to look at policies on disability in relation to rehabilitation and vocational training. The committee came out with general principles and guidelines for training in areas such as craftsmanship and other vocational training. To influence and change the attitudes of the public towards people with disabilities, the Persons with Disability Act was passed in June, 2006. The overall aim of the Act was to create an enabling environment for full participation of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in national development. Regarding education, the Act gives prominence to the following provisions:

A parent, guardian or custodian of a child with disability of school going age shall enrol the child in school.

The minister of education shall by legislative instrument designate school or institutions in each region which shall provide the necessary facilities and equipments that will enable persons with disability to fully benefit from the school or institution.

The government shall provide free education for persons with disability, and establish special schools for persons with disability who by reason of their disability cannot be enrolled in formal schools.

These provisions in the Act (Law) are to fight for and protect the right to education of people who are living with disability.

The admission process to special schools in Ghana is based on a screening process involving multi-disciplinary assessment and evaluation. The special schools per the educational policies follow the mainstream curriculum with modifications to suit the type of impairment, exceptions being for obvious reasons, like the case of schools for mentally retarded children. Some criticisms have been levelled against the special education system. First, it is believed that the special education system is expensive in relation to the resources of Ghana and it is also limited to few children with

special education needs. The system is also criticised on the basis that it alienates the child with disability from his/her community and this increases the prejudices against children with disabilities (Anson- Yevu, 1988).

1.3   The Inclusive Education situation in Ghana

As a signatory to the Salamanca Framework for Action on Special Education Needs and one of the very few countries to have first implemented the Convention of the Right of the Child, Ghana does not have a comprehensive IE policy as at now. However, efforts are underway to implements inclusive education practices in some basic schools in Ghana on pilot basis. First, the government of Ghana through the passage of the Disability Law (Act 2006, 715) aims to educate pupils with SEN in mainstream schools. For instance, article 20(1) indicates that a person with disability seeking admission into a school or any other institution of learning should not be denied access on account of his or her disability unless the person with disability has been assessed by the ministries of education, health and social welfare and found to be a person who deserves to be in a special school for children with disability (GOV, 2006). What this means is that, regular schools in Ghana are obliged to enrol children with disabilities in their schools without any discrimination. At the 48th session of the International Conference of Education, the Minister of Education of Ghana, Dominic Fobih indicated that efforts were underway to build the capacity of teachers in mainstream schools in order to handle inclusive practices (Fobih, 2008). Currently, special units in the premises of regular schools have been established to promote social integration on pilot basis in three regions of Ghana; Greater Accra region, Central region and Eastern region. This programme is been implemented by the Special Education Division (SpED) of the Ghana Education Service (GES) and VSO, an NGO. SpED is further building the capacities of some district directorates of Education to provide Inclusive Education services.

2   EDUCATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

This chapter discusses the right to education for persons with disabilities. Also examined is the concept of Inclusive Education and its benefits**.**

2.1   The right to education for children with disabilities

The right that all children, including those with special needs, have to education cannot be disputed. This is however not the case in many parts of the world since people with disability suffer from a pervasive denial of this right (UNESCO 2000). According to the UN (2005), about 40 million of the world's out–of–school children have some form of disability. It goes on to say that 5% of these children do not complete primary school at all while many never enrol or drop out very early.

International Declarations and instruments support the rights to education of persons with disabilities. The principal applicable framework for ensuring access to education for every child is the world conference on education for all. The conference held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 came out with the concept of Education For All (EFA). The aim of the concept was to promote equity and ensure universal access to education.

This was followed with the adoption in 1993 of Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. The rules emphasised the creation of equal opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in all aspects of societal activities without discrimination.

Later in 1994, the Salamanca Statement which acknowledges that education for all children can be achieved when all children are educated in the same school environment was launched. Paragraph 2 of the statement indicates that regular schools with inclusive orientations are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all (UNESCO, 1994).

In April 2000, in Dakar, 164 governments together with partner institutions adopted a framework for action which focused on access to education and inclusion for persons from disadvantaged and marginalised backgrounds. This framework was given further credence in 2006 when the Committee on the Right of the Child

adopted its principles. Comment 9 of the principles states that inclusive education should be seen as the means of educating children with disabilities. As such, states should aim at providing schools with appropriate accommodation for individual support to ensure quality basic education for disabled children (CRC/C/GC/9/par. 64, 2006).

The General Assembly of the UN in December, 2006 in a resolution of 61/106 adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Article 24 of the CRPD seeks to protect the rights of persons with disabilities to education without discrimination. It establishes the link between education and the right of persons with disabilities by using IE as a tool to develop the dignity, self worth, talent, and personality as well as the creativity of persons with disabilities. To this end, the UN, through the CRPD, encourages state parties to identify challenges that prevent the effective inclusion of persons with disabilities in education and manage these challenges effectively to ensure access to education for all children.

At the 48th session of the International Conference on Education organised by UNESCO, heads of delegation, delegates from 153 countries, representatives of 20 intergovernmental organisations as well as 25 NGOs reaffirmed Article 26 of the UN declarations of human rights which stipulates that everyone has the right to education. They further emphasised that Inclusive Education is fundamental to achieving human, social and economic development. In realising this, they acknowledge the important role that government and other social actors can play in making education inclusive. Consequently, they emphasise the importance of the broadened concept of inclusive education as a means of providing education which will meet the needs of all learners.

Despite these international conventions and declarations, there still exist in some countries, including Ghana, policies that allow authorities to declare that some children are ``uneducable``(UNESCO, 2003). Usually, this practice applies to children with severe intellectual and physical disabilities. The vast majority of centres of learning are physically inaccessible to many learners while others have rundown or are poorly maintained especially for those who have physical disabilities (UNESCO, 2003). These are unhealthy and unsafe for all learners. It is to deal with this problem and other problems associated with the provision of education for people with disabilities that the concept of IE is seen as a necessity.

2.2 Inclusive Education Concept and its benefits

Increasingly, policy–makers, non governmental organisations, educationists and development specialists acknowledge that for persons with disabilities to enjoy their rights to good quality education for all children as stipulated in international conventions and declarations, measures must be put in place by states to establish schools with environments that welcome and accommodate all children without discrimination. The Salamanca Framework for Action for instance, backs the development of inclusive schools as a means of achieving education for all. UNESCO therefore encourages states to recognise the framework as key government policy and accord it an important place in their development agenda (UNESCO, 1994). At the Salamanca conference, **all** in the framework was expanded and deliberated upon to include the establishment of schools that accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social and linguistic consideration. Even though the idea of inclusive education may be seen as an innovation by many people, it is true that in many cultural circumstances, it is also the traditional way to educate children as emphasised by Duncan 2001. ´´…Historically; we have always practiced the principles of inclusion in our educational system especially at the pre-school and primary levels´´ (Duncan, 2001 cited in Porter, 2001). The IE concept replaced the term ´´integration´´ which was common in the 1980s. Integration referred to the placement of children with SEN in mainstream schools. The integration model emphasised the provision of support services in mainstream schools for individual students to enable them to ´´fit in´´ to the mainstream schools without making changes to the programme itself. IE on the other hand lays emphasis on the child's right not only to fully participate in school life but it is also the school's duty to welcome and accept the child (British Psychological Society, 2002). UNESCO emphasises that inclusion is a movement that aims at improving the education system as a whole. It goes ahead to define Inclusive Education as a process of addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all learners by increasing participation in learning and reducing exclusion within and from education (UNESCO, 2003). According to UNESCO, the Inclusive Education concept involves making changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children.

According to Peters (2007), the IE concept as contained in the Salamanca framework is based on the concept of social equity. This is consistent with the social model of disability. The social model emphasises that all children are different, and that the school and education system need to change in order to meet individual needs of all learners. Booth (2005) acknowledges that Inclusive Education as a philosophy is based on values that aim at maximising the participation of all in society and education by minimising exclusionary and discriminatory practices. Therefore, Inclusive Education involves the inclusion of all, regardless of race, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation, language, and socio–economic status as well as any other aspect of an individual's identity that might be perceived as different.

To Sandkull (2005), Inclusive Education is concerned with the provision of appropriate responses to the broad spectrum of learning needs in formal and non formal education settings. According to him, IE goes beyond the marginal integration of children into mainstream education to the extent of how to transform the system so that it will respond to the diversity of learners. The objective of Inclusive Education is to support education for all, with special emphasis on removing barriers to participation and learning for girls and women, disadvantaged groups, children with disabilities and out of school children. According to him, the overall goal is to have a school where all children are participating and treated equally.

In summary, Inclusive Education tries to look at the rights of children and how education systems can be transformed so as to meet the needs of diverse groups of learners. IE embraces the need to create equal opportunities for children with disabilities or special needs in education to access education in mainstream environment. It is based on the theory of strengthening the capacity of education systems in order to provide equitable, high quality and accessible education for all children (UNESCO, 2009).

Studies on practical implementation of IE in OECD and some developing countries have shown numerous benefits of the concept. At the 48th Session of the International Conference on Education, some educational, social and economic benefits of Inclusive Education were identified. These include the following:

Educationally, IE enables teachers to vary their teaching methods. This is because in inclusive classrooms, teachers have to develop ways of teaching which responds to individual differences and which benefit all children.

Socially, inclusive schools help to change attitudes towards diversity when both disabled and non disabled children are educated together, thereby creating a just and non -discriminate society.

Economically, IE is less costly. This is manifested especially in the establishment and maintenance of schools that educate all children together as against the establishment of a complex system of different types of schools for different groups of children UNESCO (2008).

In a study undertaken by Hauser- Cram, Bronson & Upshur (1993), and emphasised by Odom in (2000), the effects of inclusion among 148 pre-school classrooms were monitored. The results of the study revealed that children with special education needs who were placed in classroom with high degree of inclusion exhibited greater social behaviours than those with low degree of inclusion. It states that such children acquire communication skills previously undeveloped and show increased interaction with peers and are prepared for better post –school experiences.

Inclusive Education also benefits families of children with or without special education needs. Oremland, Flynn, & Rieff (2002), acknowledge that Inclusive Education foster more optimistic attitudes toward children with Special Education Needs. It further helps them to maintain more acceptable perspectives towards diversity. More so, families of students with disabilities have access to an educational setting provided in the neighbourhood and this can lead to a heightened connection to other families in the community (Power-deFur & Orelove, 1996). Because the child is being educated in the neighbourhood school, the family has a greater opportunity to take on an active role in the neighbourhood community.

The society also benefits from inclusive education. According to Oremland et al (2002), inclusive education promotes awareness of diversity and acceptance of those with special education needs in the society. He states that a society with Inclusive Education represents practices and ideologies which maximises the possibilities and promises of all children.

Hines (2001, 3) posits that Inclusive Education benefits the child without disability in the inclusive classroom as well. This is because usually in inclusive settings, additional special education teachers are employed to assist in the provision of small individualised instructions that help in the development of academic adaptations for all students who need them. This is corroborated by Staub & Peck (1994) who emphasise that the classmates of students with disabilities also experience growth in

social cognition. Typically, non disabled students learn skills that enable them not only to communicate more effectively with their peers with disabilities, but also to be more supportive of them in daily interactions. The growth in the social skills of the students helps them to be more aware of the needs of their peers with disabilities.

One final area of benefit that inclusion provides is for teachers. A research by Power-deFur & Orelove (1996) shows that teachers in inclusive settings collaborate more and spend more time planning, learn new techniques from one another, participate in more professional development activities, show a greater willingness to change, and use a wider range of creative strategies to meet students' needs. Because regular education teachers generally have little or no experience in teaching students with disabilities, they may feel compelled to further educate themselves in order to better serve these students, and better-trained teachers translate into better education for all students.

2.3   The social approach to Inclusive Education

According to DFID (2000), disability cases exist because of the way society is organised. They go on to say that the lives of people with disabilities are made more difficult not by their specific impairment but by the way society interprets and reacts to people with disabilities. People with disabilities face several difficulties in society and in most cases, this happens in more sophisticated frameworks. They include environmental discrimination, which arises as a result of the inability of people with disabilities to participate in society's activities due to physical barriers such as inaccessible transport system and inappropriately designed buildings. There is also attitudinal discrimination, which is expressed through fear and embarrassment on the part of non disabled people toward those with disabilities. Finally, there is institutional discrimination which arises when society and its institutions fail to provide legal provisions that ensure that children with disabilities can access education without difficulties. Successful IE serves as a means for social inclusion since in practice, IE seeks to establish cooperation between education systems and external public and private institutions. Consequently, interventions to support people with disabilities must occur at the societal level. The IE model therefore acknowledges that persons with disabilities are stakeholders in their own rights and therefore have the right to ask for reforms in institutional, physical, informational

and attitudinal barriers in society. Further, IE recognises that all children are different, and that the school and the education system need to change in order to meet the individual needs of all learners with and without impairment in the community.

The role of education and training is to produce individuals who will serve the society by organising and providing the necessary resources needed for developing the knowledge and skills needed to benefit all the people in the society. This is what IE aims to achieve by restructuring mainstream education systems to ensure that all pupils have access to full range of educational and social opportunities.

Asamani (2000), identifies the absence of a comprehensive policy by the government of Ghana on IE as a barrier in changing the negative attitudes that people have about pupils with Special Education Needs. To deal with this, resources, regulations and arrangements that are vital for the removal of obstacles and the realisation of inclusion in mainstream schools are provided. As Savolainen, Kokkala & Alasuutari (2000) put it, little can be done to overcome the impairment of learners, however, a considerable impact in overcoming the physical, personal and institutional barriers to education must be sought to ensure access and participation for all children.

2.4   Rights based approach to Inclusive Education

The rights based approach to Inclusive Education is designed with a vision and principle that believe in the culture of rights, social justice and equity. It believes that all children are not the same and therefore accepts diversity as strength rather than problem. It is founded in the pedagogical believe that children learn in different ways and that success is related more to learning of life and social skills rather than scoring high marks in exams. It therefore encourages that admission policy of schools should not be based on test scores or other physical, social, and economic factors (Mohan, 2007). It is upon these bases that the call for IE practice is being made by disability groups, governments and NGOs.

According to UNESCO, inclusion in the education systems can advance, when it is viewed as right of citizenship. That is, it should be seen as an expression of the personal freedom that all children enjoy (UNESCO, 2003). This view was further emphasised at the 48th Session of UNESCO´s International Conference on Education

when participants reaffirmed Article 26 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights which states that everyone has right to education. They further went ahead to affirm that quality inclusive education is the basis for achieving human, social and economic development (UN, 2008). The human rights-based approach to inclusive education seeks to achieve these rights. It follows a process which puts poor and excluded people at the centre, and builds their skills, capacity and confidence to demand and secure these rights.

According to Bernard (2000), the human rights approach is not only about what you achieve, but also how you achieve it. This means putting poor and excluded people at the centre, transforming the power relations that keep poor people poor and recognising the centrality of unequal gender relations in this process. Bernard further explains that the approach involves raising people's awareness of their human rights and empowering them through building their skills and confidence to demand and secure these rights.

A rights–based approach to education programming builds on the principle of non retrogression and supports the fulfilment of internationally agreed human rights requirements that are relevant to the education sector (UNESCO, 2003, 7). The right to education is acknowledged as being a fundamental human right, and education is considered to be both a goal in itself and a means for attaining all other human rights.

A rights-based approach to education also emphasises the importance of quality Inclusive Education. According to Sandkull (2005), quality education based on a rights-based approach has the following characteristics. It is learner centred, leads to the realisation of every learner's full potential and prepares the learner for the challenges faced in life. He goes further to state that the rights-based approach is particularly applicable in the promotion of IE of good quality. Its core definitions and values include elements such as gender sensitivity, non discriminatory curricular and learning environments; child centred teaching and learning methods, enhanced participation of all stakeholders, and a holistic approach to education.

On the premise of the human rights based approach, UNESCO (2009) has identified some principles to be used to develop ideas for achieving rights for, and in education. The principles are based on the following:

Firstly, there is the need to identify and target specific right holders such as the most poor and oppressed people who suffer discrimination in their attempts to enjoy basic education.

Secondly, a holistic approach which focus on education as an entry point and recognise that there are many issues which impact on people's ability to access education and its complex nature must be looked at.

Moreover, the use of participatory methods to actively engage rights holders in influencing, designing, monitoring and delivering education must be adopted to ensure that complex information is translated and repackaged to make it more accessible at the grassroots level. (UNESCO, 2001 & OECD, 1999).

As a way of implementing this approach in Ghana, the government through the passage of the Disability Act in 2006 is designating schools and institutions in each region that will provide facilities and equipments which will enable people with disability to benefit from the school or institution and provide free education for people with disabilities. These are measures aimed at attracting people with disabilities so they can enjoy their rights to education.

2.5 Key ingredients for successful Inclusive Education practice

Inclusion in education is considered as an unending process which involves the collective efforts of stakeholders aimed at increasing the participation of learners and reducing their exclusion from the culture, curriculum and communities of local learning centres. Miles (2007), identifies some key issues to be addressed in making progress in developing inclusive education in developing countries. These issues include:

The need to conduct situational analysis: This deals with identifying existing resources and initiatives and highlighting the way forward to ensure that education benefits all.

An all inclusive learning environment: It is believed that in most cases learning environments are often not conducive to the inclusion of disabled children. To deal with this problem therefore, resources in the community must be mobilised to transform the situation.

Promotion of on going-teacher development: Teachers are the most valuable resource in the promotion of inclusive practice, but if they do not believe in inclusion they can be a major barrier. This usually happens as a result of their lack of

confidence and the basic knowledge needed to welcome disabled children. To overcome this, adequate pre–service and in-service training are needed to change attitudes and develop good practice.

A holistic Inclusive Education policy: This is not often seen as a mainstream issue but a variant of Special Educational Needs policy. It is important to make sure that disabled children's needs are part of the general policies of countries.

Stubbs (2008) re-emphasises what has been said by Miles by identifying three key ingredients for successful and sustainable inclusive education. According to him, for an IE programme to be realistic, appropriate, sustainable, effective and relevant to the culture, the following ingredients must be taken into consideration.

A strong framework: The basic component needed for the development of Inclusive Education is a framework which Stubbs considers as the `bones` for the programme. What this means is that for inclusion to be possible and sustainable, policy makers and implementers should be clear about the aims of the programme. They also need to put in place structures such as policies, create awareness, understanding goals and indicators .Without these, the programme will have nothing to hang on and therefore will fall away. The framework should thus consist of core values, basic principles and indicators for success.

Implementation within the local context and culture: Stubbs calls this ingredient `the flesh´. By this, we look for what will be added to the framework in order for it to be fleshed out. This therefore calls for activities aimed at unlocking and using local resources to achieve success. It demands the use of local teachers, local languages, local strengths and local community. A key mistake identified in the implementation of Inclusive Education has been the importation of solutions from outside to solve local problems which are usually culturally different. Experience, according to Stubbs demonstrates that solutions to problems encounted in the implementation of IE need to be developed locally, using local resources, or else they are not sustainable. Consequently, for Inclusive Education to successful, it should be seen as something that is locally owned rather than being imposed from outside.

On-going participation and critical self- reflection of all key groups: Stubbs calls this ingredient `the life blood. `According to him, for inclusion to be successful, it should be seen as a process. This means that it needs on-going participatory monitoring that involves all stakeholders. To sustain the programme therefore

requires regular support, in-service training, and advocacy, working at all levels including national and international campaigns and initiatives.

2.6   Teachers´ attitudes towards IE in developing countries

Swart et al (2002, 177), Avramidis & Norwich (2003, 130) acknowledge that the teacher is key element to successful implementation of IE practices. This idea is corroborated by Sands et al (2000,   26) who emphasise that the mainstream classroom has become the primary context within which Inclusive Education has to be implemented. Class teachers of today are been obliged to seek ways to instruct all students in their classrooms (Brownlee & Carrington, 2000, 99), with emphasis on the physical environment, instructional strategies employed, and classroom management techniques, as well as educational corroboration. Carrington, for instance, hopes that these changes will result in fundamental alterations in the way teachers think about knowledge, teaching, learning and their role in the inclusive classroom. In Ghana, the Education Service implements educational policies for the state through classroom teachers. The role of the Ghanaian teacher in educational policy implementation is in line with the view of Ainscow (2007). To him, teachers have a key role in the change process as they have to change their attitudes, ways of working, materials used and their cooperation with other professionals in and outside the classroom, among other things.

Pace (2003), acknowledges the importance of teacher attitudes towards inclusion as reflected by the findings of numerous studies conducted in that field. Teachers must believe that their behaviour can affect the education of their students. They must recognise that they have the capacity and power to make key decisions which affect their role and students´ production. In a study conducted by Carrington 1999 (cited in Pottas, 2005), the development of Inclusive Education practices has the potential to unsettle teachers and this could prevent overall school development. Therefore, when being introduced, policy makers should not only consider changes to the curriculum and methods but they must also look at the teachers´ fundamental beliefs, attitudes and knowledge. According to Williams and Finnegan (2003) the perceptions that people have determine their actions. Swart et al (cited in Pottas, 2005) further say that the attitude of people can have a cognitive (learned) component, an emotional

(affective) component and a component of observable behaviour. What this implies is that if the teacher in the classroom feels positive about a certain policy, it will have a positive influence on his or her behaviour and vice versa. With reference to IE, Avramidis & Norwich, (2002, 130) indicate that teachers´ perceptions of inclusive policies will not only determine their acceptance of inclusive practices but also may influence their commitment to implement such policies.

A number of studies undertaken in a number of countries in the developing world to look at teachers' attitudes towards Inclusive Education have revealed interesting results. Detailed discussion of some selected studies and their results in relation to Inclusive Education in South Africa, Botswana, Guyana, India, Zambia and Finland are presented below. Results of studies in Ghana are also reviewed.

In a study conducted in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa in 2008, Mayaba examined educators´ perceptions and experiences on inclusive education in selected schools .A semi-structured questionnaire adopted from the British Colombia Teachers´ Federation (BCTF), work life of Teachers survey series 2: Special Education (BCTF, 2001) was used for the study.

From the study, it was revealed that teachers in South Africa generally do not support Inclusive Education. First, respondents identified problems which they encounter in the implementation of inclusive practices in their classrooms. Moreover, respondents indicated that they lack sufficient resources, expertise or training on Inclusive Education. In conclusion, teachers indicated in this study that they see themselves as unprepared to teach children with varying decrees of disability in their schools.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made. First, there was a recommendation that appropriate resources for teaching should be provided for teachers in inclusive schools. Emphasis was also placed on appropriate training skills for such educators. Finally educators were urged to recognise the ability of every child to learn with emphasis on the child's strengths rather than his or her weaknesses.

Another study was undertaken by Chhabra, Srivastava and Ishaan (2009) in Botswana to identify the attitudes of teachers towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. In this study, 103 teachers responded to the Attitudes towards Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES) which was developed by Wilczenski (1992). Generally, the study revealed that teachers do not have positive attitudes towards inclusion. Specifically, the study showed that teachers are not

interested in including children who need individualised educational programs and children with behavioural problems in mainstream classrooms. Also, the result of the study indicated that the majority of teachers are concerned about including students with severe disabilities into mainstream classrooms since the needs of such children cannot be met in mainstream classrooms.

The study also tried to find the existing relationship between teacher variables and attitudes toward Inclusive Education. From their research, Chhabra et al found that age and gender do not have a significant relationship with teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. Consequently, age and gender can not be used to measure respondents' perception on inclusion. One major finding from this study was that teachers' insufficient knowledge on Inclusive Education was a contributing factor towards their negative attitudes. In conclusion, the study indicated that teachers in mainstream classrooms do not have adequate knowledge and training needed to address the needs of students with disabilities in mainstream schools.

In 2010, Amanda, Ajodhia-Andrews and Elaine undertook a study in Guyana on the theme ´´Inclusive Education for children with special needs from the views of policy makers, teachers and parents.´´ Specifically, the study looked at the relationship between attitudes towards those with special needs on one side and other conditions such as change agents and resources needed for successful inclusion. Four themes emerged from the study as having impact on Inclusive Education in Guyana. These were identified as attitudes and perception towards those with special needs, change agents, resources and experiences with children with special needs.

The results of the study showed that negative attitudes and perceptions towards those with special needs are core obstacles to successful IE. According to the study, the negative attitudes are caused by the absence of change agents in Guyana, inadequate resources and the absence of teachers' experiences with children with special needs. On the attitudes of teachers in regular schools in particular, the study maintained that they do not have enough time to attend to children with special needs.

A study on the impact of a teacher education programme on knowledge and attitudes of IE was conducted by Gafor and Asaraf (2009) in India. The major objective of the study was to examine whether the regular Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programme establishes any significant difference in the knowledge and understanding as well as attitudes of student teachers on Inclusive Education. The sample for the study comprised teachers who have gone through the Bachelor of education (B.Ed.)

programme and those without it. The researchers adopted the survey method to elicit responses from the respondents.

The study revealed that teachers who have passed through the B.Ed. programme showed marginal increase in their knowledge base of Inclusive Education when compared to those without B.Ed. training. Results of the study on attitudes of respondents towards Inclusive Education showed a fairly higher positive level for those with B.Ed. training as compared to their other colleagues. When male and female attitudes were compared, the study revealed that both males with and without teaching experience in B.Ed. exhibited higher level of positive attitudes than their female counterparts. While the results from the study acknowledged that there is a gradual increase in students´ knowledge on IE as a result of the Bachelor of Education programme, the programme is yet to achieve its needed impact with regard to Inclusive Education.

In a study conducted in (2003) in Zambia and Finland, Moberg and Savolainen assessed the perception of teachers and parents on Inclusive Education. They also examined the best learning environment for children with different levels of disabilities. In this study, 1,350 Zambian teachers and parents as well as 512 Finish ordinary and special education teachers´ views were sought. The study generally revealed that Finnish ordinary teachers are more pessimistic towards Inclusive Education as compared to their special education counterparts. However, the Zambian respondents are the most segregationists. When demographic characteristics and their relationship with teachers' perceptions were cross examined, it was found that age is related to teachers´ perception with older teachers being more negative in their attitudes towards IE than their younger colleagues. The study also found that sex is related to teachers´ perceptions on Inclusive Education. In Zambia for example, male respondents are more positive towards Inclusive Education than females. However, in Finland, females are more positive than males. Level of education is also related to teachers´ perceptions. Teachers experiences of inclusion was analysed solely in the Finnish sample to see its impact on teachers attitudes. The results of the study showed that the quantity of teachers' experiences has no impact on teachers' perception on IE. However, the quality of experiences was seen as a major factor. Specifically, the study revealed that teachers who have successful experiences of inclusion turn out to be more positive than those with no or less successful experiences.

When respondents were asked to evaluate the best educational placement across the various levels of disabilities, the study revealed differing results. Both the Zambian and Finnish respondents recommended a more restrictive environment for children with severe disabilities than those with moderate disabilities. Respondents from both countries also recommended that children with speech disorders and specific learning problems be placed in learning environments close to mainstream classrooms. The study however revealed some differences on the kinds of disabilities likely to cause problems for educators when placed in mainstream classrooms. While respondents in Finland indicated that students with intellectual and behavioural disorders will pose problems when educated in mainstream classrooms, their Zambian counterparts were of the view that students with physical disabilities can cause problem when included in mainstream classrooms. Generally, both groups recommend more restrictive environments for students with severe disabilities than those with moderate disabilities.

A study was carried out in (2005) by Obeng to examine the views of teachers concerning the teaching of children with disabilities in Ghanaian classrooms. The sample for the study comprised four hundred and eighty (480) teachers from the Accra metropolis and some rural areas in the Eastern region of Ghana. The result of the study revealed that 39.0% of teachers have not experienced the teaching of children with disabilities in their classrooms as against 61.0% who indicated that they have some experience of teaching SEN children. Further, the study showed that 60.0% of children with disabilities have vision problems. 20.0% of Special Education Needs children in classrooms have behavioural problems. 8.0% are hearing impaired, 7.0% have physical problems while 5.0% have multiple impairments. The study revealed that about 32.0% of teachers have children with disciplinary (behavioural) problems in their classrooms and this makes class control very difficult. This is coupled with the fact that an astonishing 75.0% indicated that they did not have any professional training in Special Needs Education. Just 15.0% indicated that they have received in-service training of any sort on SEN. When teachers were asked if they were interested in including children with disability in their classrooms, the results was in the negative. About 80.0% of teachers indicated their unwillingness to include such children. In conclusion, the study revealed that although teachers express love and affection towards the children they teach, they are unwilling to include them in mainstream classrooms.

In (2005), Agbeke carried out a study in Akwapim Mampong, Ghana to assess the impact of segregation and Inclusive Education on pupils with low vision at the basic school. To obtain valid data for his study, the researcher combined a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview to elicit responses. These instruments were responded to by teachers, pupils, past pupils and parents of children with visual impairment from two schools; Akwapim Akropong School for the Blind and the Integrated Education Programme (IEP) of Akwapim North. The results of the study were examined from two perspectives. These are socialisation and academic performance. First, the study showed that pupils from inclusive schools are more actively involved in social activities than their counterparts from the segregated schools. On academic performance however, the study does not show any difference between the two schools. The study revealed that pupils from both schools exhibit an average performance. On the whole, the study indicated a brighter future for inclusive education.

In another study conducted by Agbenyega (2007) in the Accra Metropolis of Ghana, the concerns and attitudes of one hundred teachers towards Inclusive Education were examined. The study was undertaken in five Ghana Education Service and an NGO (VSO) inclusive supported schools, and five "ordinary" schools .The results from the study could broadly be put into three key themes; beliefs about inclusion, professional issues and resource issues. Regarding beliefs about inclusion, the results of the study indicated that teachers are of the view that pupils with disabilities, especially those with sensory problems should be educated in special classrooms. Further, teachers think that including children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms increases their workload which results in the incompletion of syllabuses. This, they indicated may affect the academic performance of non disabled children in their classrooms.

On issues of professional skills, teachers indicated that they lack the professional expertise to handle pupils with disabilities in the schools effectively and that this is a contributing factor to poor school performance.

With regards to issues of resource, the study revealed that inaccessible classrooms, overcrowding, absence of teaching materials such as brail and large prints; and the absence of paraprofessionals are some of the problems hindering the successful implementation of inclusive education in Ghana. The study generally does not see a

difference in the attitudes of teachers in the GES/VSO inclusive schools and those in "ordinary" schools.

In (2010), a study was conducted in the Cape Coast metropolis of Ghana by Ackah to find out any relationship between teacher background characteristics (gender, school location, teaching experience and professional qualification) and attitudes towards Inclusive Education. The study adopted a four-point Likert scale questionnaire which was responded to by 132 teachers. Descriptive and inferential statistics were adopted in analysing and discussing the data which were obtained for the study. Four hypotheses were formulated to guide the study; there is no significant difference between male and female teachers' attitudes towards Inclusive Education; there is no significant difference between teachers' school location and attitude towards Inclusive Education; there is no significant difference between teachers' teaching experience and attitude towards Inclusive Education, there is no significant difference between teachers' professional qualification and attitude towards Inclusive Education.

The results of the study were analysed in relation to the four hypotheses. Regarding the first hypotheses, the study found no relationship between gender and teachers´ attitudes about Inclusive Education. Secondly, the study revealed that the geographical location (rural or urban) of teachers may not necessarily affect their attitudes towards Inclusive Education. It discovered, rather, that the teachers´ understanding of children with disabilities is a paramount indicator of their attitudes towards inclusive education. Moreover, teaching experience of teachers was found not to be linked to teacher attitude. Finally, the study did not reveal any relationship between teachers' educational qualification and their attitudes towards Inclusive Education.

The results of the studies discussed have indicated that in general, mainstream classroom teachers do not support Inclusive Education. The possible reason for this is that teachers lack the necessary equipment and training to handle the disability cases they face in their schools. These studies have also indicated that background variables may not necessarily be associated with the negative stance of teachers. The results of these studies show how delicate the issues concerning the implementation of Inclusive Education are. They emphasise the need for stakeholders in education to show extra commitment in the implementation of IE practices.

2.7   Promoting Inclusive Education

Active participation of children with SEN in an inclusive classroom is paramount in ensuring that teaching and learning benefit every child in the classroom. In fact, educators´ abilities to ensure that children with and without SEN enjoy a sense of belonging in mainstream classrooms, teachers´ abilities to make SEN children feel a sense of belonging and their abilities to differentiate what is taught and how it is taught are necessary for successful inclusive education. Further studies on this theme have led to the discovery of strategies which should be implemented for creating a successful inclusive environment.

Cooperative teaching: As demonstrated by case studies in Austria, Luxembourg and Ireland, Inclusive Education could be successful when teachers get support from their colleagues within the school such as teaching assistant as well as other professionals from outside the school (EADSEN, 2005). There are instances that children with SEN may need specific help which cannot be met by the ´ordinary´ class teacher. In cases like this, other teachers and support personnel may be invited to assist. According to Power-defur & Orelove (1997), a successful inclusive classroom rests on the teachers' abilities to plan classroom activities with support from their colleagues, modify classroom tasks for pupils and develop strategies for evaluating students' performance.

Cooperative Learning: Studies conducted in Sweden and an expert review of literature reported by EADSEN in 2005 indicated that peer tutoring or cooperative learning is effective in both the cognitive and socio-emotional areas of students´ learning and development. This is collaborated by UNESCO (2001) that an effective means for helping children with SEN to learn is to put them into groups according to their abilities. As means of building social interaction and to instil self confidence, children with SEN can be paired with more abled students who will assist and help them organise their classroom activities.

Conducive classroom climate: Volts, Brazil and Ford (2001) see teachers' abilities to create conducive social and emotional climate in the classroom as a major tool needed to achieve successful IE. To them, a classroom atmosphere where teachers and pupils feel safe, accepted and valued is needed to achieve active participation from all children in teaching and learning. It is recommended that pupils are involved

in the making of clear cut rules for the class while problem solving techniques are employed by educators to decrease the amount and intensity of disturbances during lessons.

Effective teaching: Successful education takes place within an overall approach where education is based on assessment, evaluation and high expectation. Adopting an effective teaching approach in the inclusive classroom contributes to the goal of decreasing the gap between students with and without SEN. All students, including students with special needs demonstrate improvements in their learning with systematic monitoring, assessment, planning and evaluation of their work. The curriculum could therefore be geared to individual needs and additional support can be introduced adequately through the Individual Education Plan (IEP). The IEP should however fit within the normal curriculum.

3   RESEARCH QUESTION

The research questions to guide this study were formulated in line with the objective of the study and these include:

1. What are teachers' experiences and knowledge of Special Education Needs (SEN) in Ghana?

2. What are basic school teachers´ perceptions of inclusive education in Ghana?

2.1 What factors are related to teachers´ attitudes towards inclusive education?

3. Which educational environments are rated the best for students with diverse disabilities?

4   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the Ashanti region, the third largest region in Ghana after the Northern and Brong Ahafo regions and the second most populous region after the Greater Accra region. The region is made up of 27 districts, out of which the study was conducted in three districts, namely; Bosomtwe, Ejisu–Juaben Municipal and Kumasi Metropolis.

Bosomtwe district is one of the 27 created districts in the Ashanti region, having been carved out of the former Bosomtwe Atwima Kwanwoma district. The district is located in the central portion of the Ashanti region. It lies within latitude 6.43 degrees north and longitude 1.46 degrees west, and it spreads over a land area of 718 square kilometres.

Ejisu–Juaben Municipality is among the 27 administrative and political districts in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The Municipality is known globally for its rich cultural heritage and tourists attractions, notably the booming kente weaving industry of Ghana. The municipality stretches over an area of 637.2 square km, constituting about 10 percent of the entire Ashanti region and with Ejisu as its capital. The municipality lies within the latitudes 1.15 degrees north and 1.45 north as well as the longitudes 6.15 degrees west and 7.00 degrees west.

Kumasi Metropolis is located in the transitional forest zone and is about 270 kilometres north of the national capital, Accra. Kumasi is between the latitudes of 6.35 degrees—6.40 north and longitudes of 1.30 degrees—1.35 west with an elevation which ranges between 250-300 metres above sea level with an area of about 254 squares kilometres.

4.1   Sampling size and procedure

The study was carried out in public schools in three selected districts in the Ashanti region of Ghana. These were Bosomtwe district, Ejisu Juaben Municipality and Kumasi Metropolis. The target population for the study comprised lower primary, upper primary and junior high school teachers in the afore-mentioned districts. The population was picked based on the researcher's desire to examine and compare the attitudes of teachers towards Inclusive Education in rural, peri-urban and urban

settlements. Bosomtwe district is a rural area. Ejisu – Juaben Municipal is a peri-urban district while Kumasi Metropolis is an urban area.

In this study, a simple random sampling procedure was adopted to select some teachers from the schools in the study area. According to Laws et al (2003), in simple random sampling, the sample is designed so that each unit in the population has an equal chance of selection. In this study, the lottery technique was adopted to select the schools for the study. The names of schools were written on pieces of papers of the same size and weight. The papers were put in a box, reshuffled thoroughly and the target schools were handpicked. To ensure fairness and equal chance, after a name of a school was picked and recorded, it was put back in the box. When an already recorded name was picked again, it was put back without being recorded. This same process was followed to select the respondents (teachers) for the study.

The sample size used for the study comprised 400 teachers which is about (5 %) of the population and was sampled from public primary and junior high schools in the three districts. This is in line with the view held by Amedahe. According to him, in most quantitative studies a sample size of 5% to 20% of the population is sufficient for generalisation purposes (Amedahe, 2002). 122 of the respondents sampled were from lower primary schools, 123 from upper primary schools while 155 teachers were sampled from the junior high schools. The distribution of the schools by districts was: Kumasi 36, Bosomtwe 32 and Ejisu- Juaben 28.More than half of the respondents for this study came from the Kumasi Metropolis of the Ashanti region of Ghana. This is because Kumasi had the greatest teacher population in the study districts.

TABLE 1: Respondent districts

District	Teachers (N)	Sample (N)	sample (%)
Bosomtwe	1370	68	17
Ejisu Juaben	1392	71	18
Kumasi	5199	261	65
Total	7961	400	100

The dominant ages of respondents ranged from 20 – 40 years. This shows that majority of the respondents were of youthful age. This could mean that the teaching

profession in Ghana is becoming more attractive to the youth. This is positive for the development of basic education in Ghana. The study also looked at the number of years that respondents have spent in the teaching profession. The study revealed that many of the teachers have spent between 1-10 years in the teaching profession. This is consistent with the average ages of the respondents which makes them a youthful group.

TABLE 2: Respondent age distribution and years served

Age	N	%	No of yrs served	N	%
20-30	179	45	1-5	180	45
31-40	160	40	6-10	113	28
41-50	42	11	11-15	46	12
51-60	19	5	16-20	29	7
Total	400	100	Above 21	32	8
			Total	400	100

The academic qualifications of teachers were also examined and it was found that the majority of teachers in the study area had ´Teachers´ Certificate A´. This could be because until 2004, the basic qualification for teaching at the basic level in Ghana was Teacher's Certificate A. This was followed by Diploma, which is consistent with the youthful age of the respondents who might have joined the teaching profession in 2007.

TABLE 3: Teachers education level

Education level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
GCE/ SSCE	41	10
Teachers´ Cert A	169	42
Diploma	106	27
Degree	80	21
Others	4	1
Total	400	100

4.2   Research instrument and administration

The research instrument titled ``Questionnaire for teachers `` was used to gather data for the study. The questions were adopted from the Moberg scale (2002) with a few additions to suit the study area (Appendix II).They consisted of closed structured questions. This is in line with the view held by Cohen, Lawrence & Keith (2007, 321-322). They believe that highly closed structured questions have the advantage of generating frequencies of responses amenable to statistical treatment and analysis. They go further to argue that such questions enable comparisons to be made across groups in the sample. The first part of the research instrument was demographic data which sought information on variables such as type of school, district, age, gender, subject taught, qualification and experience of teachers. Part two of the instrument describes teachers´ knowledge and experiences with Special Education Needs (SEN) pupils in their schools. There are four questions on this part constructed along a four point Likert type scale. Part three contains 24 items on placement of pupils with SEN in mainstream classrooms while part four deals with support for SEN children in the classroom and contains 13 items. Part five deals with the educational environment for pupils with diverse impairments. It contains 14 items built along a five point Likert type scale.

The questionnaires were administered between the periods of November, 2009 to January, 2010 and were delivered to the respective schools personally by the researcher for the teachers to respond to them. This was after permission has been sought and granted by the regional directorate of education. Upon reaching the schools, the researcher went to the head teacher to introduce himself and sought permission by handing over the letter (Appendix IV) of authorisation from the regional education office before administering the questionnaire. First, the staff list of those selected to answer the questionnaire was checked in order to assign numbers to every respondent. This made the distribution of the questionnaire easier and ensured that all the target respondents were reached.

4.3   Reliability

Denscombe 1998 cited in Laws et al, (2003, 417) sees reliability as when the research instrument produces the same data time after time whenever it is used and that any variations in the results reflects real variations in what is being measured. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the attitude scale. (Variables 1-19). However Variables (2, 3, 7,8,9,13,17 and 19) which were in the negative were reversed so that responses would be towards the positive. Alpha was 0.62 which is acceptable. Reliability for variables measuring educational environment was 0.63. Alpha for the whole scale was however 0.71 which is acceptable**.**

4.4   Validity

Blaxter, Hughes & Tight (2000) describe validity as the ability of an instrument to measure the methods, approaches and techniques that are being explored. The instrument (Moberg scale) used for this study had been used for a similar study in Finland and Zambia. That study found that the level of standardisation has adequate validity and this justifies its use in further studies of attitudes of teachers towards Inclusive Education. However, in this study, the instrument revealed a reasonable seven factor structure when a varimax rotation factor analysis was computed. Structural validity was assessed using explorative factor analysis (principal component analysis with varimax rotation). This is presented in the appendix I.

4.5   Ethical issues

Ethics in research deals with issues which must be considered by the researcher concerning his conduct. This is because in studies like this the researcher is expected to behave in a professional and responsible manner. In this study, ethical clearance was obtained from the Regional Education Office (Ashanti region) of the Ghana Education Service. A Letter of introduction was issued by the Regional Office to introduce the researcher to the districts (Appendix IV). To obtain the respondents consent, the aim and rational behind the study were explained verbally to them and they were given the chance to make informed decision on whether they wished to participate in the study or not. It must be emphasised that respondents were not in anyway coerced into taking part in the study.

5   RESULTS

5.1   Knowledge and experiences of teachers regarding SEN

In this study, knowledge is interpreted as teachers understanding and training on Special Education Needs (SEN). An experience on the other hand is interpreted as teachers' ability to involve pupils with SEN in their classroom teaching and learning activities.

Teachers knowledge about SEN

This statement tried to seek teachers' knowledge on Special Education Needs. The results indicated that teachers generally have little knowledge about SEN. About two out of three (2/3) teachers had little knowledge about SEN.

TABLE 4: Teachers' knowledge about SEN

Response	N	%
Little	262	65.5
Much	138	34.5
Total	400	100

When a One-Way Anova test was computed, it revealed significant differences. (f = 9.002, p = .000). A Further test with Post- Hoc Bonferonni showed that teachers in Bosomtwe had more knowledge than their colleagues in Kumasi Metro and Ejisu-Juaben (See table 5). When a One –Way Anova test was conducted with teachers' levels of education qualification, it was found that those with lower academic qualifications had less knowledge on SEN than those with higher academic qualifications (f = 31.921, p = .000).An independent sample T- test between males and females was almost significant (t = -2.036, df = 397.718, p = .042). A cross tabulation test indicated that 30% of males had knowledge on SEN as compared to 39% for females.

TABLE 5: Mean of teachers´ knowledge about SEN

District	N	Mean	Std Dev	F	p
Bosomtwe	68	2.56	.632		
Ejisu – Juaben	71	2.27	.792	9.002	.000
Kumasi	261	2.21	.544		

Teachers experiences with SEN children in class

When teachers were asked if they have had any experience with SEN children, the following responses were given. (6.5%) of teachers indicated that they have had very much experience with SEN children. (25.8%) of teachers indicated much as their response. (50.5%) of teachers said they had little experience with SEN children and (17.3%) of teachers said they had no experience at all with SEN children.

Respondents' experiences with SEN were cross examined with background variables such as districts, age, educational level and sex. A One- way–Anova test, an Independent Sample T- test and cross tabulation were computed with the aim of establishing the relationship between teaching experience of SEN children and the variables mentioned.

The Independent T- test conducted with respondents gender and their experiences of SEN children in their classrooms showed an almost significant difference between male and females teachers in the three districts (t = 2.052; df = 376.606; p = .041)
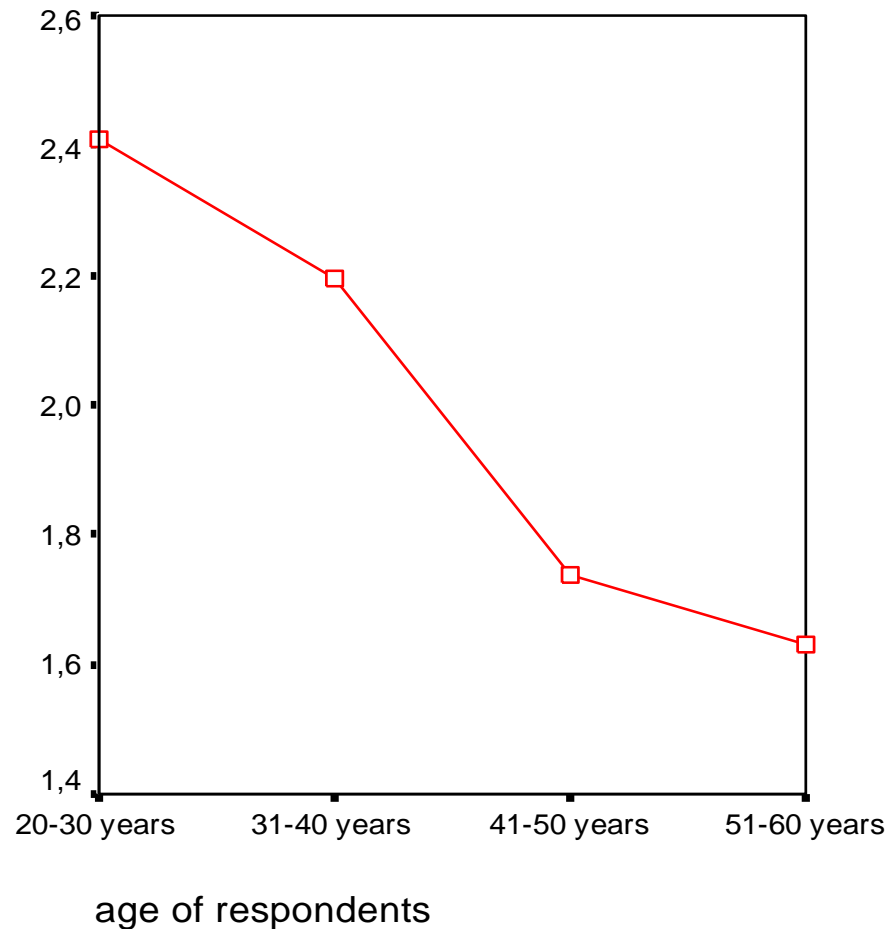
FIGURE 1: Mean of teachers experience with SEN children

Age as a background variable was used for further analysis. When a One-Way Anova test was computed, a highly significant difference was observed (f = 12.790; p = .000). Further comparisons conducted with a Post-Hoc (Bonferonni) test showed that teachers within the ages of 20-30 years had experienced teaching children with SEN more than their counterparts in the other age groups (Refer to figure 1 above)

Descriptions of teachers experiences after teaching SEN children

Teachers were asked to describe their experiences after teaching SEN children. More than half of the respondents (66.6%) indicated that their reaction was both positive and negative. Cross tabulation was adopted to examine the teachers´ descriptions of their experiences after teaching children with SEN and it was revealed that teachers in Kumasi Metro had the most positive experience.
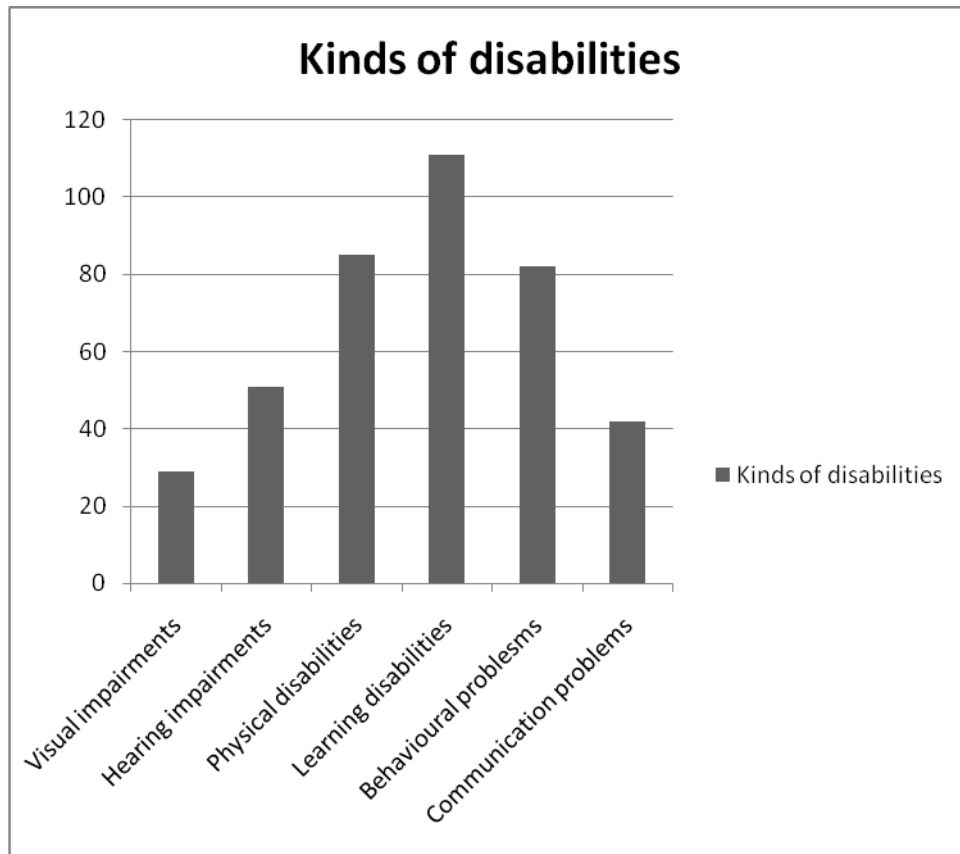
FIGURE 2: Kinds of SEN seen in the classroom

Teachers were asked to indicate the kinds of SEN they have encounted in their classrooms. The result indicates that the most common difficulty teachers face in the classrooms is learning disabilities. This is an indication that most pupils in the study area are not able to receive, process or store what their teachers teach in the classroom.

5.2   Teachers general perceptions of Inclusive Education

The general picture of respondents with regard to the placement of children with SEN in mainstream classroom is mainly negative. In examining the perception of teachers, a principal component analysis with varimax rotation of the rotation scale was carried out with the data collected. The analysis was conducted by removing only one variable from the scale (variable 11) from variables 1-20. The analysis extracted a seven factor solution and this explained 68.6% of the total variance (sample). The factors were identified as; (I) Position of SEN child in the classroom;

(II) Equal access to education for all children; (III) Segregated education; (IV) Mainstream teachers´ competence; (V) Quality education provision for all; (VI) Resources for effective teaching of SEN pupils; (VII) Meeting special needs of pupils with severe disabilities. The scale (1-5), a higher score means a more positive attitude with 3.0 being the neutral midpoint. The eigenvalues of the seven factors derived from the variables on the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education were (18.6percent; 13.1percent; 10.5percent; 8.1percent; 6.4percent; 6.1percent and 5.6percent respectively) of the variance. This comprised all the 19 variables. An assessment of the results of the factor analysis suggested that the scale was relatively valid. This supports the structural validity of the scale (See Table 6).

TABLE 6: Factor structure showing teachers' perceptions about IE.

FACTOR/ ITEM	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	h^2
3	0.74							.577
15	0.70							.586
9	0.53							.367
20	0.48							.427
12		0.75						.559
16		0.53						.393
4		0.52						.411
5		0.42						.427
1		0.30						.308
7			0.88					.610
2			0.64					.460
14				0.63				.499
10				0.60				.369
17					0.70			.389
8					0.36			.336
18					0.33			.380
6						0.63		.505
19						0.56		.363
13							0.68	.392
Eigenvalues	18.6	13.1	10.5	8.1	6.5	6.1	5.6	

5.3   Itemised perceptions of Inclusive Education by factors

Perceptions of teachers towards Inclusive Education were examined based on the seven factors produced. Further, comparisons were made to establish the relationships that exist between teachers' perceptions (attitudes) and demographic variables such as gender, district, level of school, age and teaching experiences of respondents. The Independent sample T-test, the One Way-Anova test and the cross tabulation test were employed to identify the intensity of significant differences where necessary in order to see the extent to which the variables impact teachers attitudes.

The position of the SEN children in the classroom

The questions in this factor sought the views of respondents on the suitability of placing SEN children in mainstream classrooms. Four variables were loaded highly in this factor (variables 3, 9, 15, 20). Some statements (Variables 3, 9 and 20) were reversed so that in the responses less than 3.0 represented negative attitude while 4 – 6 represented positive attitude. The mean for the factor was 3.0 and it explained 18.6% of the whole variance. The mean for the factor indicated that teachers were quite indifferent in their perception to inclusive education on the basis of this factor.

A further test was conducted to establish the relationship between the perception of teachers towards Inclusive Education and background variables. There was a significant difference between females and males when gender and position of the SEN child in the school were compared. The T- test revealed a significant difference (df = 397.379; t = -3.694; p = .000). This implies that male teachers were more against the placement of the SEN child in mainstream school as compared to their female counterparts. A One-way Anova test was conducted and shows significant differences among the three districts (f = 5.788, P= .003). Further tests conducted with Post-Hoc Bonferonni showed that teachers in Bosomtwe were more against positioning the SEN child in mainstream classrooms as compared to their colleagues in the other districts. A One-Way Anova test was conducted with age and it revealed a significant difference as well (f = 5.181; p = .002). Younger teachers (20-30) slightly favoured the positioning of SEN pupils in mainstream classrooms while their other colleagues (31-60) were against it. The teachers' educational qualification

revealed very significant differences (f = 8.820, p = .000). A Post- Hoc Bonferroni test show that teachers who hold Certificate ´A´ favoured the placement of children with SEN into mainstream schools more than their other colleagues who hold Diploma and Degrees. However, no differences were noted when levels of schools were examined (p = .518).When teachers teaching experience was computed, the test indicated an almost significant difference (p = 0.25).

Equal access to education for all children

Five variables with higher loadings were on this factor (1, 4, 5, 12, and 16) and it examined the view that Inclusive Education creates an equal platform for all children to access education. None of the variables were reversed hence in the responses less than 3.0 represented a negative attitude while responses from 4-6 represented a positive attitude. The mean for the factor when computed was 3.7. This explained 13.1% of the total variance. Teachers related positively to this factor. This is an indication that teachers believe Inclusive Education is a platform for ensuring education for all. A comparative analysis conducted found that sex related to teacher attitudes. The T-test conducted indicated a significant difference between males and females (df = 373.648; t= -895; p=.001). Female teachers believed that Inclusive Education creates an equal platform for both disabled and non disabled children to enjoy education when compared to the views of their male counterparts. The One–Way Anova test conducted with teachers' educational qualifications showed significant difference between teachers with university degrees and those with other qualifications. A Post Hoc test revealed that teachers with degree are less convinced that IE creates equal opportunities for children with and without SEN (See Table 7).

TABLE 7: Equal access to education

Variable	level	Mean	std	f	p. value
Equal access	GCE/SSCE	4.09	1.250		
to education	Cert A	3.72	.981		
	Diploma	4.05	1.063	8.768	.000
	Degree	3.21	1.030		
	Others	4.20	1.155		

Age was very significant as well (f = 16.082, p = .000). As compared to the other teachers, those within the ages of 51-60 years were of the view that inclusion did not provide equal access to education for all students. Level of school was significant (f = 6.425, p = .002). A Post-Hoc test revealed that primary school teachers support the view that inclusive practices enhance equal access to education for all children. Teaching experience also showed significant differences. (f = 10.947.p = .000). Teachers with 11- 15 years of experience were critical of the perception that IE provides equal access to all pupils when compared with their other colleagues.

Separate education for children with and without SEN

Two variables loaded highly on this factor which sought to find out if children with and without disabilities should be taught in separate schools. Both variables (2 and 7) were reversed and all responses less than 3.0 represented a negative attitude while responses from 3-6 represented a positive attitude. The mean score was 2.8 which explained 10.5% of the variance. Teachers related negatively to this factor. This is an indication that teachers support the idea of teaching pupils with severe disabilities in special institutions.

Sex has no impact on teachers' attitude towards the provision of separate schools for children with and without SEN. An Independent sample-T test revealed the following results. (t = 1.741, df = 397.922, p =, 082). A One–way Anova test was conducted to see whether teachers´ qualifications related to their support for separate education or otherwise revealed a significant difference (p = .000). Further analysis conducted with a Post- Hoc Bonferonni test showed that teachers with GCE/SSCE qualifications and those with university degrees did not favour separate education for children with SEN when compared with their colleagues who have different qualifications. When teaching experience of teachers was considered, it indicated a very significant difference (p = .000). Teachers with longer years of experience supported inclusion as compared to their colleagues. A One-Way Anova test indicated that district is also related to teachers' attitude towards the provision of separate education for children. Regarding school levels**,** a One- Way Anova test revealed significant differences (p = .000).
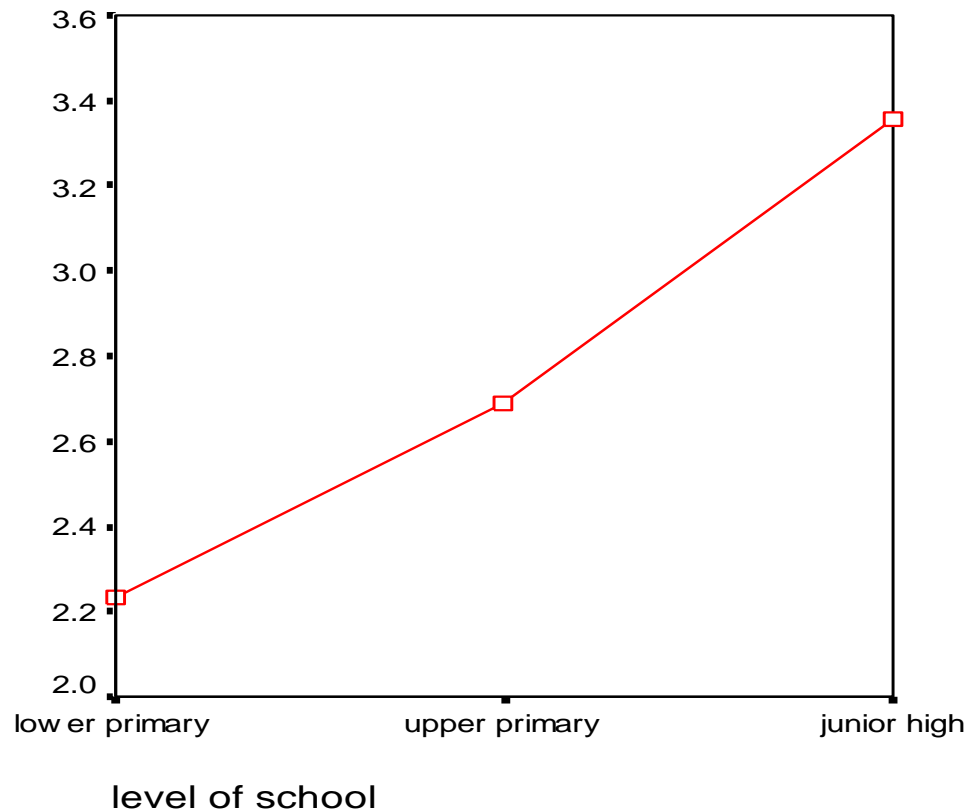
FIGURE 3: level of school that supports separate education

A further test with Post–Hoc indicated that teachers who teach in Junior High Schools supported separate education more than their colleagues in lower and upper primary as can be seen from the figure above.

The competence of mainstream teachers to handle SEN cases

Factor four explained 8.1% of the total variance with two variables (10, 14) highly loading on the factor. This factor sought the views of teachers in mainstream classrooms on their ability to effectively handle SEN children. No variable in this factor was reversed hence all of them were scored on a scale of 1- 6. Responses below 3.0 indicated negative attitudes and responses from 4-6 indicated positive attitudes. The factor analysis test conducted produced a mean of 3.2 which means that respondents were quite optimistic on items loaded on this factor. The teachers were quite positive about the capabilities of mainstream teachers to handle SEN cases in their classrooms. An Independent sample T-test revealed a significant difference between male and female teachers. Whereas male teachers believed in the

competence of mainstream teachers to deal with SEN situations in their classrooms, their female counterparts thought otherwise (t = 3.178; df = 397.664; p = .002). No difference was observed when districts were compared (p = .229). A One-Way Anova test comparing teachers qualification revealed some differences (f = 3.396; p = .010). A Post–Hoc Bonferroni test showed that GCE/SSCE teachers had confidence in mainstream teachers´ competence to handle SEN cases in their class when compared with degree holders. When levels of schools were compared, teachers in Junior High Schools were less confident in mainstream teachers´ competences to handle SEN cases as compared to those in Upper Primary Schools (p = .003). A One- Way Anova test on teaching experience revealed significant differences when compared (f = 22.223; p = .000). Teachers with relatively few years of experience had more confidence in mainstream teachers than those with longer teaching experience.

Quality education provision

Three items loaded on this factor. (Variables 8 and 17) were reversed so that responses were scored from 1-6. Responses below 3.0 represented negative attitude and those from 4-6 represented positive attitudes. This factor with a mean of 3.1 explained 6.5 % of the variance. Teachers´ perceptions towards this factor were slightly positive above the mean. One-Way Anova test conducted to see if the placement of SEN children in mainstream classroom affect quality education provision for non disable children revealed significant difference when teachers´ teaching experiences were compared (p = .000). Teachers with fewer years of experience believed that quality education provision is affected negatively while those with longer years of experience think otherwise (See Table 8).

TABLE 8: Quality education provision

Variable	Year	Mean	Std	f	p. value
Quality education provision	1-5	3.29	.999		
	6-10	3.03	.856		
				15.384	.000
	11-15	3.25	.803		
	16-20	2.57	.912		
	above 20	2.03	.759		

An Independent sample T- test conducted on sex did not show any difference (t= .044, df = -389.264, p = .965). Teachers' qualification also did not relate to attitude (p=.158). An Anova test conducted with teachers' age and its relationship to quality education provision revealed a significant difference (F = 7.162; p = .000). (see the table in appendix I). A Post–Hoc test indicated that younger teachers supported the idea of including SEN pupils in mainstream classrooms as compared to their older colleagues.

Resources for teaching SEN children

Factor six had an explanatory power of 6.1% of the total variance with two variables being highly loaded on the factor (variables 6 and 19). Variable (19), which was in the negative, was reversed so that the responses could be scored from 1-6. Here too, responses below 3.0 represented negative attitudes while responses 4- 6 represented positive attitudes. A mean of 2.8 was recorded. Teachers were of the view that mainstream schools did not have the resources to teach SEN pupils and therefore related negatively to this factor.

 A Comparative analysis established no relationship between sex and mainstream school resources (t= .078; d f= 398.851; p =.938). A One-Way-Anova test did not reveal any significant differences in attitudes among the districts (p = .074). However, teaching experience was discovered to be linked to teachers´ views on whether mainstream classrooms have the resources to meet the needs of SEN children (f = 7.445, p = .000). A significant difference between teachers with fewer years of experience and those with longer years of experience was established. Those with fewer years of experience related more positively to the factor as compared to those with longer years of experience.

Meeting the needs of pupils with severe behavioural problems

Only one item loaded on to this factor. The variable (13) was reversed. All responses for this statement below 3.0 represented a negative attitude while responses from 4- 6 represented positive attitude. A mean of 2.4 was obtained and the factor explained 5.6% of the variance. Teachers were of the opinion that the needs of pupils with severe behavioural problems could be best met in special classes and therefore related negatively to this factor.

An Independent sample T- test revealed that sex is linked with respondents views on this factor with significant difference between male and females (df =398; t= -5.308; p=.000). Female teachers demanded special classes for pupils with behavioural disorders as compared to male teachers who preferred a more a more inclusive setting. An Anova test conducted with districts did not reveal any difference (P = .116). However, a test conducted with age revealed significant differences (f =6.605; p = .000). Older teachers called for a more inclusive system than did their younger counterparts (see Table 9)

TABLE 9: Providing for the behaviourally impaired pupils

Variable	Age	Mean	std	f	P. value
Providing for the behaviourally impaired pupils	20-30	2.18	1.736	6.605	.000
	31- 40	2.85	1.579		
	41 50	1.98	1.405		
	51- 60	2.000	1.000		

5.4 Educational environment for children with different levels of SEN

In this section, respondents were requested to recommend the best educational setting for children with different levels of disabilities. They were asked to place children with moderate to severe impairments in suitable educational environments (mainstream classrooms and special schools). The scale was 1-5. A higher mean (4-5) referred to a more segregated environment while a lower mean referred to a more inclusive environment. An overview of the respondents' responses is presented in (Table 10). Generally, more restrictive environments were demanded for pupils with severe disabilities while those with moderate disabilities were seen to benefit more when placed in mainstream environments.

TABLE 10: Best environment for children with different levels of disabilities.

| Students with…	Mean	Std	Mainstream (%)	Special school (%)
Moderate speech impairments	3.34	1.517	67.2	32.8
Severe speech impairments	3.99	1.356	43.7	56.3
Moderate specific learning difficulty	3.19	1.464	73.7	26.3
Severe specific learning difficulty	3.76	1.384	56.0	44.0
Moderate mental retardations	3.69	1.305	61.0	39.0
Severe mental retardations	4.40	1.028	31.7	68.3
Moderate visual impairments	3.77	1.232	62.0	38.0
Severe visual impairments	4.36	1.084	31.0	69.0
Moderate hearing impairments	3.66	1.228	66.0	34.0
Severe hearing impairments	4.33	1.116	32.2	67.8
Moderate behavioural problems	3.36	1.386	70.2	29.8
Severe behavioural problems	3.79	1.423	52.5	47.5
Moderate physical & health problems	3.15	1.397	78.0	22.0
Severe physical & health problems	4.23	1.092	41.7	58.3
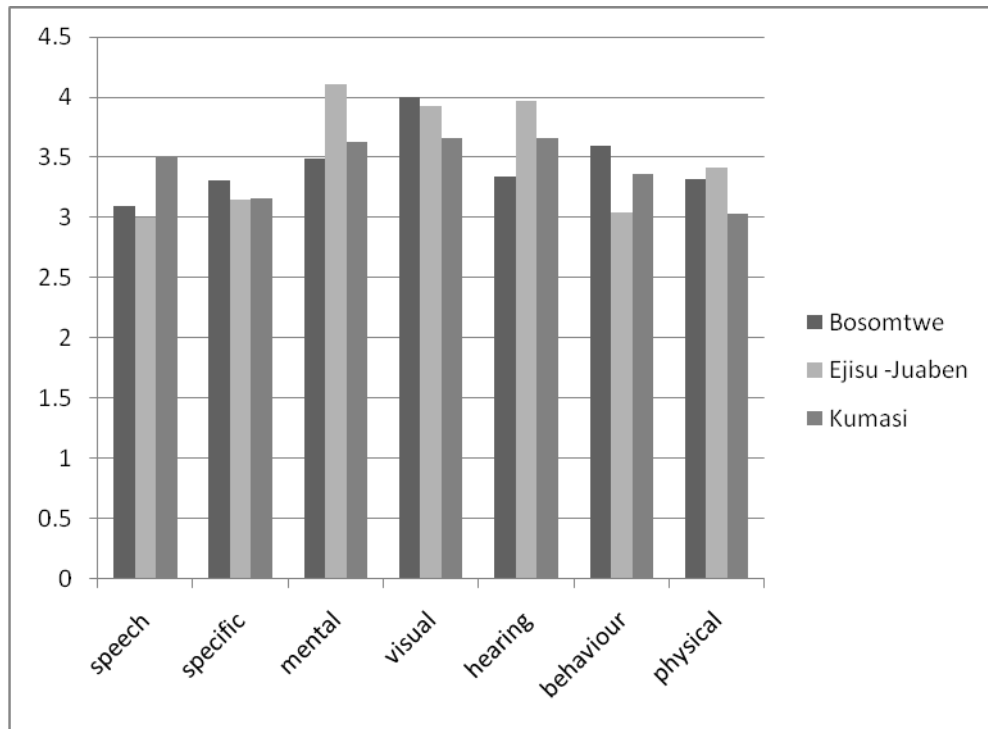
FIGURE 4: Best educational environment rated by districts for moderate disabilities.

An examination of moderate disabilities indicates that such difficulties are more common in rural and semi-urban areas than in the urban areas. Teachers in the districts favoured the placement of children with most moderate disabilities in mainstream classrooms (see Figure 4).
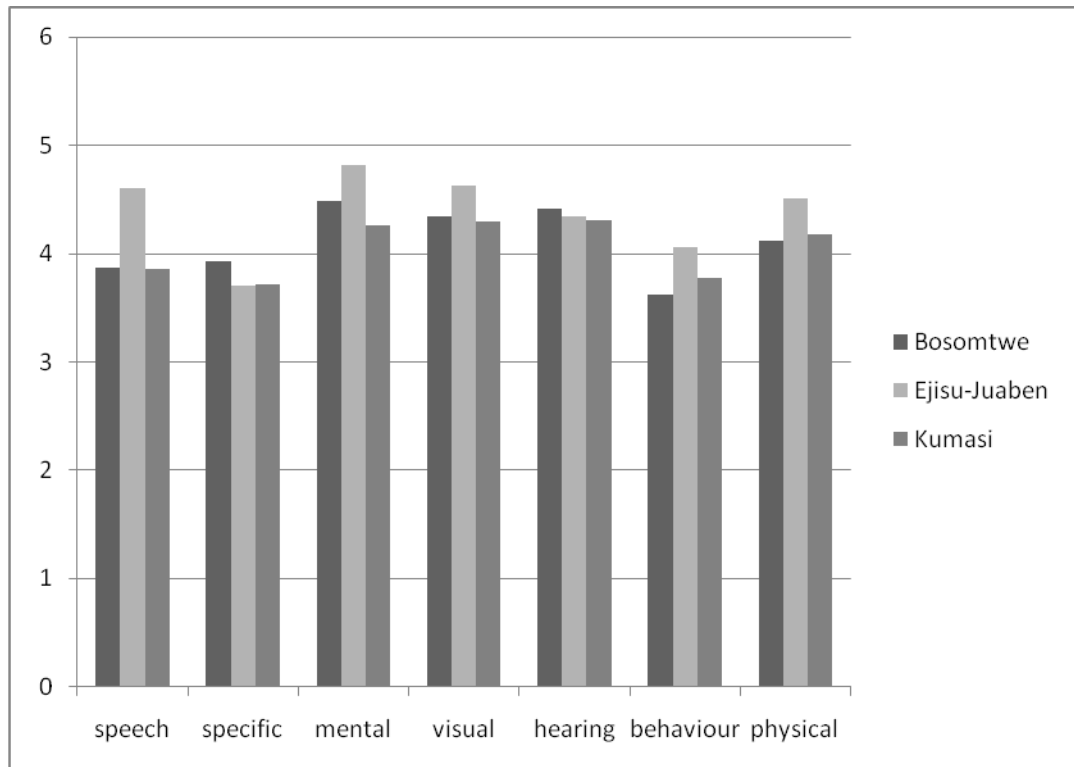
FIGURE 5: Best educational environment rated by districts for severe disabilities

An examination of severe disabilities showed that such disabilities are common mainly in semi-urban districts. However, teachers in the districts were of the opinion that most children with severe disabilities should be placed in specialised environments (see Figure 5).

Speech impairments

Pupils with severe speech difficulties were recommended to be placed full time in special schools while those with moderate difficulties were thought to be better placed in mainstream classrooms. About 20% of teachers indicated that pupils with moderate speech difficulties placed in mainstream schools must receive instructions in special classes. Further tests were conducted on moderate speech difficulties. An Independent sample T-test conducted with gender showed that while male teachers supported the placement of pupils with moderate speech difficulties in normal mainstream classrooms, their female counterparts supported full time special classes in mainstream schools (see Table 11).

TABLE 11: Environment rated best for moderate speech difficulty

Sex	N	Mean	Std dev.	t	df	p
Male	193	2.90	1.566			
				-5.812	379.898	.000
Female	207	3.75	1.348			

A One –Way Anova test conducted with school levels revealed significant differences (f = 9.529; p = .000). A Post-Hoc test further indicated support for placing children with moderate speech difficulty full time inclusive classrooms by upper and junior high school teachers while their lower primary school colleagues called special class support. Age was significant (f =11.393, p= .000). A Post- Hoc test show that teachers with relatively lower ages favoured special classes in mainstream environments as compared to their older counterparts who supported full time inclusive classrooms. Differences by district were almost significant (p = .017).Teachers educational qualifications did not show any significant difference (p= 566).

Specific learning difficulties

Pupils with moderate and severe learning difficulties were recommended to be placed in mainstream schools. A One –Way Anova test showed significance (f = 13.679; p = .000) when teachers in different school levels´ views were sought on moderate specific learning difficulties. A Post-Hoc test revealed that primary school teachers favoured special classes in mainstream schools for such pupils while their junior high colleagues supported full time inclusion. A One-Way Anova test revealed significant difference (p = .000) when severe learning difficulties and teaching experiences were compared. A Post Hoc test indicated that those with between 16- 20 years of teaching experience supported full time special school placement while their other colleagues favoured full time special classes placement in mainstream schools (see Table 12 below).

TABLE 12: Suitable environment for severe learning difficulty

No of years	Mean	Std Dev	f	p
1-5	3.87	1.114		
6-10	3.43	1.597		
			6.147	.000
11-15	3.70	1.209		
16 -20	4.72	1.032		
Above 20	3.44	1.933		

Mental difficulties

Teachers recommended that children with moderate mental retardation be placed full time in special classes in mainstream educational environment while their counterparts with severe mental problems were placed in full time special schools. Significant differences were observed among the levels of school when a One-Way Anova test was conducted regarding moderate mental difficulties (f = 8.958; p= .000). Teachers who teach in upper primary schools were mainly in support of special schools while the others called for special classes in mainstream schools. Age was almost significant (f = 4.493; p = .004). Gender had no relation to teachers perceptions on moderate mental difficulty (p = .899). The level of school taught related to teachers´ perceptions about severe mental difficulty (p= .000). A Post–Hoc test indicated that teachers in upper primary and junior high levels favoured segregation while those in lower primary supported inclusion for severely difficult pupils. A One-way Anova test conducted with districts revealed differences. (see Figure 6 below)
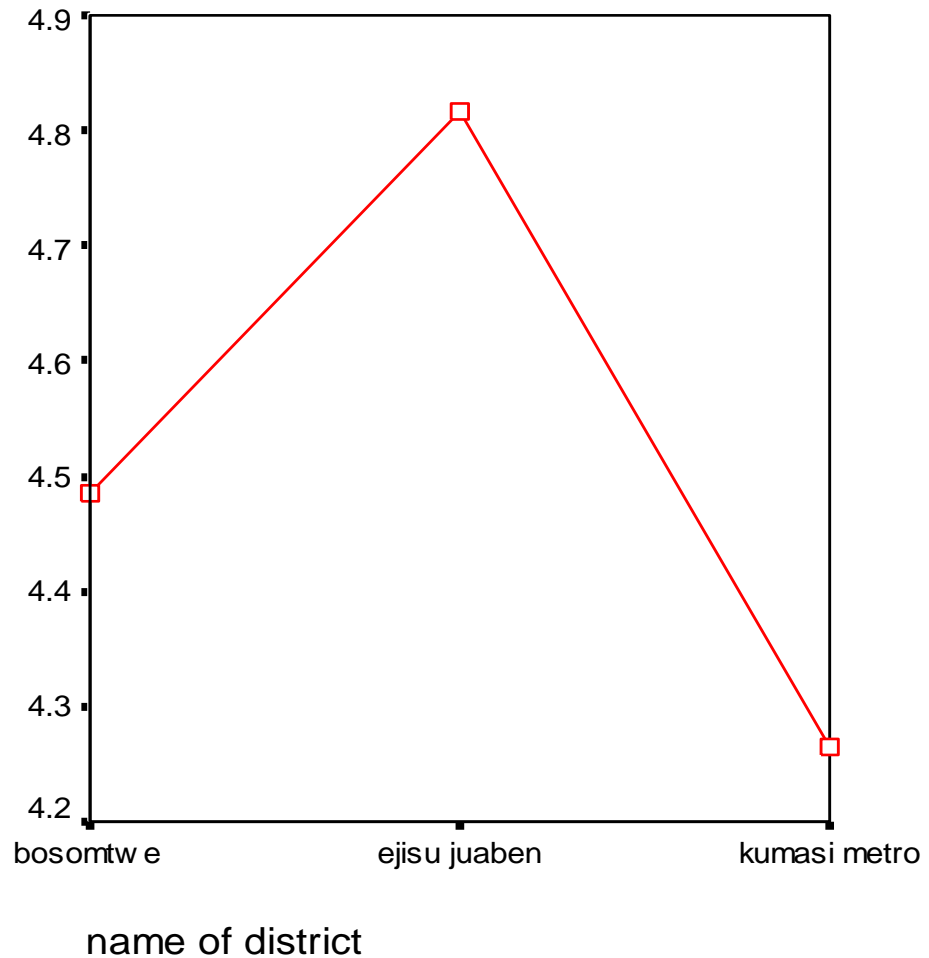
FIGURE 6: Means of districts on severe mental retardation

Physical and health difficulties

The study showed that most of the time respondents favoured the placement of pupils with moderate physical and health difficulties in special classes in mainstream schools. They however, recommended that pupils with severe physical and health difficulties are placed full time in special schools. Gender was almost significant when a T-test was computed for moderate physical and health difficulties. (t = 2.887; df = 398; p =.004). Means of age on moderate difficulties was significant (f = 16.362; p = .000). A Post-Hoc test indicated that teachers within the ages of 51-60 favoured special class placement for physically and health impaired children more than the others. An independent sample test conducted with gender indicated support for full time special school placement for pupils with severe physical and health problems (see Table 13).

TABLE 13: Best placement for pupils with severe physical and health difficulties**.**

Sex	N	Mean	Std Dev	t	df	p
Male	193	3.90	1.265			
				-5.872	318.691	.000
Female	207	4.53	.793			

6   DISCUSSION

6.1   Major findings

This section deals with the summarised presentation of the findings of the study. The general implications of the findings are presented and finally, some recommendations for future studies are made.

As has been discovered in earlier studies in Ghana, (Agbenyega 2007 and Obeng 2009), this study has also revealed that teachers have little knowledge and experiences of Special Education Needs (SEN) and this probably is the cause of teachers' generally negative attitudes towards teaching SEN children in mainstream classrooms. The findings are also consistent with results of the study undertaken by Chhabra et al (2010) in Botswana which revealed that teachers have insufficient knowledge of Special Education Needs and that this contributed to negative attitudes towards Inclusive Education. Significantly, this study revealed that teachers with higher levels of education, at least, university degrees, had more knowledge of SEN than their colleagues with other lower levels of education qualifications. This matches the findings of Gafor et al (2009). Similarly, Yazbeck, Mcvilly & Trevor (2004) found in their study in Australia that people with higher educational levels and those with prior knowledge of people with intellectual disabilities were positive towards inclusion. Moberg & Savolainen (2003) found that the quantity of teachers' experiences on SEN did not affect their attitudes but rather it is the quality of teachers' experiences that impact their attitudes towards inclusive education positively.

Further, this study revealed that the dominant disability found in the classrooms in the study area is a learning disability. This is contrary to the findings of Obeng (2009) whose similar study showed that about 70% of children with disabilities in her study area had vision problems.

Chopra (2008) suggests that one of the most significant tools for successful inclusion is the attitudes of the general education teacher concerning the inclusion of special education students into mainstream classroom. A key finding of this study was that teachers generally had negative attitude towards Inclusive Education. This contradicts findings from Yazbeck et al (2004) whose study found teachers attitudes

towards Inclusive Education to be positive. The negative perception indicated by teachers in this study is in line with findings from other studies. Mayaba (2008) and Chhabra (2009) found that teachers had negative attitudes towards IE. Ajodhia et al (2010) also found in their study in Guyana that teachers had negative attitudes towards inclusion. Particularly, teachers in this study were of the view that pupils with behavioural disorders were taught in special classrooms in mainstream schools. They were of the opinion that mainstream schools did not have the resources to accommodate SEN children. Nevertheless, inclusive education provides equal access to quality education for both disabled and non disabled children.

This study has established that demographic variables like age, gender, school level, teaching experience, amd location of school relate to teachers´ attitudes towards inclusive education. This contradicts the result of Ackah (2010) whose study found that gender, geographical location and education qualification did not relate to teachers attitudes towards inclusive education. Notwithstanding, Ackah discovered in his study that teaching experience was related to teachers attitudes towards inclusive education. The finding of this study however, matches the results of other studies undertaken by researchers all over the world. Sharma, Forlin & Loreman (2008) indicated that more positive attitudes towards inclusion are generally seen in teachers who teach lower grades and in teachers who have experienced meeting or socialising with children with disabilities. Gafor (2009) found in his study that educational qualification related to teachers´ attitudes. Moberg &Savolainen (2003) found from their studies in Zambia and Finland that age and gender were factors which affected the attitudes of teachers towards IE. In another study undertaken by Yazbeck et al (2004), it was discovered that positive attitudes towards Inclusive Education were more evident in younger people than older people. The study also found that people with higher level of educational qualification were more positive towards Inclusive Education. More so, Chopra (2008) found in his study that gender and location (urban or rural) influenced teachers attitudes on inclusion. Ellins & Porter (2005) believed that female teachers are more ready to implement inclusive practices. Women were also believed to have higher level of tolerance and sympathy towards disabled children than their male counterparts according to Carroll, Follin, & Jobling (2003).

Teachers' perceptions in this study on the best educational environment for students with different levels of disabilities were influenced by the severity and the type of

disability that children suffer. Generally, teachers recommended a more inclusive environment for children with moderate disabilities while more segregated settings were recommended for those with severe disabilities. This finding is consistent with the study undertaken by Moberg & Savolainen (2003). A Possible reason for teachers' recommendation for special schools for children with severe disabilities could be the absence of teaching and learning materials in mainstream schools and the long distance that some physically disabled children cover to access mainstream education. Another possible reason for this is the inadequate knowledge and experiences that teachers in mainstream classrooms have regarding SEN. Consequently, they believe that the needs of such children could be best met in special schools with specialised teachers.

6.2   Implications of this study

This study has shown that basic school teachers generally do not have adequate knowledge and experiences of SEN which is needed for Inclusive Education practice in Ghana. This requires urgent attention from the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service in order to design a comprehensive SEN-oriented curriculum for the training of basic school teachers. As has been established by Avramidis &Norwich (2002), Forlin (1998), and Scruggs & Mastropieri, (1996), teachers´ sufficient knowledge and ability to manage diverse needs as well as their ability to adapt curriculum and instructional strategies that will facilitate learning outcomes are key elements to successful IE practice. The inclusion of special education courses in teacher training programmes will help in demystifying disabilities and perhaps change negative attitudes as supported by Ford et al, (2001).

The kinds of disabilities identified from the study ranged from learning disabilities, physical disabilities, behavioural disorders, speech and visual impairments. According to Reid (2010), teachers need to understand that there are different kinds of disabilities as well as the typical symptoms of manifestation. It is therefore expected that schools adjust their programmes by changing factors in the school environment that may not favour the progress of pupils with different disabilities. Also, caring and stimulating learning environments which enable children to understand what they are being taught must be created. By this, teaching methods,

timetables, teaching and learning materials and settings must be adjusted in order to meet the needs of all children in the classroom.

 The complexities surrounding the concept and practice of Inclusive Education are not straight forward and this usually affects teachers' attitudes. More so, the value of teachers attitudes in the success or otherwise of inclusion cannot be underestimated. In this study, it was observed that teachers´ attitudes towards Inclusive Education were not favourable and this leads to frustration, anxiety and low performance as well as reduced learning opportunities for children with disabilities. The point here is that, teacher training programmes in Ghana lack elements that will better prepare teachers for the diversity synonymous with inclusive classrooms. To address this discrepancy, teacher training programmes in Ghana should be structured to equip teachers with the essential knowledge and strategies needed to implement inclusive programmes. It has been identified that teacher training programmes in Ghana usually have single courses or subjects on special education needs. This is insufficient to change the attitudes of teachers. As suggested by Campbell et al (2003) and Pace (2003), the attitudes of teachers can be changed when more units on special education are introduced into teacher training curriculum. Moreover, there is the need to incorporate practical field experiences with disabilities in order to reduce fears pertaining to the inclusion of children with disabilities.

Socially, effective attitudinal change towards people with disabilities must begin from the community level. This is because in Ghana, it is the society that aggravates the conditions of children with disabilities by stigmatising and labelling them as ´´failures´´ and ´uneducable´. This affects their confidence level and makes people with disabilities develop poor self- concept. Members of the society should be educated to understand that children with disabilities are assets of the community and the nation at large. Therefore, they should be embraced and accepted into the society while equal opportunities are granted them to access education in their communities just as their non disabled colleagues do.

At the government level, Ghana as of now cannot boast of any comprehensive Inclusive Education policy. What currently exists is an attempt by the Special Education Division of the GES to build the capacity of teachers and officers in mainstream schools to handle SEN children in their schools. This is good but still not enough. It is therefore recommended that the state comes out with a policy which spreads out the implementation modalities for IE practice in mainstream schools to

include all vulnerable children in Ghana. This is needed to attain high-quality equitable education for all learners by 2015.

Finally, the results of the study have an implication for teachers, parents of SEN children and health personnel. To be able to place children with different levels of disabilities in a comfortable educational environment, there is the urgent need to undertake thorough testing and assessment of the child's cognitive potential and achievement skills in order to classify his/her distinct learning needs and style. This needs the collaborative efforts of teachers, parents and health personnel. Once the child's weaknesses and strength are identified, the best learning setting can then be chosen for the child.

6.3   Limitations and recommendations for further research

This study has examined the attitudes of Ghanaian teachers towards Inclusive Education and the best educational environment for pupils with different levels of Special Education Needs. Perhaps, this is the first study in Ghana that has examined the educational environment best for children with different levels of disabilities. Notwithstanding, the study has some limitations.

The study took place in three districts; they were all located in one region of Ghana. It is therefore recommended that further research is expanded to include other regions of the country to seek teachers' responses so that findings could be better generalised. It is also recommended that teachers´ knowledge levels on IE are investigated at the pre-service level to see how teacher training curriculum and programmes are preparing teachers for the inclusive task in the classroom.

This study adopted only the quantitative approach in examining teachers´ attitudes towards Inclusive Education. It will also be appropriate that a qualitative design using interviews, observations and personal experiences is adopted to examine teachers´ attitudes towards teaching all children in mainstream schools. Observing teachers behaviour and reactions to students with disabilities in inclusive settings may provide better understanding of their attitudes towards Inclusive Education and students with special education needs.

The study focused on only teachers in mainstream classrooms. It is recommended that future studies are expanded to include teachers in special schools so that an informative comparison could be made on the attitudes of teachers towards IE.

The acquisition of knowledge about disability builds confidence and helps in changing negative attitudes towards disabilities. It is therefore necessary that a participatory and cooperative teamwork approach involving educators, human right activists, policy makers and the society as a whole are employed as resources for achieving positive attitudes towards people with disabilities and Inclusive Education.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I

Factor means for teachers´ attitudes towards IE

Item	Mean	std
Position of SEN children in the school		
3. Pupils wit SEN are sometimes rejected, ridiculed and or teased by other pupils in regular classrooms.	2.2	1.5
9. Only teachers with special education training are able to effectively teach pupils with SEN.	3.1	1.8
15. Pupils with SEN will loose the stigma/label of being different or failure if they are placed full time in mainstream classrooms.	3.8	1.9
20. Pupils with severe behaviour disorders need special education in special schools	2.3	1.7
TOTAL	**3.0**	
Equal access to education for all		
1. All pupils should receive appropriate educational and related services in mainstream classrooms.	4.3	1.7
4. The self esteem of pupils with special needs would improve if placed full time in ordinary classrooms.	3.8	1.7
5. The full time integration of pupils with SEN in mainstream classes would enhance the equity of all pupils.	3.4	1.9
12. Placing pupils with SEN full time in mainstream classrooms means quality education for all.	4.1	1.8
16. It is right to ask ordinary class teachers to accept pupils with severe disabilities into their classes.	3.3	1.7
TOTAL	**3.7**	
Separate education for SEN and non SEN children		
2. Pupils with mild impairments are likely to experience more failures if placed full time in ordinary classrooms.	2.8	1.8
7. Non disabled children and children with severe disabilities should be taught in separate classrooms	2.8	1.8
TOTAL	**2.8**	
Mainstream teachers competence		
10. Teachers in mainstream classrooms are currently able to effectively meet the academic needs of pupils in their classrooms.	3.2	1.6
14. Ordinary class teachers have the primary responsibility for the education of pupils with SEN in their classrooms.	3.1	1.7
TOTAL	**3.2**	
Quality education provision		
8. Having pupils with SEN in mainstream classrooms is likely to interfere with the quality of education offered to pupils considered as non -disabled	2.6	1.4
17. Time for teaching non disabled pupils is taken away when pupils with SEN are placed in mainstream classrooms.	3.0	1.6
18. The achievement levels of pupils with SEN would increase if they were placed full time in mainstream classrooms.	3.6	1.5
TOTAL	**3.1**	
Resources for effective teaching of SEN pupils		
6. Mainstream education has the resources and personnel to address the individual needs of all pupils especially children with SEN	2.8	1.9
19. Because of their special needs, pupils with severe SEN are best taught in special classrooms.	2.9	1.7
TOTAL	**2.8**	
Meeting special needs of pupils with severe disabilities		
13. Special classes are needed for pupils who display severe forms of behavioural problems	2.4	1.6
TOTAL	**2.4**	

Appendix II: Questionnaire

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

FINLAND

DEPARTMENT OF

EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

MA in Development and

International Co-operation

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

The purpose of this survey is to examine the attitudes of teachers towards teaching all children in mainstream classrooms in the Ashanti region, Ghana. This study is part of an MA Thesis undertaken at the University of Jyvaskyla, Finland. The results of the study will be published by the University and an article of the main results made available to the Ghana Education Service. The research is purely for academic purposes; therefore the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents are assured in all phases of the study. Please, respond to the statements and questions on the basis of your personal opinions. There is no "right" or "wrong" responses. Please, answer as sincerely and accurately as possible.

NOTE: In this survey **SEN = Special Education Needs** means children who have mild, moderate or severe learning difficulties or impairments.

Provide short responses to the following statements or mark (x) where applicable.

Name of school _____   District _____

Lower Primary __   Age   ___ years

Upper Primary __   Male   ___

Junior High __   Female   ___

If you are a subject teacher, what subject(s) do you teach?

Math___ English___ Science___ Other(s) ___

Number of years served___ years   What is your average class size

Educational Level:

GCE ´O´ Level /SSSCE __   Teachers´ Certificate ´A´___   Diploma ___

Bachelors degree __   other(s), specify _____

I have knowledge about Special Education Needs (SEN)

Not at all___   a little___   much___   very much____

I have experience teaching children with Special Education Needs (SEN)

Not at all ___   a little ___   much____   very much_____

If you have experience teaching children with SEN, how would you describe your experience?

Mainly positive__   mainly negative__   both positive and negative ___ I don't know__

What kind of SEN have you personally seen in your classroom? (You can choose more than one if necessary)

Visual impairments___ hearing impairments ____   physical disabilities___

Learning disabilities____ behavioural disorders___ speech/communication disorders___

PART I

The statements below relate to the placement of pupils with SEN in mainstream classrooms. After every statement, **mark (x)** in the appropriate column of scores numbered 1–6 which represent your personal opinion.

1 = I disagree very much,   2 = I disagree pretty much,   3 = I disagree a little,

4 = I agree a little,   5 = I agree pretty much,   6= I agree very much

STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. All pupils should receive appropriate educational and related services in mainstream classroom.						
2. Pupils with mild impairments are likely to experience more academic failure if they are placed full time in ordinary classrooms.						
3. Pupils with SEN are sometimes rejected, ridiculed and or teased by other pupils in regular classrooms.						

4. The self-esteem of pupils with special needs would improve if placed full time in ordinary classrooms.						
5. The full time integration of pupils with SEN in mainstream classes would enhance the equity of all pupils.						
6. Mainstream education has the resources and personnel to address the individual education needs of all pupils especially children with SEN.						
7. Non –disabled children and children with severe disabilities should be taught in separate classrooms.						
8. Having pupils with SEN in mainstream classrooms is likely to interfere with the quality of education offered to pupils considered as non disabled.						
9. Only teachers with special education training are able to effectively teach pupils with SEN.						
10. Teachers in mainstream classrooms are currently able to effectively meet the academic needs of pupils with SEN in their classrooms.						
11. Pupils like to be with others (classmates) with whom they share common characteristics and concerns.						
12. Placing pupils with SEN full time in mainstream classrooms means quality education for all.						
13. Special classes are needed for pupils who display severe forms of behavioural problems.						
14. Ordinary class teachers have the primary responsibility for the education of pupils with SEN in their classrooms.						
15. Pupils with SEN will loose the stigma/label of being ''different'' or ´´failures´` if they are placed full time in mainstream classrooms.						
16. It is right to ask ordinary class teachers to accept pupils with severe disabilities into their classes.						
17. Time for teaching non disabled pupils is taken away when pupils with SEN are placed in mainstream classrooms.						

STATEMENT						
18. The achievements levels of pupils with SEN would increase if they were placed full time in mainstream classrooms.						
19. Because of their special needs, pupils with severe SEN are best taught in special classrooms.						
20. Pupils with severe behaviour disorders need special education in special schools.						
21. I prefer to have children with SEN in my class.						
22. I pay particular attention to pupils with SEN in my class when teaching.						
23. Pupils with SEN should always be coupled with paraprofessionals in their classrooms.						
24. Placing children with SEN in separate classrooms infringes upon their social rights.						

After every statement, mark (x) in the appropriate column of scores numbered 1-6 which represent your personal opinion.

1 = I disagree very much,   2 = I disagree pretty much,   3 = I disagree a little

4 = I agree a little,   5 = I agree pretty much,   6 = I agree very much

STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. Awareness raising about the perceptions people have about disabilities can help reduce discrimination against pupils with SEN.						
26. Education on human rights can help reduce discriminatory practices against people with SEN.						
27. Some school rules that are discriminatory against pupils with SEN should be challenged.						
28. I get support from my head teacher in order to meet the needs of pupils with SEN in my class.						
29. I get support from my colleagues in order to meet the needs of pupils with impairments in my class.						

30. In-service training is organized for teachers to update their knowledge and skills about special education.					
31. Large class size affects the effective handling of pupils with SEN.					
32. Negative attitudes in society about pupils with SEN are a hindrance to their integration into mainstream classrooms.					
33. The lack of support from parents of children with SEN affects their integration into mainstream classroom.					
34. Teachers have adequate TLMs to support integration of children with SEN in mainstream classrooms.					
35. Teachers get support from doctors on pupils with SEN in their schools.					
36. The inaccessibility of physical infrastructure in schools is a hindrance to the integration of pupils with physical impairment in mainstream classrooms					
37. National education policies support the full integration of pupils with SEN in mainstream classrooms.					

PART II: EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT.

Below, please choose where students with different types and levels of Special Education Needs should be placed within the education system. **Mark (x)** next to the educational provision /placement that would be most appropriate for children with SEN based on your own personal opinion.

1 = Full time mainstream classroom

2 = Most time (over 70%) in mainstream classroom

3 = Most time in special classes (resource rooms) in mainstream schools

4 = Full time in special classes in mainstream schools

5 = Full time in special schools

PUPILS'S IMPAIRMENTS	EDUCATIONAL PROVISION				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Moderate speech impairment					
2. Severe speech impairment					
3. Moderate specific learning difficulty (in writing, spelling, mathematics, reading etc)					
4. Severe specific learning difficulty (in writing, spelling, mathematics, reading etc)					
5. Moderate mental retardation					
6. Severe mental retardation					
7. Moderate visual impairments					
8. Severe visual impairments					
9. Moderate hearing impairments					
10. Severe hearing impairments					
11. Moderate behavioral problems					
12. Severe behavioral problems					
13. Moderate physical and health impairments					
14. Severe physical and health impairments					

Appendix III:

Permission request to regional directorate of GES

Master´s Programme in Development and
International Cooperation

University of Jyvaskyla, Finland

Email: chsarfo @ jyu.fi

Tel: +358443307030

+233244759286

02/ 11/2009

The Regional Director

Ghana Education Service

Ashanti

Dear Sir,

REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION TO ADMINISTER QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a student of the University of Jyvaskyla, Finland pursing a master's Degree
programe in Development and International Cooperation with Education as my major
subject. I am undertaking a master's thesis on the theme ´**The Attitudes of Basic School
Teachers towards Inclusive Education in Ghana.**´´

In connection with this, I need to collect data in schools located in three districts (Ejisu-
Juaben, Bosomtwe and Kumasi) of the Ashanti region. I would be pleased if you could
grant me the permission to do so. I would also be grateful if you could re-introduce me to
authorities in the districts and schools to enable me carry out the study.

I would like to assure you that the study is purely for academic purpose. Therefore, the
anonymity and confidentiality of respondents would be treated with utmost
confidentiality. I also want to assure you that the result of this study would be published
by the University of Jyvaskyla and an abstract of it presented to your office.

Yours sincerely,

Sarfo Charles

Appendix IV:

Letter from regional directorate of GES

GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE

In case of reply the number and
Date of this letter should be quoted

Tel. No. 24781, 24344/6, 24345

GOVERNMENT OF GHANA

REGIONAL EDUCATION OFFICE
P. O. BOX 1906
KUMASI

Our Ref : 3/103/

Your Ref:

Date: November 30, 2009

THE DISTRICT/MUNICIPAL/METRO DIRECTOR

EJISU-JUABEN

BOSOMTWE

KUMASI

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION
MR. CHARLES SARFO
UNIVERSITY OF JYVASKYLA – FINLAND

It would be appreciated if you could assist Mr. Charles Sarfo a student in the University of Jyvaskyla, Finland to collect data for his research work.

He is undertaking a master's thesis on theme "The Attitudes of Basic School Teachers towards Inclusive Education: A case study of the Ashanti Region of Ghana".

Thank you.

J.K. ONYINAH
REGIONAL DIRECTOR, ASH.