

**ATTAINING DEVELOPMENT GOALS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES:
IMPLICATIONS FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

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Education has three main roles: it is developmental because it develops the unique qualities of a child; it differentiates between learners because it treats every child as an individual, appreciating individual differences; and it is integrative because it accommodates people of varying backgrounds (culture, beliefs and values) thereby allowing for a cooperative approach in problem solving (Abosi, 1996). It is therefore absolutely necessary that the components of the curriculum for teacher training programs, teaching and learning at all levels should reflect these roles, if we are to attain the development goals which include education for all. The development goals for individuals with disabilities will include elimination of poverty, acquisition of practical and survival skills, employment, empowerment and total integration in the social world. All these could be achieved through a well planned inclusive education system. Special education provides opportunity for education for all. Special education is part of general education which treats every one involved in it as individuals. Special education identifies problems which are specific to individual learner and adopts relevant personnel, methods and materials to overcome the problems. Special needs education ensures that everyone has equal opportunity to participate in classroom and play activities. This paper examines how special needs education uses the inclusive aspect of it to fulfill the aspiration of fundamental human right to education for children with disabilities. This paper will also examine some issues involved in inclusive education in some developing countries with specific reference to issues such as the concept of inclusive education, historical perspective, policies, barriers, the impact of culture, traditional values and beliefs on inclusive education, solutions and the current practice of inclusive education.

The concept of special needs education such as what it is and how to deal with it in developing world remains in a state of confusion. This may account for the poor provisions that have been made by the various governments. In fact, the state of education for persons with disabilities in developing countries has been a source of concern for professionals. (Alur, 2001; Potts, 2000; Villa, 2003) The provision for children with disabilities across developing countries has often been regarded as a privilege rather than a right (Alur, 2001). Abosi (2006) noted that proper attention has not been given to special needs education in terms of planning and organization. Its planning, organization and management have been characterized by lack of vision and commitment, inadequate funding, lack of cooperation among experts, negative attitudes influenced by traditional values, and culture. Most developing countries, if not all pay lip service to the issue of special needs education in formulation of national policies in special education. Some of the policies have such recommendation as *to give concrete meaning to the idea of equalizing educational opportunities for all children irrespective of their physical and mental conditions* (Alur, 2001; Ogbue et al., 1986). Some countries for example Botswana, Nigeria, even included in the policies that such children should be educated along side their normal counterparts in the ordinary schools. Despite these, the dreams of most people with disabilities in areas of adequate educational provisions, employment, and support services are yet to be realized.

The aim of this paper is to highlight the state of special needs education in developing countries with specific reference to inclusive education. It is hoped that this paper will not only generate discussion but also interest that will lead to the development of the right spirit for the promotion of effective inclusive education that will result in education for all on equal basis.

Who are we including?

The major problem confronting education and welfare of person with disabilities in the developing world is ignorance of the society about who the disabled are and the kind of provision that could be made to ensure equal opportunities.

We all in one way or the other require special needs services. On daily basis we are confronted with situation that affects our performance at work, school and other social events that require us to be at our best. However there are many people in the society whose special needs demand special attention and planning. Look around you, you will find persons who are wearing glasses and who may not be able to read or move around if these aids are removed from them. We really do not have to look far to appreciate the seriousness and the importance of special needs education. However as we plan for inclusive education, we have the following categories of special needs in mind; visual impairment, hearing impairment, mental retardation, learning disabilities, physical and health impairment, speech and language difficulties, behaviour disorders, gifted and talented. These special needs pose major challenges to teachers in the classroom.

Other Children Requiring Special Needs

The concept of special needs education has recently been broadened. In a UNESCO (1999) workshop held in Dakar, Senegal, an African expert group broadened the concept of special education to include marginalized group. The marginalized group included children with HIV/AIDS, abused children, children from poor homes, gifted children, abandoned children and children on the street. The issue of HIV/AIDS has become one of the most sensitive discussions in world today because the prevalence of the condition has become a source of worry to most governments. The HIV/AIDS manifests itself in different forms. Children who have aids or who come from extreme poverty background, or who have been abused by the step parents find it difficult concentrating on their studies.

Concept of Inclusive Education

The ultimate aim of education of children with disabilities is to make them live independent life in any given community. This means that they are expected to live the life of *give and take*. The current trend in education of children with disabilities is integration or inclusive education, which will enable children with disabilities to be included in all social activities. In most countries where inclusive education has been well organized, it has been found to bring about equalization of opportunity to education and social life.

However, inclusive education has been defined from different perspectives. Zalizan Jelas (2000) described the term inclusive education as an integration issue whereby participation of students with special needs is provided for in the mainstream education.

The South African Educational System defines inclusive education in two ways:

- Learning environment that promotes the full personal, academic and professional development of all learners irrespective of race, class, gender, disability, religion, culture, sexual preference, learning style and language.
- In the *Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (2001)*, inclusive education was also defined as:
 - Acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support
 - Accepting and respecting that all learners are different in some way and have different learning needs which are equally valued and an ordinary part of our human experience.
 - Enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners.
 - Acknowledging and respecting differences in learners whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability or HIV status.
 - Changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricula and the environment to meet the needs of all learners.
 - Maximizing the participation of all learners in the culture and the curricula of educational institutions and uncovering and minimizing barriers to learning.
 - Empowering learners by developing their individual strengths and enabling them to participate critically in the process of learning.
 - Acknowledging that learning also occurs in the home and community, and within formal and informal modes and structures.

Inclusive education therefore gives all children the opportunity to learn together without discrimination. This means that schools where inclusive education is taking place must be sensitive to the differences in the needs of various children with disabilities. For example, different provisions should be made for different inclusive situations—a class that has a deaf child must have such support services as an interpreter fluent in sign language, speech trainers, speech therapist, and school audiologist. The class should also be equipped with loops and the child should be given a hearing aid. In case of visually impaired children, they would need brailing equipment and brailist, mobility aids, tape recorders, and optical devices, such as magnifiers for those with residual vision. They will in addition require the services of mobility instructor and resource teacher of the blind. The mentally retarded perhaps is the most difficult to deal with. Their inclusion must be carefully planned. The class size must be drastically reduced; level of inclusion will depend on the severity of the disability. The services of the following must be provided, teacher aide, resource specialist who assists with the development of the individualized educational programme (IEP). The physically and health impaired will need some modification of the physical environment and the provision of mobility aids such as wheelchairs. It is also advisable that close and proper assessment be carried out before admission into the school because children with physical and health impairment have been observed to have other conditions like epilepsy, spinal bifida, cerebral palsy, reparatory problems, tuberculosis and heart conditions.

Inclusive education also offers both academic and social advantages. Many experts maintain that inclusive schooling is the most effective means for building solidarity between children with special needs and their peers. Zalizan Jelas (2000) found in her study in Malaysia that teachers and parents place higher value on the development of social skills gained by children with disabilities in inclusive system and were willing to trade off special education benefits such as specialized curriculum, access to specialized services and individualized instruction. We must not also lose sight of the fact that there are many children with severe disability who may not benefit from inclusive education. Some children with severe disability may be disruptive in the class.

Children with disabilities who may not benefit from ordinary schools due to the severity of their disability should be educated in special schools. Such children should however be given the opportunity somewhere along the line or on part-time basis to enjoy inclusive education. Provision for inclusive education should run across all levels of education e.g. primary, secondary and university. Relevant and adequate provision should be made to ensure effective inclusive education.

Historical Background of Inclusive Education

Early effort to educate persons with disabilities in developing countries in general was made by missionaries. Since then, the various governments have become more sensitive and committed. Special schools, classes, units and resource centers have been built. Teacher training facilities have been established locally in some cases, and more teachers have been trained locally and abroad. All these efforts notwithstanding, most developing countries have been caught in the web of international controversy of acceptable approach to effective education of persons with disabilities. Two schools of thought have since emerged—special school approach and integration and the recent, inclusive education approach. The special school approach has been with us for a long time and has its merits and demerits. Abosi (2002) notes the existence of both systems throughout developed and developing countries. In Singapore for example, special education services are organized along a continuum ranging from total segregation to partial integration to total integration. (Lim & Tan, 1999) Similar systems are practiced in Malaysia, China, America, Nigeria, Botswana, India (Zalizan Jelas, 2000; Potts, 2000; Alur, 2001; Villa et al., 2003, Abosi, 2002). The inclusive education system is current and has been adopted in most countries of the world including many countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America though without proper planning.

Inclusive education emerged by insisting that all children with special needs be included in the traditional classroom. Before the emergence of the inclusive system, it was the concept of integration or mainstreaming, which was practiced. The concept of integration is based on integrating children with disabilities according to their needs and severity of their conditions. Some children with disabilities could benefit from total integration, while others benefit from units/special class or resource rooms. However since the middle of the nineties, the American system of inclusive education has spread like fire across the world.

Development Leading to Inclusive Education

The issue of inclusive education is no more a matter for debate. The 1990 Jomtien World Conference on Education for All with its Declaration and Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs was a turning point in global education. It re-emphasized that education is a fundamental right for everyone, irrespective of physical, social, economic and psychological conditions. It specifically stated that the learning needs of children with disability require special attention and that steps should be taken to provide equal access to education to every category of disabled persons, as an integral part of national education endeavors. The UNESCO World Conference on Special Needs Education (Salamanca, Spain 7-10 June, 1994) reaffirmed the Jomtien Declaration on Education for All and specifically recognized the necessity and urgency of providing education for children, youth and adults with special educational needs within the regular education system.

Existing Policy Provision in Some developing Countries

Most developing countries have developed and adopted policies, which strongly support education of children with disabilities. (Malaysia, India, Singapore, China, Vietnam, Botswana, etc - see Zalizan Jelas 2000; Alur 2001, Lim & Tan, 1999; Potts 2000; Villa et al., 2003; Abosi, 1999) Also, Special Education Policy Guidelines (1997) of Brunei Ministry of Education clearly states that all children of school age including those with special needs should be provided with 12 years of education. The policy statement went on to say that a student requiring a special education programme will be provided with a programme appropriate for the student's needs, age, and level of educational achievement. However, a number of governments' especially those in Africa, attitudes towards the education of children with disabilities could be said to be unclear. There is also a conflict between socially desired intentions and the implementation of those intentions due to value placement of the disabled. For example, while the various government attitudes towards the education of the disabled are enlightened, favorable and worthy of commendation, in reality, these laudable attitudes are hardly seen in the implementation of Special Education Policies. Some of these conflicts are quite clear when it comes to budgetary allocation. The allocation to Special Education is usually insignificant and does not reflect the expectation of the various National Policies on Special Education, which guarantee equal educational opportunities for all citizens. In fact, some policies have gone further to say that children with special needs must be educated alongside their able-bodied counterparts (Brunei, Malaysia, Botswana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Kenya and Zambia, South Africa) to mention but a few countries.

Barriers to Education for All and Offered solutions:

A number of factors constitute barriers to education for all. These factors include:

1. Negative attitude influenced by traditional values, beliefs and culture
2. Lack of statistics of the number of persons with disabilities
3. Inadequate funding
4. Lack of cooperation among specialist administrators
5. Adopting policies that are difficult to implement

Negative Attitudes Influenced by Traditional values, Beliefs and Culture

We cannot fully talk about education of children with disabilities without reflecting on the tenets of traditional life and its attitude. It is only through such reflection that we can understand and appreciate how a typical African or Asian or Latin American conceptualizes disability. The attitude of a given community to disability can affect the kind of provision that could be made for people with disabilities within the community. An average Botswana, Malai, Indian, Nigerian, Zambian etc for example attaches something bad with disabilities. A group of special education student teachers in University of Botswana were asked the following questions:

- 1) How many of you would like to work with the disabled?
- 2) How many of you would like to have a disabled person as a friend?
- 3) How many of you would like to marry a disabled person?

All the students responded that they will like to work with the disabled justifying why they are in the profession. Only 30% of the students said that they would like to have a disabled person as a friend but not as a boy/girl friend and less than 1% will be prepared to marry a disabled person. The same questions were put to some Malai students. The responses were not different. This reflects the kind of lip service we all pay to the welfare of people with disabilities both as individuals and as a community (Abosi, 2006).

The traditional African approach to inclusion of children with special needs for example is influenced by African belief, culture and attitude. Mba (1987) observed that among the factors contributing to the general apathy and neglect of children with disabilities in emergent African countries are superstitions that regard disability as a curse from the gods. Disability in Africa is regarded as a continuous tragedy. Many people regard disability as a stain in their social status. Families with disabled children tend to hide them. Many Africans associate disability with bad luck and therefore would not like to visit special schools, or have them learn alongside with their children in the same classroom. This type of situation has implication for inclusive education

In Vietnamese culture, it is not general expectation that children with disabilities could learn. Children with disabilities are kept at home and considered unteachable or children who cannot be taught in schools. (Villa et al., 2003).

Alur (2001) found that in India, families saw having a disabled as a question of *My karma, a result of past deeds, an individual responsibilities: It's my fate and I have to bear it and it is my fault*. The Indian community's flawed negative attitudes reflects on their feelings that *some day God will forgive them and their child will be normal again* The Indian society and the State had no role to play and never saw it as any one else's responsibilities. Even at policy making level in India, disability was not seen as something normal or natural. It was seen as an *evil eye* Guilt, Stigma, and fear dominated the family. (Alur 2001)

An on the spot survey carried out in Brunei, shows a lot of similarity between the Brunei traditional belief system and that of Africans. The Brunei traditional system is greatly influenced by Malay traditional value system. In Brunei the presence of a child with disability in the family is not well received. It is seen as a disgrace and accounts for why children with disability are generally hidden from visitors. The traditional value and belief system become important. One Bruneian teachers interviewed attributed some of the difficulties encountered in the implementation of the inclusive education policy to shortage of specialist teachers but when asked if he would marry a girl with disability, he said he was already married but even if he was not married, he would not. (Abosi, 2007. unpublished interview).

Abosi and Ozoji (1985) found in their study that Nigerians in particular, and of course Africans in general, associate causes of disabilities to witchcraft, juju, sex- linked factors, God-mediated and supersensible forces. The situation in some other developing countries is not different. In Ghana, the intake of some food is linked to the cause of disability. In Brunei such actions as pushing things under the door, breaking the bone of a chicken, being unkind to a child with disability are all linked to the causes of disabilities (unpublished interview with students).

A sampled opinion in Botswana has not been different too, for example in Botswana; albinos are generally regarded as spirits. Among the Bangwato tribe, they believe that a pregnant woman is likely to give birth to a child with disability if she

- Loves or hates a child with disability
- Drinks water while standing
- Uses her foot or feet to pick up things
- Eats colon (the males' sexual organ will be long or big).

They also believe that a child may become mentally retarded if the biological father/mother has a sexual relationship with a different man/woman before he/she could make love with the biological father/mother.

The cultural belief among Bakwena, Boteti, Kalangas, and Batawana are not different. These beliefs have consequences for the way children with disabilities are treated and provided for in ordinary schools in Africa or other countries in the developing world. The negative attitude and belief must be taken into consideration when planning for integration of persons with disabilities into the mainstream. People from the third world must be made to understand that causes of disabilities are more of physiological than cultural.

Throughout Africa, disabled persons are seen as hopeless and helpless (Desta, 1995). The traditional beliefs in most other developing countries, has not made matters easier. The belief of avoiding whatever is associated with evil has from history affected people's attitude towards people with disabilities simply because disability is associated with evil. (Alur, 2001). Most of these negative

attitudes are mere misconceptions that stem from lack of proper understanding of disabilities and how they affect the functioning of the affected. These misconceptions stem directly from the traditional systems of thought, which reflect magico-religious philosophies that can be safely called superstition.

Lack of Statistics on Incidence of Special Learning Needs in Developing countries:

One major problem facing education of children with disabilities in developing countries is the lack of statistics on the number of children with disabilities. The exact number of children with disabilities in the third world is unknown. Figures given by researchers in various countries are usually based on estimate. The United Nations also maintains that where there is no definite figure of children with disabilities, the 10% figure of school-age children should be used as estimate. Eleweke and Rodda (2001) maintain that the majority of people with disabilities live in developing countries and estimate the number of children with disabilities in developing countries to be 150 million. In Brunei, the issue of statistics for persons with disabilities should not be a problem because the government has both the money and the political will to provide the best services for people with disabilities.

Inadequate funding

Special education is expensive to run and yet it is part of general education. Its budgetary allocation is derived from whatever is given to general education. Special education therefore survives on the kindness and understanding of whoever is in-charge of the ministry. In most cases it is the droppings or leftovers that are given to Special education despite the high cost of its maintenance. In one African country for example, a Member of Parliament once remarked *We don't have enough to deal with normal children before talking about people with disabilities*. This might not be different from what obtains in other developing countries. Although the right of a child with disability to an education is theoretically no longer questionable in many developing countries, but a question that is still being asked by the man in the street is *why should the government or public spend a lot of money on the education of children with disabilities when in fact many of them with severe disabilities will be unable to hold competitive employment after education*. In other words, what is the rationale for educating children with disability. This situation definitely influences the government's attitudes when it comes to budgetary allocation to special needs education.

Lack of Cooperation among special education administrators

Special education has often been used as a stepping stone for achieving personal ambitions by many people who are not really in special education. It is not uncommon to find many units, departments or divisions responsible for special education being manned by individuals without the relevant qualifications, interest and experience. This situation often results in lack of confidence, defensive behaviour, aggression and antagonistic behaviours on the part of the concerned officers, hence, resulting in lack of cooperation, constant quarrelling and lack of vision for the development of special education.

Policies that are difficult to implement

Inclusive education emerged by insisting that all children with special needs be included in the traditional classroom. Before the emergence of the inclusive system, it was the concept of integration or mainstreaming which was practiced. The concept of integration is based on integrating children with disabilities according to their needs and severity of their conditions. Some children with disabilities could benefit from total integration, while others benefit from units, special class or resource rooms and partial integration. The issue of integration is traceable to America, when in 1975; the American Congress approved Public Law titled *Education for All Handicapped Children Act*. The law was meant to make education free and mandatory for all children with disabilities. Children with disabilities were to be provided with individualized education programme in a least restrictive environment.

In 1978, the British came up with a similar programme based on the Warnock Report. The Warnock Report specifically recommended the integration of children with disabilities into ordinary schools. Since the 1970's, the mode of education has been modified and improved, thus reducing the basic hardships experienced in schools by the children with disabilities. Most European countries that run integration/inclusive education have ensured that relevant and adequate provisions are made to support children in inclusive education. Developing countries were quick to adopt this programme without adequate preparation. The questions that remain unanswered in the third world include:

1. Do we understand what inclusive education is all about?
2. Have we made available relevant provisions in all inclusive schools?

3. Are schools equipped with resource teachers?
4. Are disabled children adequately assessed before being admitted into ordinary schools?
5. Do we have enough positive attitudes to accommodate children with disabilities in ordinary schools?
6. Do countries from the third world have enough financial resources to support effective inclusive education?
7. Are there avenues for experts from the third world to meet and discuss issues involved in inclusive education?

Wyman (1995) outlines what we should bear in mind if we are to formulate effective inclusive education policy:

- A climate in which acceptance is the key. In the context of developing countries, this becomes very relevant considering the attitude, beliefs and culture.
- Focus on everyone's abilities and possibilities.
- Cooperation between/among school staff, parents and students
- Incorporating teacher strengths with student needs rather than criticize.
- Incorporate a variety of learning modalities.

The gains of inclusive education cannot be over emphasized. The conflict that exists in the educational system in the world must be resolved if we are to make headway in inclusive education. The various governments, both in the developed and the developing countries lay a lot of emphasis on standard and quality on education. Jayanthi, Epstein, Polloway, and Bursuck (1996) report that the practitioners and researchers in United States of America have expressed some concern about including students with disabilities in general education classes at a time when the forces of the reform have been ardently calling for increased commitment to educational excellence and rigor. In Asia in general and Singapore in particular and else where, it is feared that schools are becoming increasingly selective in their students intake in order to improve academic outcomes in the face of growing inter-school competition (Gewirtz, 1996). There is also tempting shift of resources away from special needs towards high-achieving children who are more likely to contribute to school performance in league-table. Children with disabilities are seen as liabilities rather than assets in the market place. (Bowe & Ball, 1992; Gewirtz, 1996; Ball; 1994, Astin, 1992; Lim & Tan, 1999; Evans & Vincent, 1997). Potts (2000) further notes that in China it is very difficult to use the individualized educational programs in the mainstream because the State Education Commission set identical standards for all students. This means that varying the standards for some students is informal.

The issue of inclusive education is one that must be considered with care and detachment if we are to avoid frustration for the disabled and discourage inequality in the educational system. Many teachers have expressed reservation about integration of the disabled people despite its advantages. Schumm and Vaughn (1991) found in their study that many general education teachers perceived classroom adaptations as being more desirable than feasible. Despite the pronouncement of various governments on integration of the disabled in ordinary schools, no concrete plan has been put into force in order to achieve effective and meaningful inclusive education. Abosi and Molosiwa (1997) point out that integration of children into ordinary schools have many implications for teachers and planners. It requires attitude change, provision of additional teaching materials, resource teachers, modification of infrastructure and flexible curriculum. Placement of a child with disability in a regular school without relevant provision could be frustrating for both the school and the child.

Including Inclusive Education in Teacher Training

The need for the development of training facilities in developed and developing countries for teachers of children with special educational needs to reflecting inclusive education cannot be over-emphasized. Teacher training programme in most developing countries for special educators has not been given proper attention in its establishment and structure. This has caused acute shortage of special educators and negative attitude among ordinary teachers towards inclusive education. If teachers who should be responsible for implementation of inclusive practice have unclear perception of their role; it may seriously undermine the effects of maintenance of restructuring programs towards inclusion. Trained teachers are more positive to inclusion. Villa et al (2003) noted in their study in Vietnam the effect of training on teachers. They found out that there were changes in teachers' attitude towards children with disabilities mainly in their beliefs in the feasibility of inclusive education. It has been noticed that a number of countries are beginning to make considerable progress in this direction

of establishment of training facilities within local institutions. In Brunei for example, the Sultan Hassanah Boikiah Institute of Education runs three programs for special educators (Certificate, B.Ed, and M.Ed) for serving teachers. His Majesty's Government has requested the university to start additional pre-service Diploma program in special education for school leavers. A number of developing countries (India, Malaysia, Singapore, Botswana, Ghana, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Zambia, etc) have also established similar programs locally to train special educators. Training special educators locally in their various countries of origin has a big advantage because the curriculum will be designed to reflect the cultural expectations and the resource limitations.

Expected Attitude of the Government Leading to Effective Inclusive Education

The first attitude expected of any government toward children with disability is the disposition toward planfulness. Government preoccupation should be to work out a detailed scheme for attaining the objective of education for ALL children including children with disability. This attitude embodies a systematic arrangement of the requirements for efficient education for children with disabilities.

The second attitude required of the various governments is the unquestionable acceptance of the education of children with disabilities as a legal obligation, this entails that the governments should take a more concrete step towards implementing the wishful intentions in their policies on education of children with disabilities. This includes integrating children with disabilities into the ordinary schools and unconditional commitment to equalizing educational opportunities for all children irrespective of their physical condition. However, the general requirements for effective inclusive education should include identification of children with disabilities, enabling programs and services, resources, funds, legislation, public education etc. The demands of each requirement should be properly understood, articulated into a system and used as a master plan in the education of children with disabilities.

Vocational Oriented Curriculum

Education of children with disabilities should aim at assisting the children to acquire survival skills. This means that any curriculum that is designed for the participation of children with disabilities must be vocational oriented. Academic ability children are to be encouraged to pursue education in line with their abilities while children whose disabilities pose difficulties for excellent academic achievement should be encouraged to pursue a vocation of interest and ability. The curriculum of an inclusive system should include training in skills such as carpentry, sewing, telephone operating, computers, art work, home economics, and music. The *normal* children will also benefit from such a curriculum.

An Effective Inclusive Education Should Start with Attitude Change

Apart from the influence of traditional beliefs on the way teachers and students perceive children with disabilities, studies have shown that teachers, administrators and students do have negative attitudes towards children with disabilities due to lack of relevant support and availability of adequate provisions.(Cook et al, 1999, Cook, 2001, Smith, 2000). However, attitudes are changeable and it's on this understanding that a critical dive into ways of changing identifiable negative attitude will be undertaken. It should be noted that most of these attitudes are devoid of ill will and are expressed with a great deal of sympathy. People pick up these attitudes during the process of growing up without any conscious intention to perpetuate them. They become more organized in one's mind. Today, new information based on scientific knowledge of causes of disabilities and the effect of disabilities could alter already held attitudes.

New information can be boosted through propaganda in selected information, in the area of informal knowledge about disabilities and their causes. It has also been observed that information-giving techniques improve expressed adult attitudes towards the disabled. This can be achieved through lectures, symposia, seminars, teach yourself leaflets and through persuasive appeals organized in a structured manner.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Inclusive education provides opportunity for children with disabilities to be taught in a regular classroom with their *normal* counterparts. This approach has social advantage and parents have expressed satisfaction with the progress of their children in this direction. A number of factors such as poor planning, traditional practices and beliefs, attitudes of teachers, administrators, and students affect the implementation of inclusive education. If we are to make progress in inclusive education, and attain

the development goals for children with disabilities, the issues raised and addressed in Salamanca must be revisited. We therefore recommend that the various governments should:

- Give the highest policy and budgetary priority to improve their education systems to enable them to include all children regardless of individual differences or difficulties.
- Adopt as a matter of law or policy the principle of inclusive education, enrolling all children in regular schools, unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise.
- Develop demonstration projects and encourage exchanges with countries having experience with inclusive schools.
- Establish decentralized and participatory mechanisms for planning, monitoring and evaluating educational provision for children and adults with special education needs. Encourage and facilitate the participation of parents, communities and organization of persons with disabilities in the planning and decision-making processes concerning provision for special education needs.
- Invest greater effort in early identification and intervention strategies as well as in vocational aspects of inclusive education.
- Ensure that, in the context of a systematic change, teacher education programs, both pre-service and in-service, address the provision of special needs education in inclusive schools.

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