Views, knowledge and challenges of teachers towards including children with Disability in regular schools in Cameroon: A Case of Hotpec Nursery and primary School

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Spring 2018

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for an award of Master of Philosophy Degree in Special Needs Education

University of Oslo

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis or any part of it has not been and will not be, submitted to another university for any other degree.

Signature:………………………………………….   Date:…………………………

Acknowledgments

First and foremost I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisors **Steiner Theie** and **Siri Wormæs** for their calmness and wise counsel. They were understanding and patient. Their wise intellectual and academic counsel is what has really made this study what it is. They were firm yet understanding throughout the study. They encouraged and inspired me even when the going was really getting tough and were approachable even beyond their normal working hours. I really appreciate their valuable contribution to this dissertation.

My heartfelt gratitude also goes to my father **Mr. Gilbert Tangunyi** and mother **Grace Tangunyi** who gave me positive counsel when I felt like giving up on the way. They stood steadfast and reprimanded me over my show of lack of interest to my academic work. I can only wish them God's blessings in all her works.

Special thanks also go to Hotpec Nursery and Primary School administration for receiving me warmly during my field work. Without their help, this study would not have been possible. Above all, I wish to express my earnest gratitude to God almighty that had placed fervent confidence in me to have successfully completed my research study and for having been my panacea at all times.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents my father **Mr. Gilbert Tangunyi** and mother **Grace Tangunyi**. I thank them for seeing me through my education from kindergarten to higher education level.

Abstract

This study aimed at investigating the views, knowledge and challenges towards including children with disabilities in mainstream classroom. The aim of this study was to identify the effects of cerebral palsy on academic performance of pupils at primary school level. Specifically, the study was undertaken at Hotpec nursery and primary school in Buea District, Cameroon. To clearly determine the views, knowledge and challenges towards including children with disabilities in mainstream classroom, a case study was undertaken. The sample consisted of four teachers who teach classes that practice inclusive education. The study used purposive sampling to select the teachers and classrooms respectively. Interviews and observations were used to collect data. Finally, thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data and quantitative data was subjected to quantitative analysis using Microsoft Excel.

The findings of this study show that society differs on views concerning inclusive education. The negative views included: inclusive education was untenable and children with special education needs are better schooled in special schools and special units where adequate special resources are available. The positive views included: it eliminates stereotyping and discrimination, promotes self-esteem and confidence among children with disabilities. This study also established that most teachers in mainstream schools have some level of training in special education. This study proposed some coping strategies for teachers including: humor, drawing from past experiences, making a plan of action, looking on the bright side, developing interests outside the classroom, engaging in physical activities, discussing the situation with colleagues and the principal, receiving help of teaching assistant and collaborating with parents. This study established that challenges of inclusive education include: few teachers, overcrowding in classrooms, inadequate to no training in special education, lack of supportive devices and resources, little time to concentrate on children with disabilities, communication difficulties and inadequate training on differentiating learning. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that more teachers be employed, more teaching assistants be employed, assistive technology be provided, budgetary allocation to education be increased, remedial training be conducted for teachers in mainstreaming schools, inclusive education teaching resources be produced, introduce incentives to teachers of mainstreaming classes and more research be undertaken on inclusive education.

Innholdsfortegnelse

1 Introduction

Current trends in education focus on the importance of inclusive practices, characterized by valuing all, respect for differences, and enabling the full participation of all learners including addressing a sense of belonging for all. These emerging trends have had an impact on the formulation of education policies world over. In Cameroon the government has worked hand in glove with other organizations to ensure that inclusive education practices are in place countrywide. This chapter presents the background to the study, the purpose of the study, statement of the problem, study objectives and questions, significance of the study, operational definitions, and the organization of the dissertation. All these are entwined to give a clear picture of the study.

1.1 Background to the Study

1.1.1 Country Profile: Cameroon

Cameroon is a country triangular in shape and with an area of 475,442 square kilometers (Sokaleh, 2009). The Republic of Cameroon is a largely landlocked. Cameroon's western border is shared with Nigeria; the northeast border with Chad; the east border with Central African Republic (CAR); the south border shared with Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and the Republic of the Congo. Cameroon has a coastline with the Atlantic Ocean and the official languages are English and French.

Cameroon is a member of both the Commonwealth of Nations and La Francophonie. Its foreign policy closely follows that of its main ally, France (Lorenco, 2009). Cameroon relies heavily on France for its defense, although military spending is high in comparison to other sectors of government (Sokaleh, 2009). Cameroon has engaged in a decades-long clash with the government of Nigeria over possession of the oil rich Bakassi peninsula. Cameroon and Nigeria share a 1,000 mile border and have disputed the sovereignty of the Bakassi peninsula. In 1994 Cameroon petitioned the International Court of Justice to resolve the dispute (Lorenco, 2009). The two countries attempted to establish a cease-fire in 1996, however, fighting continued for years. In 2002, the ICJ ruled that the Anglo-German Agreement of 1913 gave sovereignty to Cameroon. The ruling called for a withdrawal by both countries and denied the request by Cameroon for compensation due to Nigeria's long-term occupation

(Sokaleh, 2009). By 2004, Nigeria had failed to meet the deadline to handover the peninsula. A UN-mediated summit in June 2006 facilitated an agreement for Nigeria to withdraw from the region and both leaders signed the Greentree Agreement. The withdrawal and handover of control was completed by August 2006 (Sokaleh, 2009).

The constitution divides Cameroon into 10 semi-autonomous regions, each under the administration of an elected Regional Council (Lorenco, 2009). Each region is headed by a presidentially appointed governor. These leaders are charged with implementing the will of the president, reporting on the general mood and conditions of the regions, administering the civil service, keeping the peace, and overseeing the heads of the smaller administrative units. Governors have broad powers: they may order propaganda in their area and call in the army, gendarmes, and police. All local government officials are employees of the central government's Ministry of Territorial Administration, from which local governments also get most of their budgets (Sokaleh, 2009).

1.1.2 Development of Special Needs Education in Cameroon

World-wide, particularly in the United Kingdom and the United States, the first forms of special Education appeared in the latter part of the 18th Century. Tomlinson (1999) points out that these early forms of special Education were often motivated by commercial rather than educational or charitable factors. The aim was frequently to make its recipients useful and productive members of society, usually in an economic sense. Special needs education in Cameroon started in the late 20th century and has not moved much on the trajectory. In Europe, the historical writers have been able to trace at least four phases in the care and treatment of disabled children. According to Gearheart, Weishahn & Gearheart (2005: 6) cited in Mburahselih (2010) the phases include

- Early History

- Era of Institutionalization

- Era of Public Schools

- Era of Accelerated growth-public schools and normalization

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Each of these phases has distinctive features that make them differ with each other. The early history era spans for the period before 1800 (Tomlinson, 1999). This period was characterized with societal misunderstanding and superstition on issues of handicaps. In Roman history persons with disabilities were called fools and were used by the rich people as a source of entertainment. It was also believed that persons who were different from others in behavior or appearance were possessed by evil spirits. These beliefs are still existent in Cameroon where as reported by Swango (2003) some Cameroonians still believe in witchcraft as a cause of disability and that persons with disability cannot contribute to the development of the society. Swango (2003) added that due to this belief, children born with disabilities are made to undergo spiritual exorcisms to remove spirits which in some cases result in death of such children from Pneumonia as they are mainly left in the cold at such a tender age. These perceived causes are widespread in Africa as reported by Mulonda (2009) who argued that the spiritual causes of witchcraft will take long to uproot because most of the convents to Christianity still harbor their traditional beliefs that include spirits, witchcraft and others.

Exploitation or abuse using the disabled in the circus to amuse people was common place in Roman times (Swango, 2003). In African society circuses are not used but unscrupulous people enrich themselves by parading persons with disabilities and purporting to work towards promoting the plight of persons with disabilities (Mulonda, 2006). This kind of exploitation is common place in Cameroon despite the lack of documentation (Tukov, 2009). In addition, the era of early history, was characterized by marginalization, infanticide, superstition and abandonment. Historical writers such as Zilboorg & Henry (1941) as cited in Koté (2000) have provided information on how society treated persons with disabilities and they have stated that inhuman treatment was due to fear and ignorance. In Cameroon these characteristics are still existent in most rural areas where literacy levels are low (Tukov, 2009). Even today, some Cameroonians still believe that disability is associated with superstition. According to Tukov (2009) this has affected the literacy levels of such children as some parents are ashamed to bring children with disabilities to schools but instead keep them in doors.

The Era of Institutionalization occurred in the period between 1800 and 1900 (Swango, 2003). The idea of institutionalization came about as a result of a realization by the disabled, professionals and a change in the attitude of the general population to accept persons with disabilities. However, it has been argued by Sloane (1991) that the disabled were isolated so

that these physically unattractive or undesirable people could be put out of the public eye. Although this attitude is unacceptable today, it was better than infanticide. Isolation of persons with disabilities was prominent during this era. In the same era, human warehouses were created for all people with disabilities. The aim of creating these was to have the disabled put in one place for safety purpose, locking away from public view, protection of the disabled, feeling sorry for the disabled. Cameroon still shows some features from the era of institutionalization as parents isolate these children from the mainstream. This isolation has been observed in Cameroon by Okombo (1994) who found that some parents did not want their children to attend class with children with disabilities because such children were undesirable and not even worthy to receive an education. In addition, Okombo (1994) observed that at the time of the study, two pupils had left one of the schools which were part of the sample, because a child with disability had been transferred to the school. This shows that Cameroon had not moved out of the old age era of badly treating persons with disability and considering them undesirable. This ill-treatment is believed to have resulted in 'tot-steps' towards inclusive education practices as society especially in rural areas has not yet fully accepted persons with disabilities as full human beings in Cameroon (Tukov, 2009)s.

The Era of Public School-Special Classes occurred in the 1860s (Tomlinson, 1999). During this period, political reformers and leaders in education and medicine began to champion the cause of children and adults with disabilities, urging that these 'imperfect' or 'incomplete' individual be taught skills that would allow them to become independent productive citizens. The philosophy of Locke and Rousseau relating to the importance of 'the dignity of all individuals' was accompanied by a positive shift in society's attitude resulting in creation of public and special schools to provide education to children with disabilities (Wilson, 2000). There was increased care, treatment and educational services provided for all people with disabling conditions. During this era, effective procedures were devised for teaching children with sensory impairments. This was mainly due to the ideas of democracy and individual freedom that influenced people's attitudes towards the disabled (Tomlinson, 1999). The first special class for the deaf in a public school was held Boston in 1869 (Mburashelih, 2010). As noted above there is no adequate data to show the attitudes of Cameroonian society towards disability, but what is evident is that there is a rise in the number of public special schools and majority of learners with special needs receiving life skills training. The philosophy of Locke and Rousseau discussed above is relational to section 35 of Cameroonian Law No 98/ 004 of

14th April 1998 which laid down guidelines for education in Cameroon and emphasized the moral integrity of students in educational systems.

The last phase is the Era of accelerated growth and it spans from the 1960s to date (Koté, 2000). The era saw the creation of disability laws, Acts and Policies. In 1945 the UN adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, acceptance of the disabled as full human beings, community participation in provision of services, active participation and equality, fight for equal rights and integration. In Cameroon, this became the major policy frame work in the 1970s as it was reflected in the Education Reforms Document 1975 (Ministry of Education, 2013). It meant that children with special needs were going to be educated in ordinary schools. It also meant providing a natural environment where pupils with special needs alongside their peers would interact and feel freed from the isolation that characterized most of the special education placement. Many countries are able to find themselves in two or more eras at the same time. For instance Cameroon today has characteristic features of almost all phases. Today in Cameroon, it is common to find parents or families hiding away children with disabilities in their homes (Tukov, 2010). There is also a lot of misunderstanding and superstitions among local people as to the causes of disabilities. In a nutshell, Cameroonian society is a hybrid society with characteristics of all the eras of the history of special needs education still existing.

1.1.3 The Buea District

Buea was the colonial capital of German Kamerun from 1901 to 1919, the capital of the Southern Cameroons from 1949 until 1961 and the capital of West Cameroon until 1972, when Ahmadou Ahidjo abolished the Federation of Cameroon (Lorenco, 2009). The German colonial administration in Buea was temporarily suspended during the eruption of Mount Cameroon from 28 April until June 1909 (Sokaleh, 2009). Buea is the capital of the Southwest Region of Cameroon. The town is located on the eastern slopes of Mount Cameroon and has a population of 90,088 (Bureau of Census and Population, 2005). It has two Government Hotels, the Mountain Hotel and Parliamentarian Flats Hotel located around The Government Residential Area.

Buea hosts the University of Buea, Cameroon's first anglophone university (Sokaleh, 2009). It is the site of several other higher institutes of learning, including St Francis Schools of Nursing and Midwifery presently known as Biaka University Institute of Buea (BUIB) and

one of Cameroon's three Catholic universities. A handful of colonial era buildings are surviving, notably the palatial former residence of the German governor Jesko von Puttkamer. Other German colonial buildings are still standing, but some of them suffer from lack of maintenance and old age. The Nigerian Consulate in anglophone Cameroon and the main operational hub of the Naigahelp medical aid organization are in Buea. Buea hosts an annex of the National Archives of Cameroon, whose main location is Yaoundé. Next door to the annex is the Cameroon Press Photo Archive, which has been permanently closed since 2001.

Buea has an estimated population of above 200, 000 inhabitants (Bureau of Census & Population, 2005) constituting essentially of the Bakweris in the villages and a highly cosmopolitan population within the urban space putting the indigenes at a minority. Figures from census bureau, puts the male population at 49 % and that of female approximately (Bureau of Census & Population, 2005). Urban population could be put at 57% of total population while Rate of urbanization is estimated at greater than 5% annual rate of change (Bureau of Census & Population, 2006). The Bakweri language spoken by the natives is equally written and documented. English and French are two official languages used for general interaction while pidgin is the lingua franca (Lorenco, 2009). The average life expectancy of this area is 50 years and literacy rate is on the rise with some 60-75% of the youths having access to education (Bureau of Census & Population, 2005). The district has 54 primary and nursery schools, 19 secondary schools and 10 universities and professional institutions (Ministry of Education, 2013).

1.1.4 Education System in Cameroon

Cameroon has a national educational policy which guides on how teaching and learning must take place. Unlike other countries, Cameroon has two official languages namely French and English (Sokaleh, 2009). The use of these two languages is largely due to the fact that Cameroon has a double colonial heritage with France being the first colonial master, followed by the United Kingdom from 1916 to 1960 (Ministry of Education, 2013). Eight out of ten regions of Cameroon are primarily Francophone, representing 83% of the country's population, and two are Anglophone, representing 17% (Lorenco, 2009). Despite the official position of English and French, Cameroon has nearly 250 languages subdivided as 55 Afro-Asiatic languages, 2 Nilo Saharan languages, 4 Ubungian languages, 169 Niger-Congo

languages and 26 derivatives of Bantu (Sokaleh, 2009). Therefore, the languages of instruction in classrooms and workplaces are English and French.

As shown above, the Cameroonian education system is a dual system of two languages namely: the Anglophone system of education based on the Anglo-Saxon model and the Francophone system based on the French model. In many instances, the two models are used side by side. In Cameroon, early childhood is the first level of education and it is not compulsory.

Due to bilingualism, early childhood is called 'nursery school' in the Anglophone sector while the Francophone sector it is called 'L'ecole maternelle' (Ministry of Education, 2013). There is no difference in the meanings of the two sectorial terms as they are terms used according to the two languages to describe the same thing. Children attend early childhood education for less than three years and until the age of 5 or 6. Children enter primary school from the ages of six to seven and the duration of this level is six years. In Cameroon primary school is compulsory (Sokaleh, 2009). Primary education is provided by the Government, religious denominations and private individuals. At the end of primary education the closure is completed by all pupils sitting for the School Leaving Certificate which is a prerequisite to entrance to secondary school. In addition there are Technical, Vocational and Professional examinations that allow pupils access to various career choices.

At the secondary level, tuition fees are lower at the Government Secondary Schools when compared to religious and private schools. At secondary level the Francophone education lasts for seven years from the ages of 11 to around 18 (Ministry of Education, 2013). There are two cycles: the first cycle lasts for four years while the second cycle lasts for three years. At the end of the first cycle the students sit for the Brevete D'etude (BEPC) and later in the second cycle they sit for the Probatoire and Baccalauréat examinations which equates with advanced level (A Level) examinations (Koté, 2000). On the other hand, the Anglophone secondary education takes five years from ages 11 to around 16. At the end of the five years, students take the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary level examinations which is a variant of international O level examinations. If they pass they qualify for admission into high school which entails a two year studies and at the end they have to take the GCE Advanced Level examination. Besides, the system also has technical and vocational secondary schools which run for a duration of four years.

1.1.5 Special Needs Education in Cameroon

The introduction of special education in Cameroon has been delayed due to the engraved beliefs about and attitudes towards disability in general (Koté, 2000). According to Tukov (2009) Special Needs Education in Cameroon actually started in informal settings especially in the family circle where parents could teach their local dialects, use local currency in buying and selling as it was one of the main occupations in the early days. The reason for this could be attributed to the various fallacies associated with disability in Cameroon. With the increase in civic literacy and promotion by various NGOs and churches, special needs education was introduced in Cameroon.

In addition, Okombo (1994) posits that special needs education was introduced in Cameroon in 1975 with the creation of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MSA), and it was accountable for the well-being of individuals with disabilities. Cameroon Law No. 83/13, Article 3, of July 1983 as amended in 2003, and it provides for the individual needs and protection of individuals with disabilities with covering 3 major areas including: integration of children in ordinary schools, admission in special classes, and admission into specialized institutions. This law created a base under which persons with disabilities could receive an appropriate and less restrictive education (Mburahselih, 2010). As indicated above the first schools for children with disabilities were run and managed by religious groups and parents of children with disabilities. The most important of them all is the special school for children with hearing impairments and the special school for the mentally Handicapped children whose posters included a Francophone translation (Okombo, 1994). Another called PROMHANDICAM was created in 1975 for the vocational training of children with disabilities of both sexes for their eventual socio- economic integration in to the society (Ministry of Education, 2013).

The first law, section 504 of the rehabilitation Act of 1973, is an extensive civil rights law that vetoes discrimination against the disabled (Ministry of Education, 2013). The Act is intended, to ensure user friendly buildings and grounds; access to public education programs and facilities that are free and appropriate at the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary level. The second law emphasizes the education for all handicapped children act of 1975 (public law 94-142) which is an adopted guiding law from the United States of America on disability (Tukov, 2009). This law is recognized as one of the national largest federal aid programs for education. According to this law educational agencies are necessary for providing each

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student with disability a program of free public education specifically made to meet the students' unique educational needs. Despite these legal provisions on inclusion of children with disability in ordinary classrooms; peers, teachers and other staff may still have discriminatory views towards the inclusion of children with disability. These negative views may be due lack of adequate knowledge about disabilities as argued by Tukov (2009: 34) who claims "People who have high level of knowledge on interaction with disabled children, have a more positive view towards inclusive education practices as compared to those with none".

The inclusion of learners with disabilities into ordinary educational classes in Cameroon is one of the key challenges in the educational system of Cameroon (Ministry of Education, 2013). The meaning of inclusion captures issues of social justice, equality, human rights and abolishment of all forms of discrimination. In Cameroon, the enactment of the 1995 Education Forum organized by the then Ministry of National Education states that one of the social objectives of the forum is the eradication of all kinds of discrimination on access to education (Koté, 2000). This enactment drew government's interest in the provision of education embodied with practices of inclusion. Furthermore, section 35 of Law No 98/ 004 of 14th April 1998 which laid down guidelines for education in Cameroon, states that "the moral integrity of students shall be guaranteed within the educational system. Thus, all forms of discrimination are prohibited in Cameroon", however, as noted by Mburashelih (2010) this only exists on paper and not in practice.

The current trends in education focus on the importance of inclusive education practices, characterized by valuing all, respect for differences, and enabling the full participation of all learners including addressing a sense of belonging for all (Ministry of Education, 2013). Unfortunately, in Cameroon much of these tenets of education remain only on paper and are never operationalized. This has been the major problem for government and worse off in schools that practice inclusive education practices. This argument was raised by Mburashelih (2010) who observed that despite the sabbatical premise of promoting laws on inclusion of children with disability in ordinary classrooms in Cameroon; peers, teachers and other staff may still have discriminatory views towards the inclusion of children with disability. As a result a study of the views, knowledge and challenges of teachers towards including children with Disability in regular schools in Cameroon may help shade more light and raise solutions.

1.1.6 Inclusive Education Practices in Cameroon

According to Smith (1998), an individual's attitudes can be adjusted, positively or negatively, depending on the type of structure of activity, planned experience, and other exposures he or she has. In many instances children with disabilities are expected to adjust to the environmental conditions in order to suit with the so called 'normal' setup. Such expectations are based on the medical model of disability and largely the guiding principle in Cameroonian schools (Tukov, 2009). In the past, Cameroon deprived compulsory attendance requirements for children with disability because educating children with disability was seen as a waste of time and were looked upon as cursed or outcast (Koté, 2000). They believed that a disabled body was a disabled mind and as a result most of children with disabilities were not sent to school. Even the few who had the opportunity to go to school could not accomplish their aim because of the attitudes teachers and other students had towards them (Okombo, 1994).

In Cameroon, teachers viewed the inclusion of students with disabilities into mainstream settings as difficult and stressful and that mainstream educators were worried about meeting the individual needs of students with disabilities (Swango, 2003). The need for collaboration with several support staff has resulted in tension and confusion (Swango, 2003). Also, Koté (2000) argued that there is perceived lack of support from the administrative personnel at schools to support inclusive education practices. Further, the inclusion of students with disabilities into regular classrooms is viewed by some educators as contributing to increased workloads. There have also been fears that the dynamics within inclusive settings may impact on the academic progress of non-disabled students (Ministry of Education, 2013). Due to various disabilities awareness campaigns undertaken by INGOs and LNGOs parents know better about their children and have a lot to play when it concerns them while teachers are professionals in helping the students in academic milieu and provides different skills to fulfill the needs of the child (Ministry of Education, 2013).

1.2 Purpose of the Study

In Cameroon, views and knowledge on inclusive education practices differ according to the social cultural context of a given region. The purpose of this study was to investigate the views, knowledge and challenges of teachers towards including children with Disability in regular schools in Cameroon. The study explored the views, knowledge and challenges

teachers at Hotpec Nursery and Primary school had towards inclusive education. In addition, it aimed at uprooting any remedial strategies that teachers used to cope with the challenges they faced.

1.3 Research Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives

i. To investigate the knowledge primary school teachers have about inclusive education practices

ii. To explore views of teachers on inclusive education practices

iii. To examine the challenges teachers face when teaching an inclusive class

iv. To identify measures that could be put in place to mitigate the challenges teachers face when teaching inclusive classes at primary school level

1.4 Research Questions

To achieve the above stated objectives, the study used the following questions

i. What are the views of teachers towards inclusive education practices?

ii. What knowledge do teachers have on inclusive education practices?

iii. What challenges do teachers face when teaching inclusive classes?

iv. What are schools doing to mitigate the challenges arising from the implementation of inclusive education practices at primary school level?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study aimed to gather information on the views, knowledge and challenges of teachers on inclusive education practices. The study findings provide valuable information on the knowledge and views of teachers on inclusive education practices at primary level in Cameroon. In addition, the findings from this study will help government agencies and others

with a bias to inclusive education practices to formulate policies that promote effective implementation of inclusive education practices. It is hoped that the findings of the study will help all stakeholders make enlightened decisions in the area of inclusive education practices to promote quality and rebut negative perceptions.

1.6 Operational Definitions

1.6.1 Disability

Ministry of Education (2013) defines disability as involving someone who lacks the potentials of using his or her normal routine effectively, and finds it difficult to carry out major roles in life. It also involves a limitation on a person's functioning that restricts the individual's abilities.

1.6.2 Inclusion

The focus of this study was education and as such inclusion was limited to the education system and every time inclusion was mentioned it only referred to the education aspect. In a nutshell, inclusion and inclusive education practices have been used to mean one and the same thing. However, inclusive education practices can be noticed to be used more frequently than inclusion. Inclusion is therefore defined as the state or a process of addressing and responding positively to the differences that exist among the students, through modifying and changing the education systems (Kirk et al., 2005). The accommodations may range from physical to any other that might be deemed beneficial to the learner who is hearing impaired.

1.6.3 Special Needs Education

It is defined as a situation where by children requires special educational provisions because they have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of their age and also because they suffer from a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided for children of their age (Smith, 1998).

1.7 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is composed of seven chapters. In chapter 1, the background information, justification of the study, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, significance of the study as well as definitions of key terms are presented. Chapter 2 is dedicated to literature review of the concept of inclusion, theory of inclusion and various studies in Cameroon and elsewhere which relate to inclusive education practices. Chapter 3 describes in more detail the procedures and methods that were employed in collecting, analyzing and interpreting the study data obtained from the field. It covers research design, study population, sample size, research instruments, and ethical consideration. Chapter 3 also covers validity and reliability issues in the research. In chapter 4, the data collected from the field is presented according to the research objectives. Chapter 5 consists of the discussion of the findings. The discussion is done by making comparisons between participant's accounts and supporting those using theories or findings from other studies. Chapter 6 contains conclusion and future recommendations. It is the final chapter that summarizes the thesis and makes suggestions for practical implications based on the findings.

2 Literature Review

This chapter presents the literature on the views, knowledge and challenges of teachers towards including children with Disability in regular schools. The literature covers the concept of inclusion, a theory of inclusion and other studies that relate to this topic. Some previous studies that have been conducted on the field of special education particularly that which focuses on inclusive education practices are espoused.

2.1 Conceptualization of Inclusion

Traditionally, inclusive education practices have predominately centered on placing special needs student or a pupil in the general education classroom for specific period of time. In its most basic form, Cross et al., (2004) sees inclusive education practices as something which support pupils with disabilities in age- appropriate general education classes in their home schools and receive the specialized instruction delineated by their individualized educational programs within the context of the core curriculum and general class activities. Kirk et al., (2012) broadens the definition to encompass a social dimension stating that inclusion also means all pupils socially belonging and immersed in the same curriculum material.

According to Friend (2011: 29) inclusion "is a belief system that be shared by every member of a school as a learning community: teachers, administrators, other staff members, pupils and parents or guardians about responsibility of educating all pupils so that they reach their potential, inclusion is about welcoming every pupil to access learning and recognize that the diversity of learners in today's schools dictates that no single approach is appropriate for all". According to Friend's view of inclusive, all pupils' benefit from inclusion and ultimately the learning experience in term of cognitive, social, emotional and physical are enhanced in the near or long term (Friend, 2011). However, Tomlinson (1999) argued that inclusive education practices do not mean just the integration of children and young people with physical or intellectual disabilities into regular schools or just the access to education of excluded learners. He argues that inclusive must be planned in such a way that all children including the disabled receive appropriate and quality education. Okombo (1994) opined that in some cases what is considered as elimination of segregation and discrimination is in practice the gospel opposite, because children end up not receiving quality education in the name of being included in regular schools.

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According to Kochhar, West & Taymans (2000) students with disabilities can learn properly in the general education setting socially, physically, and academically, with accommodations made and without disturbing the rest of the classroom. In addition, Kochhar, West, and Taymans (2000) believe that some special educators are not in support of inclusion as they believe that some students' academic needs are best met outside of the general education classroom. It can be construed from Kochhar and others that most educators are not in support of full inclusion, but come to an agreement that each student will always have individual needs which require individualized attention. Educators have to bear in mind that they don't need to struggle to move toward full inclusion, but according to Kochhar, West, and Taymans (2000), education for students with disabilities needs to continue to improve with greater support and resources.

UNESCO (2005) defines inclusion as a measure that declines exclusion of learners for and maximizing the participation making learning more significant for all children, reorganizing school curricular, policies and practices so that all the needs of the learners can be met. Friend (2011) mentioned that inclusion involves a change of a school curriculum, teaching strategies and the assessment of students based on their differences which arises from their gender, nationality, race, social background and their disabilities. This involves a process of restructuring of the school as a whole, to make sure that each and every child has access to educational and social opportunities offered by the school.

Kochhar, West & Taymans (2000) also sees inclusion as involving a process of maximizing the participation of learners and reducing their exclusion from the curricular, cultures and mainstream school. They further state that inclusion overpowers barriers to participation that may be experienced by any learner. The above definition of inclusion can be construed to mean a setting where children with disabilities learn and share opportunities of learning and discover new things as they interact socially; being full members of an appropriate class in the school, and doing the same lesson with other pupils without disabilities.

One of the basic assumptions of inclusion is that students with disabilities once placed in a general education classroom they will become less stigmatized and they will be accepted by their friends without special needs. This is possibly the reason why Friend (2011) pointed out that the most fundamental needs of children with disabilities in their development is to be known, accepted and valued as important members among their peers. There seems to be a possibility that students with special educational needs and those without interact as

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classmates and this will likely increase the opportunity for social acceptance. The above statement can be construed to mean that inclusion prepares children for life in the community and this occurs when students from diverse background and abilities learn together in the same classroom setting. It is opined by Tukov (2009) that an inclusive classroom gives children with disability the opportunity to interact with their normal peers thus preparing them for life in the real world. This interaction is the first step to removing segregation and discrimination around Cameroonian schools.

2.2 Theory of Education

This study used more of Bronfenbrenners ecological model to explain how teachers' views and knowledge on disability may affect inclusive education practices in a school system. The ecological model suggests that human development and behavior cannot be understood independently of the social context in which it occurs. The social environment influences behavior and this occurs at several levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Thus the effects of disability on teachers, pupil's, community and parents are strongly influenced by the social environment in which they are living, including the extended family, services available and community attitudes. In understanding views and knowledge of inclusive education practices among teachers it is vital to use the four realms including: microsystems, the mesosystem, the exosystem and the macrosystem. While the model places the family as the first stage of association in the development of a child, this study will use rules of applicability and espouse the similarity to inclusive education system.

(a) Microsystems

In this study, the microsystem embodies the individual characteristics of a child with disability. The age of diagnosis will affect the way the child interacts with others (Kirk et al., 2012). For example, a child who is disabled at birth will not have difficulties interacting with other children as long those children are more accepting. On the other hand a child who becomes disabled at a later stage will have difficulties interacting with other children as he or she will first have to accept the disability before having an open mind to interact. In addition, the social economics of the family the child comes from will have an impact on the child's interactions. For example a child from an economically affluent family will have access to assistive technology which will make his or her learning easier.

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(b) Mesosystem

The classroom of the child with a disability is considered to constitute a mesosystem with the child, teachers and peers reciprocally influencing each other. How well this classroom functions therefore depends on variables associated with each of its members. First, feature connotes with the previous interactions with persons with disability (Sloane, 1991). For example pupils who have interacted before with children with disabilities will not have a problem accepting the child in the classroom. The severity of the disability is also an important factor. A child who is profoundly deaf is likely to have a different impact on the class to one who has a mild or moderate level of hearing impairment. Also, within the group of children who have Down syndrome, there is a wide range of ability levels and frequent additional problems such as heart defects. A high functioning child with no additional problem is a different prospect to one with life threatening heart disease or profound mental handicap. Therefore, the impact on the class is likely to be quite different in each of these cases. Also, uncertainty about the diagnosis that often occur with disability such as dyslexia, autism and mild to moderate levels of learning difficulties can be more difficult for class members to come to terms with than on clear-cut cases such as Down syndrome (Wormnæs, 2001). Community perceptions about disability are created first at family level, therefor, teachers and pupils who have grown up in families that have negative perceptions in relation to disability may hold these views even in adulthood. Fortunately, knowledge is power, as people begin to learn about these disabilities, they begin to hold positive perceptions about disability resulting in a reduction in discrimination. As argued by Standley (2005) teachers views on disability are in hybrid form as they combine societal perceptions before enlightenment and those held after enlightenment. For this reason positive teachings about disability for example, rebutting spiritual causes of disability may help promote inclusive education practices in a society and create positive views.

Further, it must be borne in mind that a number of factors may affect the way disability is viewed. The teacher's ages, personality, financial status, employment status, education level and the state of their health will all affect the classroom (Javakhishvili, 2012). For example, old teachers are likely to have positive views and attitudes towards children with disabilities than younger teachers. Also, teachers with extrovert personalities, who are optimistic and manage to keep a sense of humor, will typically experience less stress than those who dwell on the negative aspects of the situation they find themselves in. In addition, a key factor in the

functioning of the classroom is the amount of incentives given to teachers who handle children with disabilities as this will exert a positive influence on classroom management.

(c) Exosystem

The mesosystem itself is influenced by the exosystem, which consist of the social settings that indirectly affect the mainstream classroom. First, the way children with disabilities are portrayed in the newspapers or on the television will have an impact on the school system (Slone, 1991). When stereotyped and patronizing attitudes towards people with disabilities are perpetuated by the media this does not help families who have disabled members to integrate into the community.

Second, the quality and type of health, education and social welfare services available to parents will have a critical influence on the way, which these families cope with the disability (Cross et al., 2004). This is made clear when families with disabled children in developing countries such as Cameroon are considered. In many cases of severe disability, such children do not attend school; no financial assistance is available to parents and medical attention is inadequate at best. Families in this situation will clearly find life very difficult indeed. Although the picture in Western countries, such as England, is generally much better, current political influences are forcing education, health and welfare services to operate like business (Wolf, 2003). This is likely to have negative consequences for families of children with disabilities who typically need more intensive levels of help in these areas. For example, availability of respite care for children with disabilities, so that families can have a break from time to time, is critical in helping many families cope. If the availability of this temporary care is reduced then this will have a negative impact and the functioning of many families.

The availability of recreation facilities in the local community, suitable for the participation of children disabilities is very important in helping families cope. This is particularly well demonstrated in the account of mother's difficulties in finding suitable recreational activities for her daughter who is deaf (Mulonda, 2006). Recreational facilities can be set up especially for people with disabilities. Alternatively, institutions such as pots and leisure centers can ensure they provide appropriate access and programs for people with physical disabilities. However, many parents find that recreational activities suitable for their children or young adults with disabilities in their local communities are non-existent which result in these young

people being bored at home for much of their free time and an additional strain being put on the family.

(d) Macro system

Finally, there is a macro system, which refers to the attitudes, beliefs, values and ideology inherent in the social institution of the particular society, which all has an impact on the way a child with disability will function (Brofenbrenner, 1979). First of all, a particular culture in which the child is living will have major effects on the family. If the culture is one, which emphasizes humanitarian values, then there is much more likely to be positive attitudes towards people with disabilities than in the culture that emphasizes on materialism. Also, the specific type of society in which the family lives will have an impact on many different aspects of family life. For example, if the family lives in rural community in a developing country, then it may be easier to prepare the disabled child for the type of work which are available than if the family lives in an urban community in an industrialized country.

The beliefs of the particular ethnic group to which the child belongs will exert an influence on the way the society reacts to the disability (Koté, 2000). For example, in traditional Cameroonian society, having a disabled child in family is thought to be the result of witchcraft in the family. Religious beliefs also have a part to play in how families cope with having a disabled member. If the family believes the disabled child to be gift from God, then it will be much easier for them to accept the situation than if the disability is seen as a punishment for some sin which has been committed, as in the Cameroonian example mentioned above.

In countries that are better off economically, political policies will be instrumental in determining how the resources are distributed (Koté, 2000). When economic policies are more concerned with increasing profits than with improving the quality of life of the citizens, then people with disabilities and their families are less likely to do well. The political system in each country is responsible for the legislation regarding the rights of children with disabilities and their family. The legal system has a role to play in interpreting the law in terms of individual cases of people with disabilities. However, these cases typically indirectly affects large numbers of similar families since the legal ruling are often used to provide guidance in the health, education and social welfare fields. Recent years have witnessed increasing the use of the legal systems in the countries such as USA and the UK, by parents

attempting to ensure their children with disabilities receive the best possible services (Wolf, 2003). The ability to engage in such a process is clearly important in determining the levels of support available to such families. It must be now clear that how a family with a disabled member functions is influenced, not only by interactions within the family's Microsystems, but also by its interactions with other levels of the entire social system, which all must be taken into account by professionals when they are working with children with disabilities and their families.

2.3 Policy documents on Inclusive Education

The basic idea of inclusion can be found in many previous international policy documents. The international community has promoted inclusive education through declarations and Cameroon has ratified various declarations that support inclusive education practices. There are six major international declarations as explained below. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948 was the first policy on inclusive education adopted by United Nations General Assembly. According to UNESCO (1948) the declaration admits that human beings are different from one another and that these differences should be respected and used as catalysts for ensuring provision of services to cater for the needs of all people without discrimination. The ratification of this declaration in Cameroon in the 1970s ensured acceptance of persons with disabilities and provision of education as a human right. Tukov (2009) argues that the declaration of human rights was actually a game changer because persons with disabilities could now claim their rights and live in society without discrimination. Tukov (2009) adds that this declaration has shaped the way persons with disabilities are perceived in society especially in urban and peri-urban areas with a literate society. The above argument can be construed to mean that the declaration has far reaching positive effects on society as compared to the period that precedes it.

The second declaration is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The UNCRC was passed by the United Nations in 1989 and has been ratified by many developing countries including Cameroon. The policy is aimed at promoting rights of all children to education without any kind of segregation. In the policy, "all children" means that no child should be denied education due to disability but that equal access to education must be ensured (Koté, 2000). This policy therefore, opened doors for inclusive education practices in Cameroon as the country put efforts into promoting the education of children with

disabilities. Despite a lack of evidential data on the extent to which the rights of children as regard to education are upheld in Cameroon, it is arguably true that the introduction of free education at primary school level was birthed by this declaration.

The Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All of 1990 was a game changer where education of children with special needs is concerned in Cameroon. The declaration took place in Thailand. Emphasis in the declaration was that children with disabilities must receive appropriate education like any other child. It was the first international declaration that made use of the term disability in the pronouncements (Koté, 2000). Three years later, the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disability (SREOPD) of 1993 was passed. The SREOPD 1993 stressed on equalization of opportunities world over for children with disabilities and that they must be integrated into mainstream classes at all levels including: primary, secondary and tertiary levels. This is contained in the much publicized rule number six of the SREOPD policy (Tukov, 2009). Although not a legally binding instrument, the Standard Rules represent a strong moral and political commitment of Governments to take action to attain equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities. The rules serve as an instrument for policy-making and as a basis for technical and economic cooperation. The Standard Rules consists of 22 rules summarizing the message of the World Program of Action. The Rules incorporate the human rights perspective which had developed during the Decade. The 22 rules concerning persons of disabilities consist of four chapters – preconditions for equal participation, target areas for equal participation, implementation measures, and the monitoring mechanism – and cover all aspects of life of persons with disabilities. With time some flows were discovered in the SREOPD resulting into the proposal of the supplementary standard of rules. The proposed supplement to the Standard Rules originates from the analysis of the shortcomings and areas in need of improvement within them. The process was initiated by the first Special Rapporteur on Disability in the report to the Commission on Social Development at its thirty-sixth session (E/CN.5/2000/3). In that report the following were pointed out as issues to be further investigated: gender concerns; housing and communication issues; the needs of children and older persons; the needs of persons with developmental and psychiatric disabilities; and the needs of persons with disabilities in poverty situations

Cameroon, while noting the operational relevance of the proposed supplement, expressed concern that the emphasis on special needs indirectly portrayed persons with disability as

being permanently dependent. It was argued that on the contrary, the supplement should convey a strong sense of how social integration could lead persons with disability to autonomy and sustainable livelihood (Mburashelih, 2010). Cameroon also stressed that the implementation of the proposed supplement requires the mobilization of considerable financial, human and material resources far beyond those available in developing countries, particularly those faced with serious economic difficulties. Cameroon observed with appreciation that the term "persons with disabilities" was now used to qualify persons of all ages with disabilities and it systematically refers to men and women with disabilities (Swango, 2003).

With regard to section B of the proposed supplement, on adequate standard of living and poverty alleviation, Cameroon emphasized that poverty critically aggravated the often precarious situation of many persons with disabilities (Tukov, 2009). Regarding section I, on gender, it highlights the fact that women with disabilities are often exposed to multiple discriminations: as women, as persons with disabilities and as economically weak subjects. As a consequence, women with disabilities face enormous difficulties in their social integration. As to section J, on children with disabilities and the family, Cameroon reaffirmed that the place of children is within their families and in society and that this principle must be recognized and protected (Swango, 2003). It also highlights the importance of disability prevention and early rehabilitation. With regard to the proposition contained in paragraph 70 that "States should support women and men with disabilities wanting to pursue a separation or a divorce owing to abuse or violence", Cameroon observes that its policies aim at protecting families and at avoiding the multiple dangers of divorce and its negative social consequences. Regarding section K, on violence and abuse, Cameroon affirms that special legislative measures must be taken in order to protect the rights of persons with disabilities facing sexual and other forms of violence. As to section M, on developmental and psychiatric disabilities, Cameroon recommended that States should encourage and support the creation of organizations aiming at defending the interests of persons with developmental and psychiatric disabilities (Ministry of Education, 2013). Regarding section N, on invisible disabilities, Cameroon noted that it was important to take into consideration invisible disabilities and to take measures in order for persons with invisible disabilities to be able to participate into social life in conditions of equality.

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In 1994 another educational policy was passed which had a huge bearing on special needs education World over. The Salamanca framework is the most comprehensive of all international declaration on inclusive education. The framework gave stress on inclusive education, elimination of discrimination, creation of conducive learning environments for all, friendly communities, inclusive society and quality education for all (Koté, 2000). Arguably, the current trends in inclusive education practices were birthed from the Salamanca framework. In Cameroon efforts are being made to ensure that children with disabilities receive less restrictive education (LRE) placement were possible as this is now a right for every child (Ministry of Education, 2013). The point where the above documents meet is that inclusive education practice is a process of responding to the learning needs of all children by using child centered flexible and effective teaching and learning methods.

2.4 Role of the Teacher in an Inclusive Setting

Teaching requires management of student instructional goals and performance records, especially when instruction is adapted. Teachers create a medium through which knowledge and skills are being conveyed to pupils which help in their development. It is the sole responsibility of the teacher to provide children with proper and quality education that helps them to cope with their challenges This is because teachers are considered as the most direct and significant implementers of any educational programs (Cross et al., 2004).

It has been argued by Mburashelih (2010) that in schools that practice inclusive education teachers act as mediators, surrogates, advisers, judges, protectors and assessors of children with disability for educational placement. They teach children how to learn and solve problems and most importantly they help children to move forward to the next level of understanding and development. Vygotsky (1978) in his theory of development, points out that teaching is most effective in what he called the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) of the child, which is the distance between what a child can do without assistance and what the child can do better with the help of adults or more knowledgeable peers. In order for children to move forward to this zone, teachers need to place the teaching close enough to what they are able to do. Normally, children learn with respect to their developmental ages. This comes natural as they grow but when they are assisted by their teachers or parents, their level of understanding increases and they now perform greater tasks.

Furthermore, having children with disability in a classroom comes with more complex responsibilities for teachers (Vaughn et al., 1996). The teachers identify the special education needs of their disabled students and create a responsible and supportive network around the child. The progress of the child is observed and reviewed by them. Classroom teachers are the most decisive persons to build a friendly learning environment where every child is supported to function independently and experiences success (Sloane, 1991). In inclusive setting, teachers are required to teach all students regardless of their circumstances and abilities.

Lastly, inclusive education practices works on the principle that the school is better for all when it includes children in the community. Relative to this aspect, the teachers become better when they have the responsibility for all the children (Okombo, 1994). By this, they become more active, advanced, and creative and learned to see into the needs of the children especially those with disabilities. The teachers are faced with multiple professional difficulties no matter what is done in terms of assigning policy priority, mobilizing resources or streamlining administrative structures (Skjørten 2001).

2.5 Challenges to Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in General Education

Several challenges interfere with the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms. This section present some perceived challenges of inclusion of students with disabilities using the global context.

2.6 Lack of Clear Policies and Knowledge on Inclusive Education Practices

Several studies that have been conducted around the globe indicate that lack of clear policies on inclusive education make inclusion impossible more especially in developing countries. For example, the recent study that was conducted by Gronlund, Lim & Larsson (2010) in two developing countries namely Cameroon and Bangladesh established that in Cameroon, there were no specific policies on inclusive education practices other than those adopted from the international community declarations. The study indicates that, inclusive education practices were mentioned on some policy documents for example, Disability Policy and Education and Training Policy but still those documents did not say or state how inclusive education

practices should be implemented, monitored as well as evaluated. Elsewhere, this argument was raised by Mapsea (2006) of the University of Waikato who investigated primary school teachers' experiences in teaching mainstreaming classrooms. The results from the study indicated that most teachers were in support of the notion of inclusive education policy and were happy to implement it. However, they indicated that there was need to change the attitudes of teachers, peers, boards of management, and caregivers to provide assistance to children with special needs. Most teachers sensed that they needed to be aware of the principles and the importance of inclusion. Teachers' narrow knowledge of teaching children with special needs was also emphasized. These findings resonate with Tukov (2008) who found that teachers admitted that they needed to be trained more in the special education field in order to be able to accommodate and teach children with special needs. Furthermore, teachers expressed concern on the school inspector's lack of knowledge about inclusive education practices and that they needed to be trained also, so that together they could implement the policy.

A comparative and cross-national study conducted by Tente (2008) in Yaoundé Cameroon, focused on secondary classroom teachers in general education. He found that teachers in secondary schools took courses about inclusive education practices during their studies at the university and at the time they engaged in educational activities in the schools. These trainings closed the gap of knowledge about inclusive education practices and support, resulting in acceptance of students with disabilities. In addition, Tente (2008) found that with increased supportive services for inclusive education practices in various schools inclusive education is a working progress. The implication from Tente's study is that persons with enough knowledge relating to inclusive education practices have the affinity of promote teaching and learning for all irrespective of disability.

2.6.1 Lack of Adequate Resources (Funding)

There is no doubt that effective inclusion is dependent upon the adequate provision of resources (Kochhar, West & Taymans, 2000). In a study by Javakhishvili (2012: 36), teachers professed that the challenges surrounding inclusion were intensified by a lack of support and resources from external sources. Similarly, in a study by Mburashelih (2010) teachers held the opinion that inclusion lacked adequate funding and was a politically motivated initiative aimed at increasing financial efficiency rather than meeting the individual needs of the

learner. Whether these opinions hold any value, resourcing is a complex issue which goes beyond the constraints of simply providing materials and equipment. Providing adequate resources helps to develop a teachers' professional development. Funding can provide the financial support to develop systems both internally and externally, such as specialist teachers.

In order to manage the successful implementation of inclusion in schools, teachers have to be given the opportunity to undertake continuing professional development (CPD) to develop the right skills and knowledge to cater for the diverse range of additional support needs (ASN) (Vygotsky, 1978) as reapplied to special education by Okombo (1994). There can be no doubt that the level of funding provided to support inclusion in mainstream schools reflects the quality of teaching and progress made by the individual (Sloane, 1991). Educators who are critical of inclusion argue that placing special education students in the general education classroom may not be beneficial and full-time placements in general education classrooms would prevent some disabled students from obtaining intensive and individualized attention and teaching. Instruction in the general education class would dilute the specialized attention they would normally receive in a special education class. Also, the financial resources are not available for inclusion to be effective (Cross et al., 2004).

Further, critics of inclusion have asserted that special education funds have not be appropriated to general education in a sufficient amount to make inclusion viable in all cases (Sloane, 1991). In other words, in order for inclusion to work, funds need to be available to make inclusion effective and viable in the general education setting. Another criticism of inclusion was that general education teachers do not possess the requisite training or qualifications to teach disabled students effectively (Vaughn et al., 1996). Moreover, general education teachers do not have opportunities to work with or collaborate with special education teachers and to plan and coordinate lessons and teaching strategies between general and special education teachers.

2.6.2 Inclusive Education Practices put more pressure on Teachers

Inclusive education practices bring enormous challenges to teachers as it increased anxiety and extra workload during the lesson in the classroom (Wilson, 2000). Individual Education Plans (IEPs) were taxing for many teachers and many only had a limited background in this area. Also, the practical usefulness of IEPs is questionable as to whether they do not inform

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and guide instructional practices. In Tukov (2009) teachers and other school staff viewed inclusive education practices as merely taxing and irrelevant since few teachers had received some form of special training.

In addition, various studies such as Okombo (1994); Tente (2008); and Mburashelih (2009) have observed that some classes in most mainstream schools are overcrowded making it un-conducive for pupils with physical disabilities to participate fully in the learning process. For instance, most studies conducted in Cameroon inclusive schools found that in most inclusive classrooms, there were more than 50 pupils in each class and that most teachers were not accepting children with special educational needs in their classes (Tukov, 2009). It was hoped that if class sizes were minimal to acceptable standards, teachers would accept children with special educational needs in their classes.

2.6.3 Confusion among Teachers due to the Curriculum Rigidness

The mainstream curriculum is also a bone of contention when it comes to inclusive education. Usually there is confusion among teachers and educational assistants about their respective roles and responsibilities. Teachers often leave the prime responsibility for educating students with significant disabilities to teacher assistants. However, assistants should be playing a supplementary and not a lead role. A study conducted Mapsea (2006) reveals that lack of collaboration among teachers to teach in inclusive classroom was due to rigidity in curricular thereby, forcing teachers to recuse their teaching duties to the assistants. Also, curricula are not designed on the basis of flexibility and tend to be content-heavy (Swango, 2003). With such a rigid curriculum, students with special educational needs are excluded and even marginalized from mainstream education. Other challenges abound, further encumbering the implementation of inclusive education practices in Cameroon (Tukov, 2008). It is not easy, for example, to limit the scope of inclusive education practices to be included in the curriculum. As a result, designing teaching materials that cover students' diverse needs and cultural backgrounds is problematic.

Furthermore, the lack of teacher training in dealing with students hailing from heterogeneous cultural milieu was viewed as a vitiating factor to the difficulties in inclusive schools (Gronlund, Lim & Larson, 2010). Teaching students issues related to inclusiveness in all walks of life requires a special skill, which can be acquired through a specific training program. For instance, it takes a special effort to teach students how to appreciate differences

in culture, race, ethnicity and religion if the students come from belief systems and cultures where exclusiveness and homogeneity are highly respected and valued, and ethnocentricity is culturally rooted.

2.6.4 Institutional Barriers and Lack of Parental Involvement in the Education of their Disabled Children

Studies conducted in Cameroon on challenges inclusive schools face reports that, despite efforts by Ministry of Education to introduce inclusive education practices in Cameroon, infrastructure was not yet modified to accommodate children with disabilities (Mburashelih, 2010). For example, there were no ramps, rails along the corridors and no acoustic materials in most schools and doors in most school buildings did not allow wheel chairs to pass (Mburashelih, 2010). This situation made the learning environment somewhat hostile to pupils with disabilities (Javakhishvili, 2012). In Finland where a similar study was conducted, Savolainen (2002) observed that infrastructure was unsuitable to children with physical disabilities. This shows that inclusive education policies are not easy to implement because they require pre-requisites such as infrastructural modifications and rehabilitations to accommodate the needs of children with disabilities. Unfortunately, developing countries such as Cameroon have strained budgets which cannot accommodate the required expenses on school infrastructure to make it adaptable to children with disabilities. Due to these financial constraints schools that practice inclusive education do not receive the needed rehabilitations to that effect. This is rightly put by Friend (2011: 66) who argued "The most frequent occurring barrier to activity and participation limitations for children with disabilities were institutional and attitudinal".

In addition, in Tente (2008) parents singled out the attitudinal and social barriers as the biggest difficulty for their children, including inappropriate comments, lack of knowledge, or rude behaviour by both adults and children. Although the majority of parents valued inclusive education placements for their children with disabilities concerns about class size, availability of therapeutic services, acceptance by other children, attitudes about the child's disability, as well as teachers level of training and experience were raised (Tente, 2008). These problems and issues still affect special education in Cameroon despite a lack of extensive studies.

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2.7 How to Improve Inclusive Education Practices

There are several strategies that could be adopted to improve the inclusive education practices. Some of these strategies are presented below.

2.7.1 Keeping close links with Parents

On collaborating with parents, Wolf (2003: 45) argues "some concerns about inclusive education can be bridged by keeping close communication links with parents and informing them of their child's progression as this would help to build a relationship between the schools and parents as well as reducing the parents' concerns for their child". This shows that parental collaboration is important as teachers who possess professional knowledge may even help the parents in times of difficult or help them come to terms with the disability of the child. In addition, collaborating with parents would help parents understand the causes of disability and dispute the misconceptions that are still common in developing countries like Cameroon.

In special education a harder barrier to overcome although very rare is when the parents or caregivers fail to acknowledge that their child has an educational need that requires further support (Standley, 2005). This can put the school in a difficult position as the work reinforced by the school on the student is often easily undone once the child returns to their parents or caregivers. Therefore, when parents and caregivers receive appropriate information about the child's disability, they in turn contribute positively to the education of their child. In nutshell, inclusive education requires a strong teacher-parent partnership.

2.7.2 Collaboration among Teachers

In mathematics teachers needs to consider the full requirements of the inclusion statement when planning for individuals or groups of pupils (Okombo, 1994). Teachers will have to incorporate into their plans strategies on how to deal with potential barriers faced by the pupils in mathematics. Such circumstance may be to provide specific help with number recall or the interpretation of data in graphs, this will compensate for difficulties in the long- or short-term memory. Other incidences may require help in interpreting or responding to oral directions when making mental calculations, to compensate for difficulties in hearing or with auditory discrimination. The Qualifications and Curriculum (2008) (QCA) have developed

four documents to support inclusive teaching practices in mathematics; identifying gifted and talented (GAT) learners, planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties, pathway to learning for new arrivals and respect for all (Ministry of Education, 2013).

The first document gives guidance on identifying GAT learners, but also gives problems that can occur and prevent identification. A pupil's inability to communicate their understanding will at first appear to be struggling with the work when their understanding is correct and sometimes exceptionally mathematically gifted pupils will reject obvious methods and answers as too easy, and then try to over-complicate the question. Therefore in order to identify GAT pupils in mathematics formal assessment is insufficient and enrichment and extension exercises should be provided and observed to see how the pupil accepts and challenges the work. The QCA (2001) published a document on planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties for mathematics, which provides support for all adults who are concerned with meeting the needs of pupils with learning difficulties. The document helps teachers overcome the barriers created by the learning difficulty and give advice on modifying the mathematics programme of study, improving access to the curriculum and assessing performance (Ministry of Education, 2013).

2.7.3 Centralized Education Policy

What is proving to be a common issue is the interpretation and implementation of inclusion into practice. Far too often too much time is been spent over concerns about inputs and settings that needs to be spent on developing experiences and outcomes for the pupils. It is crucial that the schools must provide an approach focusing on both the rights of children and the effectiveness of their education. Clear guidelines need to be researched and produced to help inform the school on how to implement policy on inclusion into practice. When researching these guidelines careful consideration needs to be taken when determining what good practice is, Tomlinson (1999: 10) describes the need for more highly developed, substantial studies using quasi-experimental approaches to examine the strengths, and relative impacts, of a range of factors, together with qualitative examination of the experiences of key participants in order to help determine good practice. According to Koté (2000) centralized education policy is an exclusively one-sided policy, which is often the main cause of segregation and discrimination in schools around Cameroon. The case in point is the endlessly

controversial national exam, which fails to accommodate students' diverse backgrounds and needs.

2.7.4 Adequate Training of Teachers

No less important a challenge is the lack of teacher training in dealing with students hailing from heterogeneous cultural milieu (Cross et al., 2004). Teaching students issues related to inclusiveness in all aspects of live requires a special skill, which can be acquired through a specific training program. For instance, it takes a special effort to teach students how to appreciate differences in culture, race, ethnicity and religion if the students come from belief systems and cultures where exclusiveness and homogeneity are highly respected and valued, and ethnocentricity is culturally rooted.

3   Research Methodology

This chapter encapsulates the whole methodology used in this thesis. For clarity the chapter was subdivided into sections that each gave a detailed explanation of every significant item as pertains to the thesis. The chapter comprises research design, population, the sample, the sample size, sampling procedure, research instruments, data collection methods and methods of data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This research is a case study. A case study is an in-depth investigation of an individual, group, institution or phenomenon (Seidman, 2006). The principle behind case studies is that a detailed array of information about a case may be discovered which may have an overarching relationship to other cases. Therefore, researchers use case studies to reduce the amount of data being collected but instead concentrate on a single phenomenon (Bryman, 2012). This study is an exemplification of a case study as it is intended to analyze in detail views, knowledge and challenges of teachers towards including children with disability in regular schools in Cameroon. The study also fits into the case study design because it largely describes the experiences of the teachers and how they view inclusive education practices. The study used more of a qualitative approach than quantitative aspects. According to Johnson (2014) the qualitative approach helps the educational research to obtain an in-depth data both within and outside the school environment. It gives a detailed analysis of the views and explanations of the respondents on the topic. A miniature of quantitative aspects is however embodied in the research. Quantitative methods used include averages, percentages and frequencies in summarizing the views of the major stakeholders in the study.

3.2 Target Population

The target population is the teachers who teach pupils in classrooms that practice inclusive education at primary school level in Cameroon. The teachers were important to this study because they are the line officials of the ministry of education and have hands on experience of the happenings in the schools. Their contribution to the topic would help shape the Cameroonian educational system and elsewhere. Furthermore, the teachers are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the current system as well as the changes that need to be made in

order to promote quality education in inclusive schools in Cameroon. The views and knowledge of inclusive education practices would give a clear picture of how the inclusive education policy is viewed among teachers.

3.3 Study Sample

According to Bryman (2012) a sample is a subset of measurements drawn from a population in which the researcher is interested. The sample of this study consisted of four experienced teachers who have taught students with disability for more than 3 years in regular schools, whether presently teaching them or not. The school was selected based on the following factors: presence of children with disabilities in the school, accessibility of the school in terms of good transport network in south-west region of Cameroon particularly Buea. In addition, the researcher chose the school based on convenience, time limitations and available resources for the study.

3.4 Sampling Procedures

For this study, purposeful sampling technique was employed. According to Seidman (2006) in the broadest sense, sampling technique and selection are principles and procedures used to identify, choose and gain access to relevant units, which will be used for data generation by any method. Purposive sampling was chosen because it produces the sample that is more representative of the population (Bryman, 2012). Purposive sampling was used to select the classrooms to be observed and the teachers to be interviewed. Purposive sampling was found to be ideal in this study because the study had a bias to inclusive education practices and only by using this technique could the researcher select a reliable sample.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

During the investigation of views, knowledge and challenges of teachers towards including children with disability in regular schools in Cameroon, interview guides and observation checklists were used to collect data. Before actual data collection for this study, instruments were used in a pilot study aimed at ascertaining the effectiveness of the instruments. The weaknesses in the instruments were removed through fine tuning and rephrasing specific areas of the data collection items. According to Taylor (2000) interview guides are aimed at

preventing the researcher from asking irrelevant questions during data collection to the informants. The researcher used interview guides during interview sessions and took down the responses given by informants. In addition, observation checklists were utilized to reaffirm the data collected using interview guide. According to Bryman (2012) use of two or more instruments in data collection promotes easy triangulation of the data and closure on any ambiguous responses.

3.5.1 Designing interview guide and observation form

In this study the questions in the interview guides were developed from the research objectives. The questions also came from related theory and reviews of the literature and followed the study themes which were broken in smaller parts or phrases (Bryman, 2012). These questions were formulated in such a way that they helped the respondents to give their opinions. Similarly, the observation form was also formulated based on the research objectives and themes (Appendix 4). All the preparations were done in English bearing in mind the nature and characteristics of respondents. The interviews were conducted at the convenience of the respondent.

3.5.2 Data Collection Methods

This study used semi-structured interviews as the main instrument for data collection. The interviews involved open-ended questions that were asked to the interviewees. The questions were constructed in relation to the objectives of the study. Interview is often an efficient and valid way of understanding someone's perspective (Taylor, 2000). This study allowed explanation of the interviewees views, knowledge and challenges they faced on the implementation of inclusive education practices. The interviews were aimed at getting rich data on the phenomenon. During the interview a tape recorder was used with permission from the teachers and prepared interview guides were used.

According to Johnson (2014) the merit of using interviews during research is that a great amount of information can be obtained quickly. In addition, an interview promotes direct interaction between a researcher and the participant and helps address the phony layer of the respondent. Seidman (2006) indicates that interviewers use oral questions to gain response from the participants. The main reason why this method was selected is that it allows

participants to speak out their opinions, feelings, beliefs, insights, attitudes and experiences about a phenomenon under investigation through the use of probing questions (Taylor, 2000).

In addition, interviews make it possible to develop trust and rapport with participant; this makes it easier for a researcher to collect information that can be impossible to collect using other methods (Bryman, 2012). Therefore, the researcher made several social interactions with the participants before the interview session and this was aimed at developing trust and rapport with the research participants. Face to face interview also records non-verbal responses of the interviewee by understanding the inner meaning of the responses. There are some demerits to the use of the interview method is that an interview provides filtered information from the views of interviewer that create obstacle to gather natural. In addition presence of the interviewer may create biases in the way respondent provide answers.

Seidman (2006) observes three demerits of interviews including: i) demanding and time consuming ii) requires a lot of equipment such as tape recorders which may be costly and iii) possible barriers due to tone inundations and emotional outbursts. These three demerits may affect the quality of data collected during an interview. The interview guide can be found in Appendix 3.

Observation checklist was used as a supplementary instrument data collection in the study. The observations were aimed at giving a proviso to the data collected through interviews by using researcher's magnifying glass. Johnson (2014) argues that observation often offers a direct and influential way of learning about people's behavior. The observation method may as well add to what the oral interview may not suffice. The observation checklist evaluated a number of items including teaching methods, classroom arrangement, class size, teacher-pupil interaction, pupil-pupil interaction, classroom participation by disabled children and classroom management challenges.

According to Johnson (2014) the following are the advantages of observation. It is used to find out complex interactions in natural social settings. Johnson also believe that even in depth interview studies, observation plays a significant role as the investigator notes body language and affects in addition to the person's worlds. Unfortunately, observation may be overridden by researchers own interest. To avert the problem of overriding interest researcher ensured that only data collected was reported and analyzed in this thesis. It must be borne that

interviews and observations supplement each other and bring about successful collection of data especially in phenomenological studies (Bryman, 2012).

3.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis is central to research and a lack of prudent analysis is a sure way to fail the honorable work of research studies. Taylor (2000) describes data analysis as the stage when the researcher interprets the information collected from the respondents. In addition, Taylor (2000) argues that the data must be systematically presented, coded, transcribed and evaluated in order to help readers and the researcher discuss the findings. Interim analysis cannot be overemphasized as it determines the quality of the end report. According to Seidman (2006) interim analysis is a process of alternating data collection and data analysis in qualitative studies. Interim analysis was conducted in the current study after every interview and observation to filter out unnecessary data.

The raw data was then transcribed so that it could be readable and easy to understand as text. According to Johnson (2014) data transcription is the transformation of observation notes, interview recordings and any other primary source of data into text. This is an important step in analysis of qualitative data. The other reason for data transcription before actual analysis is based on the fact that some raw data may be in another language that may not be easily understood. During transcription, researcher translated some of the responses that were in local languages into English for ease in actual thematic data analysis.

The following are the stages of data analysis used in the current study:

i.   **Preparation**: this is the first stage in the process of data analysis. In this stage raw data was typed as was from interviews and observations.

ii. **Reading raw data**: this is the second stage in data analysis process. Researcher read through raw data to gain a general sense of information and made reflections on the general meaning of the data provided.

iii. **Coding**: The third stage in the process and involves organising data into chunks before adding meaning to them and writing a phrase representing each category (Taylor, 2000: 45). At this stage the researcher organized data into chunks, and then added meaning using short phrases that stood for each category.

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iv.   **Description of themes**: This is the fourth stage in data analysis. Researcher grouped the themes according to general themes for simplified presentation and discussion.

v.   **Interpretation**: this was the fifth and final stage of data analysis. This step involved making meaning of the data through interpretation and comparing it to other articles and studies.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

In order to verify the validity and reliability of the research tools, the tools were tested at a different school before being administered at the study school. This is in line with Seidman (2006) who argued that pilot testing of research tools helps the researcher redesign his tools when they do not collect the required information from the respondents. Pilot testing also provided an opportunity for researcher to learn of the possible outcome of the study if the tools were able to elicit the correct responses.

3.7.1 Validity

Validity of instruments refers to the quality of data gathering instruments or procedures measured (Johnson, 2014). Two major forms of validity were of focus in the study including content validity and ecological validity. Taylor (2000) contended that, content validity is that validity considered as a fit between what the researchers record as data while ecological validity is all about what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being studied. This was proved through the use of two data collection methods stated above while the ecological aspect of validity was met through actively fine tuning the data collection instruments and removing aspects that could be culturally unacceptable.

3.7.2 Reliability

Test re-test reliability is the consistency of the measure to give similar results from one administration to another. The results can be affected by the time lapse but test-retest reliability promotes consistence in research findings. To ensure that the instruments used were reliable the instruments were retested with the same respondents and the consistence assessed. According to Seidman (2006) test retest reliability helps confirm the possibility of the instrument being successfully used in collecting data in the study. The test-retest reliability

index was 0.8 and calculated by number of agreements divided by disagreements and multiplied by 100.

3.8 Delimitation

The study was conducted in Buea district. Buea district was chosen because it met majority of required parameters such as rural outlook, presence of schools practicing inclusive education, presence of children with disabilities in some schools, researcher's familiarity with the district and good road network. Buea district is located in a rural area in the South West Region of Cameroon.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The following ethical considerations were carried out. Introductory letter from University of Oslo (Appendix 6) was obtained, followed by permission from the ministry of education (Appendix 7) and the school authority. Brief explanations of the purpose and the procedures of the study were all revealed to them and their consent sought. This was in line with the ethical demand that a research must ensure that relevant persons and authorities are consulted and informed, and the necessary permission obtained and applied (Bryman, 2012). The matter of confidentiality was explained to the informants so as to build a bond of trust between the interviewer and them. Also permission was taken from the informants to use a recorder; this was in order to avoid any wrong quotations later on. No force was used on the informants to take part in the study. Furthermore, taking into consideration the teaching and busy schedules of the teachers, appointments were made at their convenient. The interviewer tried not to give promises to the respondent. At the end of each interview, the interviewer asked for permission to get back to the respondent if there was any need for clarifications.

3.10 Limitations of the study

When carrying out this research study, a number of difficulties were faced. These problems stretched from the stage of administering the interviews during which some respondents anticipated some financial reward in exchange for needed data. Others resisted being interviewed for fear that their responses could be published against their will. This resulted into having the small study sample and limited the generalization of the research finding to

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other institutions due to the limited sample available. In spite of these challenges, a reliable sample was able to take part in the research and the findings are still dependable for those who need information on views, knowledge and challenges teachers towards including children with disability in regular schools in Cameroon. In terms of context, because the respondents were from Buea district and specifically Hotpec Nursery and Primary School other social contexts were not well represented.

4 Presentation of the Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The study was guided by four research objectives. The first objective was to investigate the knowledge primary school teachers have about inclusive education practices. The second was to explore views of teachers on inclusive education practices. The third objective was to examine the challenges teachers face when handling an inclusive class and the fourth objective was to identify measures that could be put in place to mitigate the challenges teachers face when handling inclusive classes at primary school level. All the data in this study was collected using interviews and observations in supplement. The data is presented in tandem to research objectives though in some cases objectives were split into sub-titles when the researcher was convinced that such a split would bring about coordination and clear presentation of the findings. In each section raw data is presented and the discussion of the data is reserved for chapter 5. Confidentiality and anonymity is ensured by the use of representative numbers rather than names. The findings are presented according to the following themes:

1) Demographic information of Respondents

2) Views and knowledge primary school teachers have about inclusive education practices

3) Coping strategies for teachers of inclusive classrooms

4) Challenges teachers face when teaching inclusive classrooms

5) Measures that could be put in place to mitigate the challenges arising from teaching inclusive classes at primary school level

4.2 Demographic Information of Respondents

The study found out a number of characteristics that related to the respondents who participated in the investigation. Below is a range of characteristics of respondents as collected during the study.

4.2.1 Teachers' Qualification

Table 1: Teacher Qualifications

Qualification	Frequency
Certificate	2
Diploma	1
Degree	1

According to Table 1 above, two (2) teachers had teachers certificate, one (1) teacher a diploma and one (1) a degree. All teachers who took part in the research were well trained in teaching and as a result able to give the required information.

Table 2: Qualification in Special Education

Qualification	No. of Teachers
Degree in Special Education	1
Diploma in Special Education	0
Workshop Attendance Certificate	2
No training related to Special Education	1
Total	**4**

Table 2 above shows the number of teachers who were trained in special education. It was found that from a total of four (4) teachers who took part in the study: one (1) had an educational degree in special needs education, none had a diploma, two (2) only had workshop attendance certificates and one (1) had receiving no training in special needs education.

Table 3: Teaching experience

Teacher	Number of years taught
T1	12
T2	6
T3	4
T4	5

Table 3 above shows teachers teaching experience in years. It was found that: T1 had taught for more than 12 years, T2 taught for 6 years, T3 for 4 years and T5 had taught for 5 years.

Table 4: Number of pupils in Class

Class #	Girls	Boys	Total
Class 1	38	42	80
Class 2	53	22	75
Class 3	35	25	60
Class 4	45	36	81
Total	171	125	**296**

Table 4 above shows the number of pupils in each class observed. The table shows that class 1 had 80 pupils (38 girls & 42 boys), class 2 had 75 pupils (53 girls & 22 boys), class 3 had 60 pupils (35 girls & 25 boys) and class 4 had 81 pupils (45 girls & 36 girls). Against the normal class number of 40 all the classes were overcrowded.

Table 5: Disability distribution among pupils in the four classes

Class #	Girls	Boys	Total
Class 1	7	5	12
Class 2	6	9	15
Class 3	6	4	10
Class 4	4	5	9
Total	23	23	**46**

Table 5 above shows the class distribution of pupils with disabilities. The total number of pupils with disabilities was 46. Class 1 had 12 pupils with disability, class 2 had 15 pupils with disabilities, class 3 had 10 pupils with disabilities and class 4 had 9 pupils with disability.

Table 6: Disability distribution by type in the school

Disability	Girls	Boys	Total
Visually Impaired	7	9	16
Hearing Impaired	8	4	12
ADHD	3	4	7
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	1	1	2
Cerebral palsy	1	1	2
Spinal Bifida	1	0	1
Epilepsy	3	2	5
Muscular Dystrophy	0	1	1
Total	24	22	**46**

Table 6 above shows the disability distribution by type and gender in the classes that practice inclusive education at Hotpec Nursery and Primary School. It was found that there were 16 visually impaired pupils (7 girls and 9 boys), 12 hearing impaired pupils (8 girls and 4 boys), 7 with ADHD (3 girls and 4 boys), 2 with ASD (1 girl and 1 boy), 2 with Cerebral Palsy (1 girl and 1 boy), 1 girl with Spinal Bifida, 5 with epilepsy (3 girls and 2 boys) and 1 boy with Muscular Dystrophy.

4.3 The Views and Knowledge Primary School Teachers Had About Inclusive Education Practices

The researcher used a number of questions to explore the knowledge base of informants concerning inclusive education practices. The following questions were used and answers taken down as shown below.

4.3.1 What is inclusive education practice?

Under this item, informants were asked to state what they knew about inclusive education practices. The views of teachers were highly dissipated as 1 teacher did not know anything about the concept. Fortunately, 3 teachers had knowledge concerning the concept of inclusive education in mainstream schools. Below are their verbatim.

T1 stated:

> *"It one in which children with disability and those without disability are put together to study in the same class and their needs met which creates a feeling of love and belongingness"*

T2 stated:

> *"inclusive education practices is a system in which all children with and without disability are taught in the same class and their teaching strategies, environmental structure, assessment and facilities be adapted to meet each and every child's need".*

T3 stated:

> *"I do not know anything about inclusive education practices but I hear it is related to teaching lame people"*

T4 stated:

> *"Inclusive education practices is a type of education aimed at meeting the policy of 'Universal Primary Education' where all children irrespective of disability acquire an appropriate education in a less restrictive environment and in this case an inclusive school"*

4.3.2 Do you think children with disabilities must learn in mainstream classrooms?

Teachers differed on the way they viewed enrolling children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. Two (2) teachers objected to the idea of inclusive education for the following reason. They believed that inclusive education could not be attained in totality and that education for children with disabilities is better provided exclusively to ensure effective accommodation of the learners. Below are some of their statements:

T1 stated:

> *"I think the so called policy of inclusive education is a fallacy. It is not possible to teach a child with special needs in the same classroom with the regular children because this would just slow the pace at which the class covers the curriculum. As a*

result, instead of bringing children who are disabled into mainstream classes more funding must be allocated to special schools and special units."

T3 stated:

"The ministry must create a barrier between children with disabilities and the regular child. By mixing the two, the ministry will just promote failure. What happened to special schools and why are they bringing children who need special attention to classrooms taught by teachers who have no special training in the earlier? It is because Cameroon likes adopting anything proposed by the international community even when it does not make sense. Inclusive education is just uuuuuh a bad idea.

Other teachers viewed inclusive education as a positive leap in education practice in Cameroon. Those who held a positive view argued for various benefits of inclusive education practices including: reduces stereotyping and end discrimination, promotes self-esteem and self-confidence. Below is the verbatim of these two respondents:

T**2** stated:

"Enrolling children with disability in mainstream schools would help trump out stereotyping and discrimination. This is so because pupils will begin to realize that their peers with disability are as normal as themselves and with time negative views would die out as the children in these schools become adults."

T**4** stated:

"Inclusive education must be practiced as it is to the benefit of the children with disabilities. These children's self-esteem may be improved as they begin to realize that they are not actually different but only have certain special limitations normal in normal human beings. In addition, their self-confidence may be raised."

4.3.3 What is the role of a teacher in an inclusive school?

Below are the responses that informants gave in relation to the question on the role of a teacher in an inclusive classroom. Two (2) teachers believed that the role of a teacher does not change when handling an inclusive classroom while one (1) believed that the teacher must be

more empathetic towards children with disabilities. The other teacher did not know the role of the teacher in an inclusive classroom.

Below are some of the responses:

T1 stated:

> *"Uuh……..The teachers role does not change as the role of the teacher is teach, the only difference is that when teaching an inclusive class the teacher will have to employ teaching methods that would otherwise not be used. For example, an inclusive class that has a blind child may need notes written in braille."*

T2 stated:

> *"Uuuuh….. There is no difference between teaching an inclusive classroom and a purely regular classroom. As the difference is only seen in the workload."*

T3 stated:

> *"The role of a teacher in an inclusive classroom involves more empathy than otherwise could have been required."*

T4 stated:

> *"I am not sure of the teacher's role in an inclusive classroom"*

During observation it was found that a teacher had a number of roles in a classroom that practices inclusive education. During observations, researcher identified 12 roles of a teacher in an inclusive classroom. Table 7 below shows the roles of a teacher as observed during an inclusive class session.

Table 7: Role of Teacher in Inclusive Classroom

Item	Roles of a Teacher	T1	T2	T3	T4
1	Identification of children with disabilities in the classroom	✓	✓		✓
2	Referring identified children for assessment	✓	✓		
3	Accepting children with SEN	✓		✓	
4	Developing positive attitude between 'normal' and children with SEN	✓		✓	✓
5	Planning sitting arrangement that makes it easy for disabled children to learn	✓	✓	✓	
6	Removing architectural barriers from the classroom	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Making suitable adaptations to the curriculum to the benefit of children with SEN	✓		✓	
8	Parental guidance and guidance	✓		✓	
9	Collaborating with professionals involved in Special Needs Education	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Preparation of IEP	✓	✓	✓	✓
11	Providing remedial instruction to children who may require it		✓		
12	Preparation of adapted teaching materials		✓		✓

4.4 Classroom Environment

Table 8: Learning Environment

Environment	Tick
The whole classroom is clearly labeled with text and pictures to provide a literacy rich environment	✓
The classroom door is clearly labeled with a photo where possible.	✓
Pupil's trays and pegs are labeled and easily identified by pupils.	✓
A visual timetable should be provided on the wall separate to the smart-board for all pupils to access and refer to throughout the day. Individual ones may also be necessary for pupils requiring a 'now and then' approach.	✓

The alphabet should be displayed in an age appropriate form.	
Numbers, number words and possibly dot patterns should be displayed in an age appropriate form.	
Months of the year, days of the week and seasons should be displayed.	✓
Topic words should be displayed clearly.	
Helps boxes should be available for mathematics, literacy and possibly topic.	✓
Dictionaries, thesauruses and VCOP supports should be available and easily accessible.	
Finished work tray should be provided to give closure to tasks.	✓
Display space or a whiteboard should be available to list the steps in tasks that need to be completed, which can be referred to by all pupils during lessons.	✓
The classroom is bright and well lit.	✓
The classroom is well ventilated.	✓
The classroom is a calm environment with clearly labeled and uncluttered	✓
Display boards have calming backgrounds with clashing colors kept to a	✓
Desks are organized with only essential resources left out. Ensuring every pupil has adequate space to work.	
The classroom areas are well organized and free from clutter.	✓
Noise in the classroom is kept to a minimal, with background noise from fans, ICT, corridors etc carefully considered.	
Contrasts of black text on white are minimized where possible through the use of pastel smart-board backgrounds, blue ink and colored paper.	✓
All pupils are seated with a clear view of teaching space/smart-board.	✓
Pupils with dyslexic type difficulties are seated with clearest view of the	✓
Pupils with ASD difficulties are seated in quite areas with little or no movement	✓
ICT support is accessible when required	✓
Left handed resources are available	
Clear classroom rules and routines are established.	✓

4.5 Coping Strategies for Teachers of Inclusive Classrooms

In order to elicit responses on how teachers of inclusive classrooms cope with the extra burden of having children with SEN in the same class with the regular learners, the researcher used the following question.

4.5.1 What coping strategies have primary school teachers employed when teaching inclusive classrooms?

Teachers reported to have used various coping strategies when handling inclusive classrooms. Three (3) teachers reported that they felt maintaining a sense of humor was the most useful coping strategy. All the four (4) teachers saw drawing on past experience as an effective coping strategy, One (1) teacher suggested making a plan of action and following it, Two (2) teachers used looking on the bright side, another Two (2) teachers coped by developing interests outside of school and one (1) teacher engaged in physical activities in order to cope with the challenges of handling a class that practiced inclusive education. Two (2) teachers considered discussing the situation with colleagues as the most valuable coping strategy and two (2) discussed the challenges with the principal in order for them to cope with inclusive education challenges.

In the open-ended question T3 stated,

> *"With the support I receive I do not find having this child in my classroom any more stressful than with any child who struggles with behavior or learning. An excellent teaching assistant and supportive parent have made the difference."*

Interestingly, discussing the situation with the child's parents was not considered by most teachers an effective coping strategy. Only T1 used this strategy.

A summary of the coping strategies is shown in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Teachers classroom coping strategies

Coping Strategy		T1	T2	T3	T4
Personal strategy	Humor	✓		✓	
	Drawing from past experiences	✓		✓	
	Making a Plan of Action	✓		✓	✓
	Looking on the bright side	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Developing Interests outside the classroom	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Engaging in physical activities		✓	✓	✓
Professional Strategy	Discussing the situation with colleagues		✓		✓
	Discussing situation with the principal	✓	✓		✓
	Help of teaching assistant	✓	✓		✓
Institutional Strategy	Discussing situation with child's parents	✓	✓	✓	

Table 9 above shows the coping strategies employed by the teachers in the dispensation of their teaching duties. Of the top ten strategies identified by teachers as useful, the first 6 were personal coping strategies, the next 3 were professional, and the last 1 was institutional.

4.6 Challenges Teachers Face When Teaching Inclusive Classrooms

To identify the challenges that teachers face when teaching inclusive classes, the researcher asked the following question.

What challenges do teachers face when teaching inclusive classes?

The schools face a lot of challenges in implementing inclusive education practices. From the responses of professionals in the current study it was clear that four major challenges prevented full inclusion at the school. Twenty-five percent of respondents believed that the

number of teachers was too few to handle additional children coming as a result of inclusion. Fifty percent of the respondents saw inadequate training of teachers on how to handle children with disabilities in class as a challenge. Seventy-five percent of the respondents were of the view that overcrowding of pupils in classes had prevented effective teaching and learning. Hundred percent of the respondents viewed a lack of disability adapted devices and resources as a major challenge in their schools.

Table 10 shows the summary of the challenges teachers face in when teaching inclusive classrooms.

Table 10: Challenges when teaching classes with inclusive practices

Teachers Challenges in Teaching Inclusive Classes				
Item	**T1**	**T2**	**T3**	**T4**
Few teachers	✓	✓	✓	✓
Inadequate training of teachers	✓		✓	✓
Overcrowding	✓		✓	
Lack of supportive devices and resources	✓	✓	✓	
Lack of knowledge and skills to meet their academic needs	✓	✓		✓
Lack of enough time to concentrate on them	✓	✓		
Inadequate teaching and learning resources		✓	✓	
Lack of knowledge and skills to meet their behavioral needs		✓		✓
Inadequate training on differentiating activities for such learners		✓	✓	
Inexperience in communicating with parents of such learners		✓		✓

4.7 Measures that to mitigate the challenges in Teaching Classes that practice inclusive education at Primary School Level

Below are some of the measures that can be put in place to mitigate the challenges teachers face when teaching inclusive classes.

T1 suggested:

"The government must employ more teachers to reduce the pupil teacher ratio."

When asked of what the school was doing to arrest the problem of overcrowding and lack of adapted educational materials. The headmaster notified the researcher that there was a two classroom block being constructed to reduce overcrowding in classes. He stated that the block was constructed through Parents and Teacher Association (PTA) funds. On the problem of devices in the resource room, the headmaster only indicated that a letter had been sent to the District Board of Education (DBO) seeking help on the issue.

T2 stated:

> *"For inclusive education practice challenges to be amenable there is need to offer conducive learning environment for children with disabilities by conducting special infrastructural adjustments. In addition, the school must educate and sensitize the community, the parents, the students and the stakeholders concerning inclusive education practices."*

T3 stated:

> *"Employ teachers with special needs education training and offer courses and workshops for teachers who may not have undergone special education training services at college or university level."*

T4 stated:

> *"Provision of materials that can help teacher teach effectively during the learning process. Parents and pupils with learning disabilities made to understand and accept their condition"*

During observations, researcher found that the schools that had been sampled did not have visual aids and other teaching materials for use during the teaching process and this hampered the delivery of the lesson especially to disabled children who would otherwise benefit from adapted devices and materials. In addition, no special recognition was given to teachers who handled inclusive schools and researcher believed that incentives given to such teachers would be a source of motivation.

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5 Discussion of the Findings

5.1 Introduction

The chapter presents a discussion of the emergent themes from the study. As previously stated in this thesis, the inclusion of learners with disabilities in mainstream education classrooms in Cameroon is at infancy stage and research on classroom inclusion and levels of success is non-existent. Challenges facing education may be numerous, but Cameroon and other developing countries are obligated by the Salamanca statement (UNESCO, 1994) to provide inclusive education practices, recognize the right of all children to a free public education and work towards providing quality community based education for all learners. Additionally, the Salamanca statement advocates for organizational changes in schools, curricular, teaching strategies, and learning approaches in order to realize optimal opportunities for learners (UNESCO, 1994). As a way of understanding the meaning of the experiences and opinions that the participants had with regard to the major themes of the study, an interpretation of the emergent themes was done by relating the key findings to the existing literature on inclusion of learners with disabilities in inclusive schools.

5.2 Views and Knowledge Primary School Teachers Have About Inclusive Education Practices

This study found that teacher's views towards including children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms were both positive and negative. The study found that the reason for negative views is mainly based on what one believed. The study found that society may be divided on views on inclusion. The study established that in some cases inclusive education can be seen as unattainable and a waste of resources as the place for children with disabilities is the special school and unit. These findings are evident in Tukov (2009) who also found that inclusive education still had a negative connotation because many teachers did not believe that it can be achieved in totality. Further, this study established that despite the existence of negative views towards mainstreaming classes, some teachers observe positives in the policy. The itemized positives of inclusive education include elimination of societal stereotyping and discrimination as children learn to accept their peers with disability. It is an established rule that "train up a child in the right way so that he may not turn away in adulthood". This rule

can be construed to mean that when children with disabilities learn in mainstreaming classrooms, members of that class will grow with the knowledge that children with disabilities must not be stereotyped or discriminated. In the long run this will bring about total societal acceptance of children with disabilities in Cameroon and World over. In turn children with disabilities will have high self-esteem and self-confidence.

This study found that about the teachers had some knowledge about inclusive education practices. This is an important aspect on the part of the teacher because it would not be possible for a teacher to implement a policy in which they lack knowledge. This knowledge about inclusive education practices ranged from mere basic knowledge to advanced knowledge on the issues that affect mainstreaming classrooms. The failure by 2 teachers to give explicit explanation of the concept of inclusive education is scary because if an implementer of the policy is not knowledgeable of the policy itself, there is a chance of failure in the implementation process. This shows that about half of the implementers of inclusive education practices in Cameroon lack adequate knowledge about the concept and the policy. The teacher who did not have knowledge about inclusive education practices denote that in some schools in Cameroon some teachers are implementing policies that they do not really understand. It has been argued that knowledge is power and the question that begs an answer is: How can one implement what they do not really understand? The correct answer is they cannot. These findings resonate with Javakhishvili (2012) who found that 50% of the respondents had lax knowledge concerning inclusive education practices and this was a huge barrier to the implementation of the policy. This lack of knowledge about inclusive education practices defeats the general purpose of inclusive education policy in Cameroon.

Elsewhere, Mapsea (2006) found that the inclusive education practices policy was ill-sensitized among the line officers in Papua Guinea resulting in misunderstanding and not appreciating the policy. According to Mapsea, inclusive education practices policy seemed to have been imposed without proper training of teachers and sensitization. This lack of sensitization and explanation of inclusive education practices policy could be blamed on the government and the ministry responsible for education. This study found that about 1 teacher did not undergo any workshop training relating to inclusive education practices and as a result, teachers take part in the implementation of a policy they do not really understand. Considering the findings in this study and other scholars indicated above, it can be construed that in Cameroon and elsewhere in Africa, inclusive education policies are imposed on the

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teacher without providing remedial training and sensitization about the policy. This study and that of Tukov (2009) agree that inclusive education practices have not been as effectively implemented in developing countries as it is in developed ones.

Further, the study shows that the role of a teacher was found to be central to the implementation of inclusive education policy in Cameroon. It was found that the role of the teacher did not change when a formally regular classroom became an inclusive one. Despite the failure by some teachers to differentiate between an inclusive classroom and a regular classroom, most the teachers had received some form of training to equip them for inclusive education policy implementation. This study shows that the role of the teacher in inclusive classrooms moves from the traditional roles to include identification of children with disabilities in the classroom and referring identified children for assessment. In this case identification occurred when children entered the classroom and showed signs that they had difficult learning due to some disability. This study found that once the child was identified relevant authorities were approached to help categorize the disability or rebut the suspicion. These findings are in agreement with Swango (2003) who observed that the major role of a teacher in an inclusive classroom was to identify children with disabilities and seek redress for such suspicions.

It is grounded in this study that accepting children with special educational needs in a classroom is an added role of a teacher. Having a disability is mainly frowned upon by people with limited knowledge about disabilities (Okombo, 1994). During class children with disabilities, may be socially excluded from other learners if the teacher does not show acceptance of these learners. Teachers therefore, have a responsibility of ensuring that children with disabilities are accepted by all members of an inclusive classroom through teaching the children about disabilities. When knowledge about disability is taught to the class myths about disabilities may be cleared resulting into a positive learning atmosphere. It is therefore, imperative that teachers accept each learner as they are without bias. This role is in tandem with Cross et al., (2004) who believed that teachers would promote acceptance of children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms if they accept such children first. This can be construed to mean that teachers who discriminate against children with disabilities end up promoting discrimination in the classroom. This discrimination may also spill out of the classroom like bush fire. It is therefore, at the core of promoting inclusive education practices that the teacher accepts disabled children first. In line with this, Mburashelih (2010) posits

that accepting children with disabilities would help in developing positive attitudes between so called 'normal children' and children with disabilities.

The present study also shows that teacher roles include planning sitting arrangement that makes it easy for disabled children to learn and removing architectural barriers from the classroom. For teaching of children with special education needs to be successful, the teacher must consider revising the sitting arrangement in the classroom to ensure that obstacles are removed. For example, children with low vision may require sitting in the front row for maximum use of the residual vision. In addition, teacher must make suitable adaptations to the curriculum so that it can be more accessible to a learner with SEN. According to Wilson (2000: 34) "Changes in sitting arrangement promotes academic performance among learners with disabilities because they will sit according to ability to learn. Failure by teacher to use available information in planning sitting arrangement may negatively affect the disabled learner". This study found that those children with disabilities whose sitting arrangement had been professionally planned tended to perform better than those who did not. Just like in this study, Smith (1998) and Wolf (2003) believe that sitting arrangement is critical to the success of inclusive education practices and that planning in this area must be mandatory.

Furthermore, methods of teaching must be adapted to suit the specific needs of the learners in the classroom. In a classroom with children with learning disabilities, the teacher is expected to use a combination of teaching methods in order to reach out to learners with special education needs who attend an inclusive classroom. For example when teaching geography the teacher can have embodies maps made for children with visual impairments so that they can be able to assimilate the lesson by using both touch and hearing as media of learning. Adaptation of the curriculum as a role of an inclusive classroom teacher was identified by Swango (2003) who also believed that teachers who adapted curriculum to meet the needs of the learners tended to succeed in content and concept delivery. Without specific adaptations to the classroom arrangement teachers who teach classrooms with children with special needs will always face challenges in content delivery.

The study also showed that participants viewed parental guidance and collaborating with professional's involved in Special Needs Education as part of the important roles of the teacher in an inclusive classroom. Smith (1998) also considers parental guidance as an important role that a teacher must take seriously. This role demands more input when children with disabilities join the classroom because some parents may still be in denial from the fact

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that their child is disabled. Therefore, it calls for a teacher to be professional in the way he or she handles the situation because encouragement that comes from a teacher may go a long way especially, in communities in some parts of Cameroon were teachers are highly respected and considered to be role models (Mburashelih, 2010: 24).

Teacher's roles also include preparation of IEP, provision of remedial instruction to children who may require it and adapting teaching materials to suit the specific needs of learners. Remedial instruction included one on one repeat of the lesson by the teacher in the resource room. According to UNESCO (2003) remedial instructions are designed to close the gap between what a student knows and what he is expected to know. This study showed that many students with disabilities required the extra help through remedial instructions because some of teachers were not well oriented on how to handle inclusive classroom. For example, there was a lot of concern about the reading proficiency gap between children with disabilities and those without in some schools in Yaoundé as some teachers did not know what to do to help children with special education needs (Tukov, 2009).

5.3 Coping Strategies for Teachers of Inclusive Classrooms

The study found that maintaining a sense of humor and drawing on past experiences were the most useful personal coping strategies. Humor was used by most teachers to cope with the challenges that arise from teaching inclusive classrooms especially when they did not have special training. These findings reverberate with Swango (2003) who observed that majority of teachers who handled inclusive education practices used humor to teach especially when faced with the challenges arising from inclusive education practice. So a joke would cool the mood in the classroom and promote cooperation among all the learners.

Using past experiences to cope with the challenges of inclusive classrooms was used by the 4 teachers who took part in the study. Since all the teachers had taught for more than 3 years, they did not have difficulties to cope with the challenges associated with inclusive classroom practices, as experience had taught them to use other means. For example, during observations a teacher who did not have the services of a sign language interpreter used the black board and wrote everything he said in relation to the topic on the black board. It was later confirmed that the school he previously taught emphasized maximum use of the

blackboard especially at primary school level because at that stage children were in the process of acquiring basic literacy skills and could not easily decipher content. Maximum use of the blackboard for children who are hearing impaired is believed to enhance delivery of learning (Tente, 2008) and as such must be promoted. The findings of this study resonate with Vaughn et al. (1996) who argued that visual learners must be given more visual aids because by doing so teaching and learning would have taken place. This study is in agreement with the adage "experience is the best teacher" as years of teaching pays off in inclusive classroom teaching.

According to this study making a plan of action and following it is an important coping strategy for teachers of inclusive classrooms. Teachers used this strategy by ensuring that they took notes of the learning behaviors of children with disabilities and incorporating them in the teachings methods to be used during the classroom lesson. This strategy had been used elsewhere as reported by Swango (2003) and Mburashelih (2010) who both found that teachers of inclusive classrooms needed to have a plan of action and follow it for successful teaching. In Standley (2005) plan of action may include physical activities that may be useful in an inclusive classroom. It must be appreciated that no classroom is an island, especially an inclusive classroom and discussing the situation with colleagues was seen as an effective coping strategy. Other teachers went as far as discussing the situation with the principal who is the top leader of the primary school. Using his many years of experience, the principal was able to advise teachers on the best coping strategies. Therefore, in this study the head of the school acted as a panacea to the difficulties teachers faced. In addition, opening up the room to service providers, paraprofessionals, special education teachers, other teachers and parents gives valuable opportunities to participate in collaborative teaching. Collaborative teaching looks different depending on what school, level, and setting one is working on and becomes dynamic in inclusive classrooms do to heterogeneity in learning behaviors. Therefore, planning together with other teachers on the course of action results in effective teaching and learning (Abber, 2009).

Special education needs (SEN) teaching assistants support teachers to help children with a wide range of learning, physical or behavioral difficulties (Wilson, 2000). Teaching assistant were found valuable in inclusive classrooms because they made work easy for teachers who concentrated in delivery of the lesson while they minded the classroom and attended to the needs of the children with disabilities. The assistants prepared learning materials, adapted

support according to the needs, created a stimulating environment and kept records of children's performance. These responsibilities undertaken by assistants promoted effective use of teaching methods by teachers of inclusive classrooms because they now had time to concentrate on pedagogical principles. According to Kirk et al., (2012) teaching assistants are as valuable to an inclusive classroom as sight to a bus driver. Kirk & others seem to argue that teaching assistants are an invaluable resource and effective teaching cannot take place.

5.4 Challenges Teachers Face When Teaching Inclusive Classrooms

According to Hornsby (2011) schools that grapple with few teachers tend to find difficulties in implementing inclusive education practices because of the special training required. Therefore, where there are few teachers in a school it becomes more challenging to introduce inclusive education practices that may require additional staff. This study found that majority of schools in Buea district had fewer teachers with a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:100, respectively. This made it difficult for teachers to accommodate disabled learners because of the problem of overcrowding and being overwhelmed by numbers. In Namibia, Giorcelli (2009) found that pupils with disabilities did not access quality education because the purported inclusive education practices were actually excluding them from the curriculum. This study and that of Giorcelli show that when teachers are few in a school introducing inclusive education practices only worsens the situation. It is therefore, important that more teachers are employed by the ministry of education to lower the teacher pupil ratio. Due to the need for various modifications and use of differentiated learning, a class practicing inclusive education must have a maximum of 5 children with special education needs mainstreamed (Smith, 1998). Unfortunately, at Hotpec nursery and primary school the average number of children with disabilities in each class stood at 11.5 which was double the acceptable number for mainstreaming classrooms (Table 5, page 43).

The rationale in having 5 children with disabilities in each mainstream classroom is based on the assumption that teaching one child with special education needs equates with 3 children receiving an education in a regular classroom. Therefore, the five children with special education needs equate with 15 children in a regular classroom. Since the mainstreaming classes had an average of 11.5 (11.5 X 3) it means each already overcrowded class had an additional average of 56.5 pupils. This entailed that one teacher handled three classrooms at

the time which affected service delivery especially to pupils with special education needs. The problem of overcrowding associated with this study resonates with Tukov (2009) who argued that for inclusive education practices to be successful, certain problems must be weeded out of mainstream schools including overcrowding, inadequate training and issue of few teachers. It is therefore, imperative that the issue of overcrowding be dealt with first before the district can dream to effectively provide inclusive education practices.

In addition, this study found that some teachers had received inadequate to no training in special education which made it difficult for them to handle the extra responsibilities of having disabled children in a classroom. This lack of adequately trained teachers made it difficult to 'include' children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms because the teachers did not have adequate knowledge to birth positive views about disability and inclusive education practices. Majority of teachers depended upon the mainstream teaching methods to the disadvantage of learners with disabilities. For example, in one of the observations the teacher asked pupils to explain what they saw on the blackboard even when one of the learners in the classroom was blind. Therefore, putting children in inclusive classrooms without giving special training to teachers or employing the services of a trained special education teacher for advice would in itself be exclusion. Similarly, Mapsea (2006) argues that merely enrolling disabled children in a mainstream classroom does not ensure inclusiveness in the teaching because pre-requisites must be taken into consideration. Therefore, it is opined in this study that unequal treatment of unequal's is the best way to promote equality as this would ensure that every child receives appropriate education as opposed to using 'one shoe fits all' principle.

The participants in the study cited lack of supportive devices and resources as s challenge for teachers who teach mainstreaming classrooms. Assistive devices may include computer software and hardware, such as voice recognition programs, screen readers, and screen enlargement applications, hearing aids, wheelchairs, prosthetic devices and felt tip pens are important in a school environment were disabled children learn (Friend, 2011). Unfortunately, the schools did not have these devices and this made learning difficult for the children with disabilities. For example during the investigation, it was found that one of the children with cerebral palsy was unable to do class work because he was unable to control his muscles when writing. This was considered by the teacher as a normal thing and a principle of differentiated curriculum but unbeknown to the school and the teacher felt tip pens could be

successfully used by children with cerebral palsy to write without much difficult (Smith, 1998). In this case, it was not the disability that hampered learning in the child but the schools failure to accommodate the child through provision of assistive devices.

Unfortunately, the lack of knowledge and skills to meet the academic needs of children with disabilities made it difficult to teach inclusive classrooms. The authority of Kirk et al., (2012) posits that acquiring the knowledge and skills in teaching inclusive classrooms must be a prerequisite to the implementation of inclusive education practices policy. It should therefore, be the primary goal of schools to train their teachers on how to handle inclusive classrooms before taking the root of enrolling children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. When teachers lack knowledge on how to handle inclusive classrooms, the disabled learner feels isolated and discriminated (Tukov, 2009).

Furthermore, this study found that teachers lacked enough time to concentrate on children with disabilities and that inadequate teaching and learning occurred due to lack of needed resources. The lack of enough time to teach children with disabilities emanate from the fact that the classrooms handled by the teachers were overcrowded notwithstanding the presence of children with disabilities. Therefore, the teachers did not only lack time for children with special needs but also the regular learners. These findings are contrary to Mburashelih (2010) who found that time and learning materials was not a factor in inclusive education practices because these could easily be bought or created by the teachers themselves. The key difference between these two studies is based on the issue of regionalism. While this study was conducted in a developing country, Mburashelih's study took place in New York an epitome of a developed city. For this reason, Mburashelih argued that poor quality teaching was due to laziness among teachers (Mburashelih, 2010) of which this study suggests otherwise.

Children with special education needs require special attention to their behavioural needs. Managing a classroom with students with disabilities is a challenging and rewarding task. Teachers and their assistants should know how to professionally address those challenges. Managing student behavior of special needs children poses its own unique challenges. The challenges arise from the level of communication and skill set needed for teachers and other staff. The guidelines to effective include: establishing a routine, communicating on the level of the student, rewarding appropriate behavior, handling problems in a consistent manner, minimizing the number of rules in the classroom and attempting to insure that students

comprehend and understand he rules (Sloane, 1991). The above skillset was missing among the teachers that handled inclusive classrooms at Hotpect nursery and primary school making it difficult to manage the classroom during the lesson and failure to meet lesson objectives.

Differentiated learning is one that is individualized to meet the diverse need of all of the students in one class (Smith, 1998). This is based on the principle that equality means giving everyone equal opportunities to learn, not teaching everyone in exactly the same way. It was unfortunate to find that teachers who took part in the study had inadequate training on differentiating activities for learners with disabilities and such lesson delivery was done using one size fits all principle which goes against the norms of special education. Therefore, the poor performance among children with disabilities in the sampled school could be attributed to the failure by teachers to differentiate the curriculum in the classroom.

The study also showed that teachers were inexperienced in communicating with parents of children with disabilities. Most professionals who work with children or adults with disabilities agree that parental involvement in interventions increases their effectiveness (Abber, 2003). They also realize that parents and other family members have needs which the professionals need to address. A source of help for professional is counsellors but the training program for these does not pay much attention to working with persons with disabilities and their families. Another problem is that majority of parents are reluctant to seek professional counselling as this is seen as a weakness (Friend, 2011). Teachers should develop expertise in working with parents because they are likely to be the main source of professional help for families who have children with disabilities. Therefore, the failure by teachers at Hotpec nursery and primary school to communicate with parents could be construed as failure to do their roles as teachers.

6   Main Conclusion

6.1   Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study. It summarizes the findings of the study and gives the recommendations which the author thinks would help improve the views and knowledge of Inclusive education practices in Cameroon. In addition, the suggestions from this study are aimed at mitigating the challenges teachers face in teaching inclusive classrooms in Cameroon. It also outlines areas of further research.

6.2   Summary of the Study

The views of teachers on inclusive education practices in the school were very important to this study as it was considered the beginning of successful implementation of inclusive education. The study showed that teachers who handle mainstreaming classrooms hold diverse views concerning the implementation of this policy. Some teachers still believe that inclusive education is untenable in Cameroon because of the poor infrastructure and sluggish funding the schools. It was observed by some teachers that what is perceived to be including children with disabilities in mainstream schools is actually excluding them. Other teachers were of the view that special education is better offered in special schools and special units because in such facilities teacher have the requisite training to handle children with special education needs.

Despite the negatives posited by some teachers in the study, it was found that some teachers saw the Sun-side of inclusive education. On the Sun-side teachers observed that implementing inclusive education policy is a good move as this would help prevent stereotyping and end discrimination based on disability. In addition, disability is not inability therefore; society must adjust through infrastructural modifications to accommodate learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. Further, the study established that inclusive education promotes self-esteem and self-confidence among the learners with disabilities who no longer consider themselves 'different'. The study has built a ground and supports the implementation of inclusive education policy around Cameroon.

This study has established that most teachers in mainstream schools have some level of training in special education obtained through workshops or college or other study. This knowledge is crucial to the implementation of inclusive education practices. Unfortunately, there are some teachers who have not undergone any training in special education and these are the teachers who may not have much knowledge about inclusive education. This study established that teachers who have no training in special education needs found the concept of inclusive education alien to their known pedagogy.

In addition, this study established that teachers used various strategies to cope with the challenges that arise from teaching classes that practice inclusive education. These coping strategies were divided into six personal strategies, three professional strategies and 1 institutional strategy. Under personal strategies the following continuum took center stage including: humor, drawing from past experiences, making a plan of action, looking on the bright side, developing interests outside the classroom, engaging in physical activities. Professional strategies included discussing the situation with colleagues, discussing situation with the principal and receiving help of teaching assistant. The institutional classroom strategy was applied through teacher parent collaboration which entailed discussing situation with child's parents. These strategies in combination resulted in successful teaching by teachers in mainstreaming classes albeit 'all things constant'.

With respect to the challenges which teachers face in teaching classrooms practicing inclusive education, the study found that there were some challenges which the teachers face in teaching children with special needs. These challenges included few teachers, overcrowding in classrooms, inadequate to no training in special education, lack of supportive devices and resources, little time to concentrate on children with disabilities, communication difficulties and inadequate training on differentiating learning. The study established that these challenges affect the quality of inclusive education practices in the school.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study outlined above, various recommendations can be made.

1. The government through the Ministry of Education must introduce remedial training on inclusive education practices for teachers in mainstreaming schools. This will promote quality

in delivery of content in mainstreaming schools as the teachers will be equipped with knowledge necessary for effective implementation of inclusive education policy.

2. Government through the Ministry of Education should employ more teachers to reduce the teacher-pupil ratio to manageable levels. This will result in teachers having enough time which they can easily divide and attend to pupils with special education needs who may need more attention. When this is done the quality of education in mainstreaming classrooms would be improved.

3. The University of Buea and other universities should take a leading role in research to discover new and effective strategies of teaching in classrooms with inclusive education practices. There are numerous research opportunities in inclusive education since it is a relatively new field.

4. The government through the Ministry of Education should introduce incentives for teachers who teach mainstreaming classrooms. This will increase the number of teachers who train in special education and in turn be useful in inclusive schools where the competence is required.

5. The government should develop more inclusive education teaching resources. These should be in the form of sign language books, picture strips, sign language video tapes, charts, pupils and teachers' books and many more in order to improve the teaching in inclusive classrooms.

6. The government should provide financial assistance to mainstreaming schools so that classroom rehabilitations and modifications can be made to meet the special requirements of children with special education needs. This will result in reducing environmental barriers in the schools that hinder quality of learning for pupils with special needs.

7. The ministry of education should provide assistive technology to children with special needs in order to promote their access to education. For example, failure by one pupil to write because she did not have a felt tip pen must be a thing of the must. Once assistive technology is provided teaching and learning will be fun as opposed to being a burden in classrooms practicing inclusive education.

8. The ministry of education should employee more teaching assistants as this will reduce on the amount of work teachers do in classrooms practicing inclusive education. Once more

teaching assistants are employed teachers will now concentrate on more pertinent issues of teaching thereby providing quality education services.

It is hoped that these recommendations once implemented will greatly enhance the quality of education being offered by schools with inclusive education practices and result in positive views concerning inclusive education in Buea district and Cameroon at large.

6.4 Further Research

1. A Situational Analysis on the use of Sign Language in the Education of the Deaf in Cameroon: A Case of Buea District Schools.

2. Effect of Teachers perceptions on disability on a disabled child's academic performance.

3. Determinants of an effective Inclusive Classroom.

4. A Situational Analysis of the Current Trends in Special Needs Education in Cameroon.

5. Quantifying Special Needs Education in Cameroon.

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Appendix 1:

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

APPENDICES

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

My name is …………………………………………….. a postgraduate student at the University of Oslo pursuing a Master of Education in Special Needs education. I cordially invite you to take part in a research aimed at ascertaining 'VIEWS, KNOWLEDGE AND CHALLENGES OF TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUDING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY IN REGULAR SCHOOLS IN CAMEROON'. You are at liberty to accept or deny this offer. However, your acceptance will benefit both this research and the final beneficiary i.e. children with disabilities. All data collected through this investigation will be used for the purposes of this study only and no unauthorised persons will have access.

A) DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. How old are you? ……………………………………………………………………..

2. What is your highest level of education? …………………………………………………

3. How long have you been teaching children with disabilities? …………………………..

4. What types of disability are found in your class? ………………………………………..

5. How many pupils have a disability in your class? ………………………………………..

6. How many pupils use assistive technology (A.T) in learning? e.g. of A.T Cochlear implants. ……………………………………………………………

7. From your list in (5) above, which disability brings more difficult in learning and teaching?

……………………………………………………………………………………………..

B) VIEWS ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

8. What is disability? …………………………………………………………………………

9. How would you define 'inclusive education'? …………………………………………...

10. Do you think inclusive education benefits the children with disabilities? Explain.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

10. What is the role of a teacher in an inclusive classroom? Tick from list

LIST OF TEACHER'S ROLES IN AN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM	
Tick	**Role**
	Identification of children with disabilities in the classroom
	Referring identified children for assessment
	Accepting children with SEN
	Developing positive attitude between 'normal' and children with SEN
	Planning sitting arrangement that makes it easy for disabled children to learn
	Removing architectural barriers from the classroom
	Making suitable adaptations to the curriculum to the benefit of children with SEN
	Parental guidance and guidance
	Collaborating with professionals involved in Special Needs Education
	Preparation of IEP
	Providing remedial instruction to children who may require it
	Preparation of adapted teaching materials

11. Do you think 'inclusive education' is attainable with the status quo in schools? Please explain.

……………………………………………………………………………………………….

C) DISABILITY SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

On each child with disability in your classroom:

12. State his or her disability and learning style. ………………………………………….

13. Compare his academic performance to others with disability on a scale of

(Bad)   (Good)   (Very Good)   (Excellent)

14. For every child with bad academic performance, in 13, above state:

i) His or her learning style

ii) How does the disability affect the learning process?

iii) State the possible causes of poor academic performance

iv) State measures put in place to help the child improve on academic performance

v) On a trajectory state the improvements due to measures introduced: Select one from the following Improvements. (Poor)   (Fair)   (Good)

vi) How do you differentiate instructions to meet the learning needs of the child with disability?

v) Do you have any suggestions that could help the child become academically proficient?

C) GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE CLASSROOM SITUATION

15. What difficulties do you face in the classroom when teaching children with disabilities?
………………………………………………………………………………………….

16. What factors in the classroom affect the way children with disabilities learn?

………………………………………………………………………………………….

17. What methods of instruction must be incorporated to meet the learning needs of learners with SEN?
………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………

18. What challenges do teachers face when teaching inclusive classes?
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………..

19. What coping strategies do you use to ensure that pupils with SEN learn at the same pace with the regular learners?

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………

20. What measures can be put in place to mitigate the challenges faced by teachers in inclusive classes?

………..

D) GENERAL VIEWS AND SUGGESTIONS

21. Using the terms below, describe your experience teaching an inclusive classroom

(Easy)   (Difficult)   (Challenging)   (Worst)

22. For the selected item in (16) above explain the reason for the choice.

………
……….

23. What are the merits of inclusive education?

………
……..

24. What are the demerits of inclusive education?

………
……..

25. What are the benefits to the child of differentiated instruction?

………
……….

26. Do you think inclusive education is a successful policy in schools around Buea district? Explain your answer.

………
………

27. What kind of support do you receive from stakeholders like parents or other teachers?

………
……..

28. What kind of adaptations and adjustments has been made to the school to meet the needs of learners with SNE?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………….

E) MEASURES TO BE PUT IN PLACE TO PROMOTE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

30. What can be done to ensure that inclusive education policy in Cameroon becomes a success?

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Appendix 2:

Classroom Observation Checklist

Classroom Observation Checklist

Environment	Tick
The whole classroom is clearly labeled with text and pictures to provide a literacy rich environment	
The classroom door is clearly labeled with a photo where possible.	
Pupil's trays and pegs are labeled and easily identified by pupils.	
A visual timetable should be provided on the wall separate to the smart-board for all pupils to access and refer to throughout the day. Individual ones may also be necessary for pupils requiring a 'now and then' approach.	
The alphabet should be displayed in an age appropriate form.	
Numbers, number words and possibly dot patterns should be displayed in an age appropriate form.	
Months of the year, days of the week and seasons should be displayed.	
Topic words should be displayed clearly.	
Helps boxes should be available for mathematics, literacy and possibly topic.	
Dictionaries, thesauruses and VCOP supports should be available and easily accessible.	
Finished work tray should be provided to give closure to tasks.	
Display space or a whiteboard should be available to list the steps in tasks that need to be completed, which can be referred to by all pupils during lessons.	
The classroom is bright and well lit.	
The classroom is well ventilated.	
The classroom is a calm environment with clearly labeled and uncluttered	
Display boards have calming backgrounds with clashing colors kept to a	
Desks are organized with only essential resources left out. Ensuring every pupil has adequate space to work.	
The classroom areas are well organized and free from clutter.	
Noise in the classroom is kept to a minimal, with background noise from fans, ICT, corridors etc carefully considered.	
Contrasts of black text on white are minimized where possible through the use of pastel smart-board backgrounds, blue ink and colored paper.	
All pupils are seated with a clear view of teaching space/smart-board.	

Pupils with dyslexic type difficulties are seated with clearest view of the	79
Pupils with ASD difficulties are seated in quite areas with little or no movement	
ICT support is accessible when required	
Left handed resources are available	
Clear classroom rules and routines are established.	

Appendix 3:
Permissions for Research

Permissions for Research

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix-Travail-Patrie

MINISTERE DE L'EDUCATION DE BASE

DELEGATION REGIONALE DU SUD-OUEST
P.M.B. 10015 BUEA

REF....*G 379/ VOL. XIII /126*........./MINEDUB/RDBE/SW/SS

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace-Work-Fatherland

MINISTRY OF BASIC EDUCATION

REGIONAL DELEGATION FOR THE SOUTH WEST
P.M.B. 10015 BUEA

Buea, the .....*1 2 OCT 2015*...................

To:

TANGUNYI AMBO BILLEH
P O Box 222 Molyko Buea.
South West Region of Cameroon.

AUTHORIZATION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH WORK IN SOME PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN BUEA.

I write to acknowledge receipt of the application file to carry out field work in Buea, by **TANGUNYI AMBOH BILLEH,** a post graduate student in the Department of Special Needs Education at the University of OSLO, NORWAY. It is my pleasure to inform you that your request has been granted, especially as the Ministry of Basic Education is paying particular attention to Inclusive Education.

However, you will have to liaise – up with the Inspector of Basic Education, Buea to draw – up a suitable schedule that will not interrupt the school programme.

While wishing you success in your endeavour, I count on your sincere collaboration.

REGIONAL DELEGATE

EBAI MAURICE ATINE

Tangunyi Ambo Billeh
P. O. box 222 Molyko-Buea
South West Region Cameroon
7th October, 2015

The Regional Delegate of,
Basic Education,
South West Region,
Buea Cameroon.

Dear Sir,

AN APPLICATION TO CARRY OUT FIELD WORK IN BUEA

I am a Cameroonian student pursuing a Masters of Philosophy degree program in special needs Education at the University of Oslo in Norway.

I wish to ask for permission to undertake research work in a few primary schools in Buea and as part of the requirement for the award of a degree mentioned above.

The title of my research is –views, knowledge and challenges primary school teachers face towards including children with disability in Regular schools.

Attached to this application is an introductory letter from the University of Oslo, which states the time frame for carrying out the research.

While waiting for your response Sir, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

Tangunyi Ambo Billeh.

Letter