

ASSESSMENT OF GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT, FREE AND COMPULSORY EDUCATION OF PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED EDUCATION IN KATSINA STATE

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Abstract

The study assessed government commitment, free and compulsory education of physically challenged education in Katsina state, Nigeria. The study is set to answer two research questions which include, What is the commitment of the government towards the physically challenged education in Katsina state? And what is the provision of the free and compulsory education to all physically challenged students in Katsina state? The study adopted quantitative research method using descriptive survey research design and the targeted population of the study comprised total number of one hundred and sixty-two (162) respondents which comprise of one hundred and eight (108) teachers, thirty-four (34) educational administrators and twenty (20) School Base Management Committees. Total enumeration sampling was used by taking the entire population of the study. A questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection and was validated by experts in the field. The reliability result was 0.87 and the data collected was analysed using simple frequency Tables, Percentages and Means. The findings of the study discovered that all the three categories of respondent opinion agree with fact that the government is committed towards educating the physically challenged in Katsina state and education for the physically challenged is free and compulsory in Katsina state. Based on these findings, the study recommended that Katsina State Government in collaboration with NGOs and parents should intensify effort and commitments toward enrolling physically challenged persons into the physically challenged school through regular sensitization and mentoring and among others.

Keywords: Assessment, Government commitment, Free and compulsory education, Physically-challenged education

Introduction

Education plays a vital role in the development of individuals and society as a whole. It is essential for everyone, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, economic background, physical ability, or disability, to have access to education (Lden, Clark, & Abualghaib, 2019). Education positively influences socio-economic behaviors such as productivity, living standards, health, and demographic characteristics. Furthermore, it offers limitless opportunities for society improving health and livelihood, fostering strong families, encouraging civic participation, shaping morals and values, creating culture, and influencing history. It serves as a foundation for progress and sustainable development, upholding human rights and serving as a critical step towards eliminating gender discrimination. Education also promotes freedom and democracy, both within borders and internationally, acting as a catalyst for peace and security (UNICEF, 2000 in Wanja, 2018).

Given its importance, societies have an obligation to provide education tailored to individuals' needs and capacities. According to the United States Census Bureau (2021), the world's population is approximately eight billion, with about 15 percent living with disabilities. The World Health Organization (WHO) states that people with physical disabilities are among the most marginalized groups globally, experiencing poorer health outcomes, lower educational attainment, limited economic participation, and higher poverty rates compared to those without disabilities (WHO, 2021).

In Nigeria, estimates from the 2006 Census, 2012 General Household Survey, and 2018 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) suggest a disability prevalence of around 2%. However, experts believe this figure underestimates the true number, due to reliance on self-reporting and adapted survey questions that may lead to underreporting (WHO, 2011; Haruna, 2017). Notably, the DHS indicates that 9% of individuals over 60 live with a disability, with states like Kano, Katsina, and Jigawa showing higher rates up to 5% of men in Jigawa reporting significant difficulties. The WHO (2011) estimates Nigeria has approximately 25 million persons with disabilities, representing about 13.2% of the population, aligning with the global estimate that around 15% live with disabilities. Additionally, nearly 40% of Nigerian persons with disabilities have multiple impairments (Thompson, 2020).

Nigeria has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, mandating inclusive and accessible education for all children, including those with physical challenges. The country is also committed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4, which aims for all school-age children including those with disabilities to access quality, functional, and effective basic education by 2030. The 2013 National Policy on Education emphasizes inclusive education, affirming that all children, regardless of disabilities, have the right to quality learning experiences. The Universal Basic Education Act (2004) guarantees free and compulsory basic education for all children, while the Policy on Special Needs Education (2013) advocates for customized programs to meet the needs of persons with special needs. It states:

1. Equalize educational opportunities for all, regardless of physical, sensory, mental, psychological, or emotional disabilities;
2. Provide adequate education to enable individuals with special needs to contribute meaningfully to national development;
 1. Ensure access to necessary facilities, materials, and assistive devices to facilitate quality education for persons with disabilities.

Based on the 2013 National Policy on Education, this study aims to assess government commitment, free and compulsory education of physically challenged education in Katsina state, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Currently, the world is striving to achieve free, equitable, and quality education for all, beginning with basic education, progressing through secondary education, and culminating in higher education, in line with the Education for All (EFA) goals. These objectives have been embraced by many countries, including Nigeria, which has developed several policies aimed at promoting education for persons with special needs. Additionally, Basha (2018) notes that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, recognizes education as a fundamental right for all individuals, including those with disabilities. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2011), Nigeria's population of people with disabilities is estimated at around 25 million.

For persons with disabilities to access education equally, certain facilities and resources must be available. These are mandated by the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act of 2004 and the National Policy on Education (2013). Such facilities include Braille materials, audio meters, psychological toys, wheelchairs, artificial limbs, calipers, prostheses, standard libraries, audiovisual aids, computer technology and accessories, as well as adaptive clothing such as long-sleeve shirts, trousers, and sunglasses, among others. As such the study seek to assess government commitment, free and compulsory education of physically challenged education in Katsina state, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the commitment of the government towards the physically challenged education in Katsina state?
2. What is the provision of the free and compulsory education to all physically challenged students in Katsina state?

Literature Review

Physically challenged as psychological concept refers to a special target group with one form of deformity or other that can easily be distinguished, World Health Organization (WHO, 2017) defined Physically challenge as a state of in-complete physical, mental and social -being of an individual also, disability is classified into three (3) categories (a) physically deformed (b) the mentally related or disordered (c) the socially deprived. These three (3) groups could be further divided into so many other sub groups, such as emotionally disturbed, naturally disadvantage and the poorly co-ordinated.

Allam and Martin (2021) stressed that all over the world people have reacted to such differences in variety of ways, ranging from the cruel to the humane. He further stated that, those who were different were destroyed, tortured, exercise is sterilized, ignored, exiled exploited and consider devine. Their problems were cruelly explained in terms of superstitions. They were however, later pitied and cared for and finally accepted, accommodated, educated, sieved and employed. Before then, they had to cope with survival in the world where the harshness of both nature and those around them threaten their very existence. According to National Census Bureau. (2018), physically challenged student means a person who has a physiological disability, malformation, disfigurement or condition that eliminates or severely limits the person's ability to have access to the person's environment by normal ambulatory function, necessitating the use of crutches, a wheelchair other similar device for locomotion. It means every natural person who has permanently lost the use of a leg or both legs or an arm or both arms or any combination thereof or any person who is so severely disabled as to be unable to move without the aid of crutches or a wheelchair. In another perspective, Bulman (2017) defined physically challenged student means a person who, on account of any deficiency, injury, disease or congenital deformity, is substantially handicapped in obtaining or keeping employment, or in undertaking work on his own account, of a kind which but for such deficiency, injury, disease or deformity would be suited to his age, experience and qualifications.

Katsina State in 2018, had implemented several programs aimed at providing education to individuals with disabilities. These programs included special education schools, the establishment of resource centers, the provision of assistive devices and equipment, and training for teachers and caregivers. One notable program was the Katsina State Disability Inclusive Education (KS-DIE) program, which aimed to provide inclusive education to children with disabilities in regular schools. The program involved the training of teachers and school personnel on inclusive education practices and the provision of assistive devices and materials for learners with disabilities. Another program was the Katsina State Partnership for Education and Training (K-PET) program, which aimed to provide access to education and vocational skills training to marginalized and vulnerable groups, including individuals with disabilities, (Daily Trust 2018).

Research Method and Design

The study adopted quantitative research method using descriptive survey research design and the targeted population of the study comprised total number of one hundred and sixty two (162) respondents which comprise of one hundred and eight (108) teachers, thirty four (34) educational administrators and twenty (20) School Base Management Committees. Total enumeration sampling was used by taking the entire population of the study. A questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection and was validated by experts in the field. The reliability result was 0.87 and the data collected was analysed using simple frequency Tables, Percentages and Means.

Table 1: Questionnaires Administered

Status	Questionnaire Distributed	Retrieval (Frequency)	Percentage
Teachers	108	108	100
SBMC	20	20	100
Educational Administrators	34	34	100
Total	162	162	100%

Table 1 shows the number instruments administered and retrieved by category. The table shows that teachers have 108 respondents, while the SBMC officials and educational administrators has 20 and 34

respondents. This shows that the teachers has highest frequency and percentage, and that all the instruments administered were retrieved successfully.

What is the commitment of the government towards the physically challenged education in Katsina state?

Table 2: Respondent opinion on the commitment of the government towards the physically challenged education in Katsina state

S/N	Item Statements	Respon Dents	Response					Mean
			SA	A	D	SD	N	
1	Sufficient number of teachers are posted to the physically challenged schools in Katsina state	Teachers	108	48	22	25	13	2.97
		SBMC	20	17	2	0	1	3.75
		Edu. Adm.	34	24	10	0	0	3.71
2	Teachers recruited have minimum qualifications of teaching in Katsina State	Teachers	108	40	30	24	14	2.88
		SBMC	20	16	4	0	0	3.80
		Edu. Adm	34	15	12	7	0	3.24
3	There is adequate supervision and monitoring in the schools for the blind and the deaf in Katsina State	Teachers	108	45	26	23	14	2.94
		SBMC	20	12	4	3	1	3.35
		Edu. Adm	34	19	13	2	0	3.50
4.	Qualified candidates who are physically challenged were appointed to teach in the schools for the blind and the deaf in Katsina State	Teachers	108	38	26	28	16	2.80
		SBMC	20	13	5	0	2	3.45
		Edu. Adm	34	16	14	3	1	3.32
5	Government are committed toward provision of infrastructures to the schools for the blind and the deaf in Katsina State	Teachers	108	26	38	27	17	2.67
		SBMC	20	11	6	1	2	3.30
		Edu. Adm	34	20	8	6	0	3.41
6	Government are committed toward provision of instructional materials to the schools for the blind and the deaf in Katsina State	Teachers	108	39	24	25	19	2.77
		SBMC	20	18	2	0	0	3.90
		Edu. Adm	34	18	10	4	2	3.29
7	There is water supply in the schools for the blind and the deaf in Katsina state	Teachers	108	38	27	25	18	2.79
		SBMC	20	10	6	3	1	3.25
		Edu. Adm	34	25	5	4	0	3.61
8	There is available electricity supply in the schools for the blind and the deaf in Katsina State	Teachers	108	47	25	23	13	2.98
		SBMC	20	19	0	1	0	3.55
		Edu. Adm	34	12	10	7	5	2.85
Average Mean		Teacher	2.85					
		SBMC	3.54					
		Edu. Adm.	3.37					

The researchers used 2.5 as decision rule for retaining or rejecting an items questionnaire Table 2 indicated that the Katsina state government is committed towards the physically challenged

education in the state, from item one (1) to eight (8), the average mean scores of the teachers was 2.85, SBMC 3.54 and Educational Administrators 3.37. This is a clear indication that most of the respondents agree that the government is committed towards educating the physically challenged in Katsina state. What is the provision of the free and compulsory education to all physically challenged students in Katsina state?

Table 3: Respondent opinion on the provision of the free and compulsory education to all physically challenged students in Katsina state

S/N	Item Statements	Respondents	Response					Mean
			N	SA	A	D	SD	
1	Government provides free transportation to convey the physical challenged in the schools for the blind and the deaf in Katsina State	Teachers	108	46	28	20	14	2.98
		SBMC	20	5	10	4	1	2.95
		Edu. Adm.	34	17	9	8	0	3.27
2	Government provides free feeding programme for the physically challenged students in the schools for the blind and the deaf in Katsina State	Teachers	108	44	27	22	15	2.93
		SBMC	20	9	7	1	3	3.10
		Edu. Adm	34	22	12	0	0	3.65
3	Government provides free accommodations for physically challenged students in the schools for the blind and the deaf in Katsina State	Teachers	108	43	26	22	17	2.88
		SBMC	20	8	8	3	1	3.15
		Edu. Adm	34	13	15	6	0	3.21
4.	Free medical care services are provided by the government in the school for the blind and the deaf in Katsina State	Teachers	108	42	27	20	19	2.85
		SBMC	20	15	3	1	1	3.60
		Edu. Adm	34	30	2	2	0	3.82
5	Government provides scholarship for the physically challenged students in Katsina State	Teachers	108	29	40	19	20	2.54
		SBMC	20	8	7	4	1	3.10
		Edu. Adm	34	21	11	2	0	3.56
6	Government provides free and compulsory education for physically challenged to increase literacy among them in Katsina state.	Teachers	108	35	30	25	18	2.76
		SBMC	20	9	6	4	1	3.15
		Edu. Adm	34	13	12	7	2	3.06
7	There is availability of learning materials in the School for the blind and the deaf in Katsina state.	Teachers	108	40	30	15	23	2.81
		SBMC	20	6	6	5	3	2.80
		Edu. Adm	34	16	15	3	0	3.38
8	Stakeholders renovate classrooms in the schools for the blind and the deaf in Katsina State	Teachers	108	50	24	22	12	3.04
		SBMC	20	15	3	2	0	3.65
		Edu. Adm	34	26	4	2	2	3.59
Average Mean		Teacher	2.85					
		SBMC	3.19					
		Edu. Adm.	3.44					

Table 3 showed the opinion of the respondents regarding provision of free and compulsory education to all physically challenged students in Katsina state. The table revealed that from item one (1) to eight

(8), teachers have the mean average score of 2.85. The average mean scores for the SBMC respondents was 3.19 while that of Educational administrators was 3.44. This means that majority of the respondents are therefore of the view that education for the physically challenged is free and compulsory in Katsina state.

Discussion of Findings

All the three categories of respondents opinion agree with fact that the government is committed towards educating the physically challenged in Katsina state. In disagreement with the finding of the study, Allam and Martin (2021) revealed that there is less commitment to classrooms for children with learning disabilities have poor learning environment and that there is lack of budget, curriculum guide, Instructional Materials (IMs) and even school facilities. It is possible that respondents have no divergent opinion because they are actively working in the school of physically challenge and therefore they witnessed all the effort invested by the government to sustain education for physically challenged.

All the three categories of respondents' opinion majority agree that education for the physically challenged is free and compulsory in Katsina state. Aligning with the finding of the study, Getachew (2020) found that the Nigerian government made a provision of providing basic free and compulsory education to all Nigerians.

Conclusions

Based on the findings it was concluded that the government is committed towards free and compulsory education by provision of basic manipulative and life skills needed for physically challenged schools. This effort is culminated incorporating the physically challenged students' education across Katsina State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Katsina State Government in collaboration with NGOs and parents should intensify effort and commitments toward enrolling physically challenged persons into the physically challenged school through regular sensitization and mentoring.
2. The government should not only provide adequate infrastructural and instructional facilities, but rather ensure effective utilization of the facilities by training teachers and learners how to appropriately use the facilities for effective teaching and learning process. In the school for physically challenged.

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