Fakultät II

Department Erziehungswissen-
schaft • Psychologie
Adolf-Reichwein-Str. 2
57068 Siegen
www.uni-siegen.de

UNIVERSITÄT SIEGEN

– Working Paper Series –

Discriminations against children with disabilities in mainstream schools in Southern Ghana: perspectives from stakeholders

Year of Publication: 2015

Department of Social Work, University of Ghana

Keywords: Disability; disabled; perceptions; social model; policies

---

Efua Esaaba Mantey

Discriminations against children with disabilities in mainstream schools in Southern Ghana: perspectives from stakeholders

Abstract:

There is less favourable attitudes towards inclusion of children with disabilities in Ghana as a result of historical assumption concerning persons with disabilities. These assumptions are beliefs which look down upon persons with disabilities leading to providing them separate education or experiencing total exclusion from the education system. Using Ghana as an example the study examined the perspectives of some stakeholders on challenges children with disabilities face in mainstream schools. The study utilised qualitative method of research mainly in-depth interviews and also used social model of disability put forward by Mike Oliver to underpin the study. The study found that children with disabilities were mostly discriminated by their colleagues, teachers, and other significant stakeholders. Government does not adequately plan for them by way of policies and programs. Their educational needs were not properly taken care of and the design of school infrastructure was not conducive for them. There are inadequate resource persons coupled with general teachers incompetence to properly handle them to impart knowledge to them to ensure the development of their potentials. Also Cultural beliefs were found to be one of the explanation for causing disabilities in children. The study therefore recommends that before any law or policy can work, there is the need to re-orient people's thoughts about disabilities and their beliefs towards people with disabilities.

Keywords: Disability; disabled; perceptions; social model; policies

Background

The importance of education in the total development of children cannot be overemphasised. Education helps individuals to develop skills, improve their social status and gain access to networks that could lead to enhanced social outcomes, independently from the effect of education on income (OECD, 2010). Globally, children with disabilities experience marginalisation within the educational system and also traditionally experience varying forms of discrimination from mainstream society. Children with disabilities have remained relatively invisible in most governments' efforts to achieve universal access to primary education, (UNESCO, 2012). As a result of these, many children with disabilities are not reaping the full benefits of education. Internationally, a growing focus has been placed on inclusion as the key strategy for promoting the right to education, including children with disabilities. Thus, global trends in special education have shifted from the institutionalisation of children with disabilities in special schools towards inclusive approaches that enable children to access mainstream educational programs in the communities where they live (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Hutchinson & Martin, 2012).

Governments owe it to their citizens to make the necessary investment in education in order to provide the best standard possible, (Porter, 2011). More so, it is well documented that disability presents certain challenges that influence the learning modes of persons, especially, children. However, available data do not support the fact that persons with difficulties including chil-

Discriminations against children with disabilities in mainstream schools in Southern Ghana: perspectives from stake-holders

Seite 3 von 15

dren are "non-educable" (Culham &Nuid, 2003; Reiter &Vitani, 2007; Maul & Singer, 2009; Porter & Smith, 2011). Thus, all children are capable of learning and becoming recipient of quality education if the right atmosphere of inclusion and acceptance are created, (Mittler, et al., 2002).

Inclusive education practices are built around the concept of accessibility and it is essential if children with disabilities are enjoying their right to participation in education. Ghana, since the inception of education many years has provided special education and regular education separately. Education will improve if a stystem of education moves away from special education for persons with disabilities towards inclusive education.

It is worth noting that inclusive education practice in the formal school system in Ghana started as far back in 1961 with the passage of Free Educational Act which increased basic education enrolment. There are also other legal frameworks such as the 1992 constitution which encouraged and improved inclusive education in Ghana. For instance, the passage of the Salamanca Statement (1994) and the Dakar Conference (2000) which Ghana signed emphasised more on inclusive education in Ghana. In line with this, the Ministry of Education pursued those rights and the Ghana Education Service in its Education Strategic plan 2003-2015 adapted inclusive education. The Ministry, thus, envisions the achievements of an inclusive education system by 2015 Special Education Division (SpED), 2005). As a result, both government and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) have supported inclusive education and special needs education in Ghana.

In 2003/2004 academic year, the SpED of Ghana Education Service (GES) in addressing the policy objectives initiated the implementation of Inclusive Education on pilot basis in fourteen (14) districts of five (5) regions namely, Greater Accra, Eastern, Central, Volta and Northern. As a result, inclusive education in a developing country like Ghana could be explained as being at its embryonic stage of practice. This is consistent with the notions of WHO and World Bank (2011) which stated that although inclusion is gaining roots in Western countries, the move towards inclusive education is at its early stage of adoption and implementation in developing countries such as Ghana due to people's perceptions and beliefs about children with disabilities and their position in society. In view of the statement by WHO and World Bank (2011) in reality, it appears that, there is a negative perception of children with disabilities in Ghana, with levels of stigmatisation and discrimination associated with disabilities. Hence much more efforts is needed to protect the rights of children with disabilities and to fully participate in education. However the main objective of the study examined stakeholders perceptions about inclusive education with

focus on challenges children with disabilities face in mainstream school, stakeholders understanding of the terms disabled and disability and people's perception of causes of disabilities.

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the social model of disability. The social model of disability was developed in the 1970s by activists in the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS), and given academic credibility through the works of Vic Finkelstein (1980, 1981;Colin Barnes,1991; and Mike Oliver,1990, 1996. The social model sees disability as the result of the interaction between people living with impairments and an environment filled with physical, attitudinal, communication and social barriers. It carries the implication that, the physical, attitudinal, communication and social environment must change to enable people living with impairments to participate in society on an equal basis with others.

The principle of inclusive education is based on the social model which perceives the current education system and schools as discriminatory and inadequate. It therefore requires schools to adapt to meet the individual needs of all learners whose exclusion from mainstream education may have been the results of disability. The model has greatly influenced the area of disability as well as educational perspectives on inclusion. It sees the problems facing disabled people as a result of society's barriers rather than the person's medical conditions reference. The theory argues for the full inclusion of disabled people in educational institutions, the larger societal institutions and for their complete acceptance as citizens with equal rights, entitlements and responsibilities. The social model also regards disability as all the things that impose restrictions on disabled people ranging from individual prejudice to institutional discrimination, from inaccessible buildings to unusable transportation systems, from segregated education to exclusion from work and many more. The consequences of the failure to make the environment less restrictive do not simply and randomly fall on individuals but systematically upon disabled people as a group who experience these failures of discriminatory institutions throughout society. It recognises the solution as to rid the society of these barriers, rather than relying on curing all people who have impairments, which is not possible.

Mike Oliver (1999), argued that people with disabilities are viewed as "unfortunate", "useless", different, oppressed and sick". He further explained that persons with disabilities are viewed as unfortunate because they are unable to enjoy material and social benefits of modern society, and useless because they are unable to contribute to the economic good of the community. This analysis led to the view that disabled individuals encountered prejudice which expresses itself in discrimination and oppression. Thus the social model explains the cycle of impairment and poverty seen around the world that, once an individual becomes impaired, he becomes

Discriminations against children with disabilities in mainstream schools in Southern Ghana: perspectives from stake-holders

Seite 5 von 15

socially excluded from society. Children with disabilities are often excluded from a country's education system because it lacks the ability to accommodate them or because they are actively discriminated against due to stigma attached to their disability (Ibid). Again, he argued that the education system has failed disabled pupils/ students by not equipping them to exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens. In a similar vein, the special education system has functioned to exclude them from both the education process and wider social life. Also to the social view, Ainscow (2004) recognises that any child can experience difficulty in school, but that these difficulties can be a stimulus for improvement of the school learning environment.

The Social Model of Disability on the other hand is criticized by some researchers; in that it failed to recognised the importance of impairment. That is the model ignores or is unable to deal adequately with the subjective experiences of the pain of both of impairment and disability. According to Oliver (1996), this is based on a conceptual misunderstanding because the social model is not about the personal experience of impairment but the collective conceptual experience of disablement. The environment is portrayed as necessary cause, even if not sufficient, and as the predominant factor in all trait-related disadvantages. Thus; it captured the social setting alone as sufficient cause of barrier to persons with disabilities.

In spite of the limitation of the social model of disability, it is important to this study because, it helps the researcher to understand and examine the personal, social and cultural forces that for many years have marginalised and oppressed children with disabilities. The model is useful in providing insight and understanding to education trainees and academicians to lobby the government in adapting to policies in the areas of social, political and economics to be responsive to the needs and aspirations of children with disabilities. Also the model offers a critical understanding of the reasons why discrimination occurs in the society. Lastly, the study embraced this model because it provides an alternative to the medical model of disability which rejects the patient as defective by situating disability exclusively in the individual characteristics.

Methodology

The study employed qualitative research method to enable the experiences and feelings of the people to be explored, permitting an understanding of their lives. This is in line with Bray et al. (2007), Bryman, (2008), and Creswell, (2003) suggestions that, in qualitative research, the participant is expected to give detailed rather than general information on the features of the specific case under investigation. In addition, in conducting research into the issues of marginalised groups such as children with disabilities, qualitative enquiry helps to bring out their experiences

in order to understand their situation. Primary and secondary sources of data collection was used to gather data. The researcher adopted a double-sided research method for the study which comprised of primary and secondary sources. Data collection instruments involved semi structured questionnaires and interview guide. Information was obtained directly from children with disabilities and their parents, head teachers, teachers, resource teachers, education officers and disabilities association personnel. In all 10 schools were chosen in the Ga East and New Juabeng district respectively with a sample size of 19 respondents considered for the study. Data collection was done through in depth interviews. The sample size was not too large because the study as largely qualitative.

The sampling design used for this study was simple random and purposive sampling. Simple random sampling was used in picking the schools so that each school would stand an equal chance of being chosen. Second in using purposive sampling, the researcher used his/her judgement to select people who took part in the study with the fore knowledge that, those people can provide answers that are necessary for the study. These subjects of respondents have experiences with vast knowledge and special expertise on the study, particularly the key informants such as officers, head of schools, representative from a disability association and parents. English language was the main medium for data administration with translated versions such as Ga, Ga-Adangbe, Ewe, Fante, and Twi to complement because not all the respondents were literates. Data collected was qualitatively analysed thus, the researcher transcribed all the data collected from respondents. All the transcribed data were read through several times and to identify the flow of information and themes that are emerging. After the themes were identified, the main analytical tool used for the study was constant comparison analysis. Since this study comprised of different research participants, all their transcripts were carefully listened to and information teased from each and compared to make the analysis of data. Thus points of collaboration and divergence were taken care of. The interpretations and findings were discussed and compared with existing findings.

Limitations of the study

As typical as most qualitative studies, this study was limited in some ways. First the findings cannot be generalised to a larger population as the voices were only limited to the participants experiences. Thus, the transferability of the findings to other places should be cautioned.

Presentation of Findings

The Realities Students with Disabilities Face in Mainstream Schools

Discriminations against children with disabilities in mainstream schools in Southern Ghana: perspectives from stake-holders

Seite 7 von 15

The findings from the various stakeholders who took part in this study unearthed that students with disabilities faced several challenges. These challenges ranged from discriminations from government inadequate policies, their school colleagues, teachers, and non-teaching staff in the mainstream school. The presentations below captured vividly the daily experiences of children with disabilities in mainstream schools.

> *The people in my class prefer to give their notes to others who are non-disabled like them rather than me. I am being insulted and humiliated due to my disabilities by my mates. Sometimes they do not want to play with me; especially, Baba Issah who has a tumour in the head is always being ridiculed by his mates. Also I have been repeated in class for poor performance and sometimes several repetitions become a threat to my stay in the school. Also, I am sometimes teased by our mates due to my inability to remember what is taught in class. The teachers are patient for me in the classroom but when the lessons are over they do not want you to ask questions for further explanation. My friends help me in the explanation of our notes but they also sometimes mislead me. (**A child with disability from mainstream school**)*

> *There are no special materials in school and the teachers are sometimes not nice to me. Though my classmates do accept me and talk with me some of them laugh at me in class and also they tease me of my disability by calling me names like "Akakedro" (ginger). Few of my mates don't talk to me in class because of my disability. I think this problem I am having will have a great effect on my life and also my education at school, because at times I cry and want to stop schooling though the teachers are good. I feel motivated to come to school and learn and I have learnt a lot of things in school but if I come to school and I have these problems I feel like stopping the school. (**A child with disability from mainstream school**)*

> *My teachers don't mind me, they always leave me out of the class because they don't ask me to answer or ask questions in class. May be if they are in good mood sometimes they help me understand my notes. Again, I think teachers don't prepare me to move forward with my classmates. The school does not really address the barriers I have when I come to school and learn. Some of the teachers normally will get angry and cane me if I don't see well what is written on the board. The school doesn't provide me with any remedial class to explain further if I don't understand some subjects in class. I really don't know if they do welcome me to the school. (**A child with disability from mainstream school**).*

Parents and Teachers Perspectives on Disabilities

This section presents the understanding of disabilities from different stakeholders. Thus teachers, parents, and special educators others were asked to explain their understanding of the terms disability and disabled. Basically, they saw disability to be an impairment, condition, or inability of a particular individual to perform certain tasks. Below are some quotes to show peoples understanding of the term disability and disabled.

> *Disability is when someone has impairments and he or she is not able to perform certain activities like any other person.* **(Parent A)**

> *Disability is a condition in which a person is physically and mentally challenged."* **(Parent B)**

> *Disability, I believe, is when someone is not able to do what everyone can do as a result of child birth or accidents, but at times the environment around can make a person with disability more disabled. I am saying this because they don't provide things to help people with disabilities but only the non-disabled people. I believe the word itself brings a negative idea into people's mind.* **(Teacher A)**

> *The word disabled brings the idea that the person is sick. In fact the moment that word comes to mind it means the persons needs help. I am a parent with a child with disabilities but the word disabled brings negative thought to many people because they view that person as not part of society;and because of the negative conotations they are looked down upon, I think the word should be replaced with a more respectful word.* **(Parent C)**

> *The word disabled is very degrading because it is not like the person cannot do anything but when left alone he/she can also use his/her talent to do something. Unfortunately in our Ghanaian society the word depicts negative ideas. The moment you mention disabled it means that person is sick and needs assistance.* **(Teacher B)**

> *The word disabled is too 'strong', for me as special educator because if you are labeled like that it means you are not normal. Personally as a special educator I hope to see that word fade out one day.* **(Special education teacher or resource teacher A)**

Barriers Pupils with Disabilities Face in School: Parents and Teachers Perspectives

In this section, parents and teachers narrated the barriers that the children with disabilities face in school. In summary, teachers and parents noted that children with disabilities face the following challenges: the unsuitability of architectural design of the schools, inadequate resource teachers, lack of parental involvement in matters concerning academic work, inadequate teaching and learning materials, low intellectual ability and emotional problems as their friends tease and make fun of them. Below are some voices to buttress the challenges faced by children with disabilities.

> *My child has a physical disability- that is he limbs and finds it difficult to get to his class; it is my biggest problem. His friends always have to help him which he*

Discriminations against children with disabilities in mainstream schools in Southern Ghana: perspectives from stakeholders

Seite 9 von 15

said he feels uncomfortable with. At times too, he needs additional tuition to catch up but it seems that opportunity is not available. (**Parent D**)

The barriers my child encounters are many because it seems what it takes to help him are not there in the school. For example, my child's disability is got to do with his legs so he needs easy access to the school environment but unfortunately there are no ramps in the school and he always has to struggle on to get to his classroom. At times the friends have to carry him to the class. My child also complains of some few teasing here and there goes on which makes me uncomfortable so at times he does not want to go school. (**Parent A**)

As a special educator, I see a lot of barriers being encountered in the practice of inclusive education in Ghana. Some of which include lack of parental involvement. Indeed it is difficult to get parents in the schools to discuss issues of their child's learning needs. The curriculum is very inflexible to modify and the regular teachers are not ready to change it to suit all categories of children in the classroom. They claim the education institution as a body has set targets for them to which it is a requirement for their promotion at work; however, they have to meet their targets for the term (**Special education/resource teacher B**).

Well, for the child with disability in my class the problem he faces is the limited access to the resource teacher because I don't have the expertise to help her when he does not understand the lesson. The materials for learning are also not available so that he can learn properly. My pupil with disability in my class doesn't have problem moving around the buildings. But I think if there should be a child with visual or physical disability he or she will find it difficult to move around. This is due to the architectural construction with long staircases without the provision of ramps and elevators. (**Teacher C**).

The major barrier is the required textbooks for their level of intelligence are not provided. Thus, the learning and teaching materials are not provided in the school for us to use to help them learn. I have a child with disability in my class and when I am teaching I realise she struggles to understand. Unfortunately I don't have any additional teaching material to help her understand the lesson and learn. The other barriers are architectural where those with movement problem find it difficult to use the school buildings and classrooms easily. In this school there are two children with disabilities, one in my class and the other one in the lower class. (**Teacher D**).

Causes of Disability

In here, the researchers enquired about the causes of disability in children. From the expression of their views, it was realised that cultural beliefs were paramount. People usually as can be seen in the findings below that, parents who give birth to disabled are either punished for a wrong doing either by themselves or relatives. Some even see children with disabilities as "spirit children". A few held the view that disability can be caused by medical conditions. The findings below present the evidence discussed above.

Yes, culturally educating these groups of children is not allowed because they see them as gods. Even me myself at first I was having the perception that they are from the gods. I have realised my mistakes through sensitisation from my children. At first I even was having the perception that they are children from the gods. Also I understand it can be a medical condition which not detected early could lead to disabilities. (**Parent A**).

Parents with special children are not bringing their children out due to our cultural beliefs and practices. In the Ghanaian society persons with disabilities are seen as pitiful and worthless. This perception affects their opportunities in the society; those ones hiding are denied any form of education. (**Teacher A**).

Cultural beliefs influence a lot, because a parent who gives birth to a disabled child is assumed to have done wrong to the gods and she is being punished. So, most parents hide them. The problem is that there is not enough awareness or education to disabuse these perceptions; some even believe they are spirits or gods and don't want to do anything with them. (**Teacher B**).

It is one of the problems when it comes to the issues of disability; culturally persons with disabilities are completely rejected by some ethnic groups whiles others see them as burden on the family. They are not regarded and respected in the society but those that are seen as gods who are worshipped and revered in the family. These perceptions affect the care given to them by families and services provided to them by the society. Most families for fear of stigma hide their child with disability from societal view. Hiding them prevent them from going to school. (**Education officer A**)

Personally, I believe culturally our beliefs affect or influence educating persons with disabilities. This is because our perceptions and attitudes prevent children with disabilities to go to school; they aren't regarded as "normal" leading to neglect. Teachers, administrative staff, children and other teaching staff carry their attitudes from the society to the schools, discouraging them from benefiting from schooling. (**Education officer B**)

Knowledge of disability law

Concerning knowledge of disability law some of the respondents, including teachers, had no knowledge of the disability law. For those who recounted ever hearing of the disability law, they were not sure of what it entails. Below are evidence of low knowledge of the law.

I don't know of any law but i heard they are protected and also have equal right. (**Parent B**)

I have never heard of any disability law neither do I know about any policies; if there is any then I believe it is not helping too much because for example my child will have been provided with a better school environment to learn. (**Parent C**)

It has been long when I heard a law should be passed but I don't know if it has been passed and even if it has been passed, unfortunately, I don't know the details so I can't say much about it but I am sure it helps persons with disability in the country. (**Teacher A**)

Discriminations against children with disabilities in mainstream schools in Southern Ghana: perspectives from stakeholders

Seite 11 von 15

> *I have heard about the Act briefly and what I know is that they should be provided with equal right and be treated as normal because they also contribute to the nation. (***Teacher B)**

> *The disability law says that there should be no discrimination, so that they can also feel loved and be part of the human populace.* **(Teacher C)**

> *It is a good move to help persons with disabilities in the country to participant in the society. So far I will say I have not seen much being done after the passage as the result of the 10 years moratorium. It is sad and frustrating that 6 years into the passage of the Act the government has not found it important to implement the law. Now the government cannot hold any service provider responsible for inaccessible facility and also denial of employment. The 10 years moratorium is just unreasonable, we have gone back and forth but no results so we have to wait for 10 years. The Federation of Persons with Disability is the key stakeholder in the passage of the Disability Act. The Act is there to promote the welfare of persons with disabilities and violation can be sanctioned.* (**Officer from disability institution A)**

This was surprising especially in the case of the teachers who are supposed to have at least some basic knowledge about disabilities and the legal rights protecting children with disabilities that they are in charge. The possible conclusion could be attributed to the fact that they are no special education teachers thus; they do not consider disability issues too important.

Stakeholder Perspective on the Position of Children with Disabilities in School

> *I think children with disabilities should be given equal access to school. This is because, there are regulatory frameworks such as the 1992 constitution, the children's Act of 1998 and other international legal support for their inclusion in mainstream schools (****Head teacher** *A)*

> *Despite the fact that there are regulatory frameworks supporting the inclusion of children with disabilities in school, their needs and experiences are different. In our educational system in general, teachers, and pupils do not take into considerations such differences. This makes their education frustrating and unwelcoming. (****Head teacher B)**

Discussions of Major findings

Results of the study indicated that even though, there are special schools for some children with some form of disabilities, some children with LESS disabilities are also included in the mainstream schools. This has been made possible as a result of the general education policies which have compelled stakeholders to do so. For instance the United Nation Conversion on the Rights of the Child which Ghana signed onto clearly upholds the importance of education of all children with disabilities and maintains that they must not be excluded from the general educa-

tional system, "Education for All" (1990), the World Summit for Children in 1990, the Standard Rules in the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disability (1993), the UNESCO Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994), the Dakar Framework for Action (2000), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, 2000) among other policies.

Though Ghana has not yet been able to place all children with disabilities into mainstream schools, those who are already placed in mainstream schools face a lot of challenges. It was revealed by the children with disabilities that they are discriminated against by the colleague students, teachers, and the society at large. Parents and teachers and other participants corroborated the findings of children with disabilities by bemoaning the deplorable state of school conditions, inadequacy of resources for their needs (resource teachers, text books, school infrastructure) and even how the few available are not designed to suit them. This is in tandem with the findings of Moasun and Sottie (2014) that, the State and its agencies have failed to provide adequate skilled personnel, infrastructure and logistics for the care and protection of Children with Disabilities. The findings that the school environment were not suitable to the needs of children with disabilities also confirms the social model of disabilities which argues that the disability of the individual is not what disables him or her but the social organisation and architectural design of the environment within which the person lives. The case is made that inclusive education is not just placing children with disabilities in the mainstream schools but involves the provision of special needs for them while they are with others in the mainstream schools. The point is that, inclusive education is not just the presence of children with disabilities in school but involves the provision of special education needs for their benefit from learning process and education like their non-disabled counterparts. Second, to practice inclusive education in Ghana there is the need to take a step away from cultural beliefs and practices and the medical model of disability which explains and relates inaccessibility to education for children with disabilities to their individual characteristics towards the barriers which prevent them from participating and benefitting from education.

The next objective of the researchers was to examine stakeholders understanding of the terms disabilities and disabled and what causes them. The findings revealed that people's understanding of the terms determines the types of treatment they will give to people with those conditions. Basically, according to the participants, "disability" is an impairment which limits one's ability to perform certain activities. With regards to "disabled", most of the participants' acknowledged that anytime the term is used, it means the person is sick and needs help. The term therefore connotes negativity as some parents noted in the interview. This also goes to support earlier findings by Moasun and Sottie (2014) that people have a lot of ignorance towards people with disabilities. They furthered that as a

Discriminations against children with disabilities in mainstream schools in Southern Ghana: perspectives from stakeholders

Seite 13 von 15

result of ignorance about the cause of disability; they turn to blame and maltreat children with disabilities (Moasun & Sottie, 2014). People often perceive that parents who give birth to children with disabilities are either punished for a wrong doing either by themselves or relatives.

Besides, some teachers' attitudes related positively towards inclusive education as evident in the field data gathered. On the whole, there were negative attitudes towards having children with disabilities in their classroom. The possible conclusion may be as a result of educators submitting to and pursuing the general education policies of Ghana which requires educating all school going age children irrespective of their background. More so, training workshops for resource teachers may have helped by sensitising the regular classroom teacher on issues of disabilities. Thus, the districts run 'train – the – trainer' programs for resource persons to assist and sensitise teachers in the various schools on how to handle children with disabilities in their classroom.

Implications for policy and practice

It is worth noting that educational policies that have been in existence have not been able to address the needs of children with disabilities in mainstream schools. Therefore, Government and other stakeholders need to step up their efforts in ensuring that the needs of children with disabilities in mainstream schools are met, otherwise they could be prevented from accessing and benefiting from education despite the free education for all children. This suggests that these policy provisions are so far inadequate and inappropriate in addressing the educational needs of children with disabilities in school i.e. there is limited implementation of policies for successful inclusive education in Ghana. Schools fall short in their practical implementation due to a variety of reasons many of which are outside the school's control. An example of a major challenge has been, difficulty in changing the established attitudes and behaviours acting as barriers to any change in the school and the larger society.

The failure of the community to change their attitudes may be due to lack of deeper understanding of inclusive education being a process of systematic and structural change. Again, lack of interest in the development and implementation of educational policies for persons with disabilities may be as a result of protection of segregated education and the peoples understanding of disability and its causes in general. But the benefit of Inclusive Education is that it would be very effective in promoting social inclusion and demystifying stereotypes associated with disabilities and the education of children with disabilities.

In addition special education services provided to children with disabilities in mainstream schools were limited. Clearly, it suggests that the lack of provision of special education services for children with disabilities serves as a limitation to the practice of inclusive education. The interviewee teacher pointed out that, they run the normal school; thus, there is nothing like the provision of special education services except counseling, extra curriculum classes which are organised for the whole school, not targeting children with disabilities, and at times identification of learning needs. All other variables were limited with regards to the practice of inclusive education.

Moreover, there is hardly any acknowledgement of traditional beliefs and practice in relation to developing policies and programs to the education of children with disabilities. Thus, implementing and practicing inclusive education will need recognition of Ghanaian traditional education to help understand basic attitudes and cultural modification leading to societal change. This is because inclusive education is a highly controversial concept in education which relates to the cultural beliefs, values, and practices as well as dominating concept of individual worth and dignity. More so, Ghanaian societies have cared for and educated their disabled members for many years which have been overlooked in our modern education system and it is a significant barrier to expanding access to education to children with disabilities. It appears the colonial legacy of education in Ghana has not changed much; Ghana models its education practice on her colonial masters which has implication for inclusive education. For instance, Dahlberg and Moss (2005) noted that colonial form of schooling considers schooling as simply receiving knowledge from a superior authority for replication.

However, if the pedagogical landscape of the Ghanaian schooling systems privilege teachers' authority and knowledge over learners then individuals with learning difficulties will be further subjugated, (Agbenyega, & Deku, 2011). These suggest that the practice of inclusive education in Ghana must incorporate individual national identity with respect to the local context situation to help address the challenges and promote effective and efficient practice. Linking the broader Ghanaian values and beliefs will contribute to the education of children with disabilities. It will also help in eliminating negative preconceive ideas of persons with disabilities and to achieve the goal of inclusive education.

References

Agbenyega, J. & Deku, P. (2011). Building New Identities in Teacher Preparation for
    Inclusive Education in Ghana. *Current Issues in Education,* 14(1). Retrieved from
    http://cie.asu.edu/

Ainscow, M., & Sandill, A. (2010). Developing inclusive education systems: the role of

Discriminations against children with disabilities in mainstream schools in Southern Ghana: perspectives from stake-
holders

Seite 15 von 15

organizational cultures and leadership. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 14*(4), 401-416

Ainscow, M. (2004). Salamanca 10 years on: What has been the impact internationally? Keynote address. *IN: Final Report: Regional Workshop on Inclusive Education: Getting All Children into School and Helping Them Learn:* Available from http://www2.unescobkk.org/elib/publications/Inclusive_Edu/

Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (second edition ed.). USA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Danforth, S., & Morris, P. (2006). Orthodoxy, heresay and the inclusion of America students considered to have emotional/behavioural disorders. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 10(2-3), 135-148

Culham, A., & Nind, M. (2003). Deconstructing Normalization: Clearing the Way for inclusion. *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability* 28(1), 65–78.

Hutchinson, N. L., & Martin, A., K. (2012). *Inclusive classrooms in Ontario schools*. Toronto: Pearson Canada.

Maul, C. A., & **George H. S. Singer** (2009). "Just good different things": specific accommodations families make to positively adapt to their children with developmental disabilities. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education* 29, pp. 155-170.

Moasun, F. Y. & Sottie, A. C. (2014). Growing up with disability in Ghana: Experiences and perspectives. *Ghana Social Science Journal* 11 (1), 53-77

Mittler, et al., (2002). Social Exclusion and Education. *Journal of Integrated Care,* 10 (3), pp. 5-15.

Porter, G. L., & Smith, D. (Eds.). (2011). *Exploring inclusive practices through professional enquiry*. Rotterdam: Sense publishers

Reiter, S., & Vitani T. (2007). Inclusion of pupils with autism: The effect of an intervention program on the regular pupils' burnout, attitudes and quality of mediation. *Autism* 11(4) 321–333.

UNESCO (2012). *Education for All Goals.* Retrieved from:

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the

internatiagenda/educationfor-all/efa-goals/