

## **ADMINISTERING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR STUDENTS' HEALTH, SOCIAL WELL-BEING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NSUKKA EDUCATION ZONE, ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

This study investigated ways of administering inclusive education in secondary schools for students' health social well-being and sustainable development in Nsukka Education Zone Enugu State. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The design of the study was descriptive survey. The population of the study was 8,695 made up of 865 principals and 7830 teachers from the public secondary schools in the zone. A sample of 462 made up of 117 principals and 345 teachers sampled through proportionate simple random sampling was used for the study. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select teachers from selected schools in each of the 3 local Government Areas that constitute the educational zone. A 24-item structured questionnaire was designed from the review of literature. The structured questionnaire was face validated by 3 experts, two in Special education and one in Measurement and Evaluation. The Cronbach Alpha Method was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument and obtained the reliability indices of 0.81, 0.87 with overall reliability 0.83. The questionnaire was administered on 462 respondents; all were retrieved and analyzed. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation while z-test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses. The findings of this study revealed that teachers exhibit poor attitudinal dispositions towards students for an inclusive education in schools. The study further revealed that principals' administrative traits had no significant impact towards promoting an inclusive education for the mutual co-existence and social well-being of students that could lead to sustainable development in the educational system. It was therefore, recommended that an adequate managerial and administrative training programme in inclusive education should be provided for both principals and teachers which must be compulsorily attended as they are pivotal to the implementation of effective inclusive education. In addition, the stakeholders should set up monitoring team that will oversee and supervise teachers and principals in line with an inclusive education policy goals supported with regular orientations on inclusive education in schools administration. This will go a long way in ensuring that the tone of school environment is healthy and socially inclined to equitable and competitive academic engagement for all categories of students to have a sense of belonging without any form of prejudices.

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**Keywords:** Inclusive, school administration, health, social well-being, sustainable devlmt.

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### **Introduction**

Education remains a potent change agent for accelerated national development and societal transformation. Everybody, both young and old has a right to education irrespective of gender, disability, race, color, religion and language differences. In pursuant of the Jomtiem World Conference Declaration on "Education for All (EFA)," UNESCO (1990) laid emphasis on achieving quality education as the bedrock for national

development, an all-inclusive education of students has been in the front burner of national discourse. To achieve this lofty objective, education was made free and compulsory at basic level as a means towards achieving sustainable development in Nigeria. In line with this assertion, the United Nations Charter on achieving sustainable development goals (SDG) in 2015 emphasized on the need to have an inclusive education policy framework especially in the developing countries across the world. The idea was intended to use education as a potent means for combating poverty, hunger, food crisis and numerous health challenges plaguing education system continuity and humanity in general especially in the sub-Saharan African. Many African countries, particularly Nigeria have been highly affected by some emergent public health challenges such as covid-19 pandemic, HIV, Ebola, Cholera, Measles, mpox among others which have affected schooling calendar tremendously and impeded drives towards achieving the sustainable health and education aspects of the sustainable development goal SDG 3 (Rotimi, 2016).

Sustainable development requires meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to satisfy human aspirations for a better life. The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) (2015) defines sustainable development as an attempt to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It can be achieved through eradicating poverty, hunger, illiteracy, while guarantying a healthy life. Universal accesses to basic health and education, social welfare through inclusive quality education for the populace have been advocated as steps towards achieving sustainable development for Nations. Sustainable development means better ways of doing things without compromising the health status of the people. Therefore, sustainable development includes economic growth, environmental stewardship and social inclusion. The Sustainable Development Goals set in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly are intended to be achieved by the year 2030. The sustainable development goals offer a framework and blue print for achieving sustainable global prosperity and commit participating countries to individual and joint action for the good of all on the planet. Hence, healthy living while pursuing the goals of education is one of the cardinal objectives of sustainable development, which is a trust in inclusive education. One implication of not doing so is an increase in mortality rate and denial of an opportunity for education which affects the manpower production for achieving sustainable living standards. This means that, the schools in order to co-exist with various kinds of learners with different health status, disabilities and certain standards must be ensured, in terms of conducive and risk free environments (Tangcharoensathien, Mills & Palu, 2015).

Sustainable development encourages conserving and enhancing resource base by gradually changing the ways in which individuals develop and use technologies. Countries must be allowed to meet their basic needs of employment, food, energy, water, sanitation, education and good health (Christopher, 2014). Sustainable development has two key concepts that are, needs and limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organizations on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs. Stabilizing and reducing carbon emissions is the key to living within environmental limits. This comprehensive goal encompasses a wide range of health priorities, economic, social and management of infectious and non-communicable diseases, mental health, universal health coverage and access to quality inclusive education for students (Chireshe, 2018).

Inclusive education for students' learning is a principle applied to accommodate all learners with diverse backgrounds, learning abilities and limitations for the purpose of sharing collective learning experiences. This is done in a manner that all will be afforded

an equal opportunity for students' maximum participation in order to achieve whatever gains that is potentially available to learners (Ozaji, 2015). In the early 1950s, many schools in the United States of America had non-inclusive education policies, thus warranting serious segregation policies for students with learning challenges and disabilities from cohabiting in the same learning classroom. Many decades after, this situation was confronted with stiff protests from parents, civil society organizations and members of the parliaments pushing to reverse the trends and allow every student the opportunity for the common resources of the public-school utilities and share interactions with the same school personnel (Akhidonor, 2007). Singh (2016) expressed that prior to this equalization principle, any child with perceived or actual disabilities; physical, emotionally, psychological, language and intellectual challenges was not allowed to share common classroom learning space with other students. Administering an inclusive education is one which manages and takes into cognizance the diversities of learners, their structural differences and responds appropriately to the needs of students while paying attention to special assistance and providing facilities as needed. According to Singh (2016), administering inclusive education refers to a new management approach to systematically organize schools where children with actual or perceived disabilities and learning difficulties are allowed coexist with normal ones under this same roof. This is a way of bringing in and encouraging all students to mutually accept one another, coexist and learn together in one classroom, group and community regardless of their disabilities in any area and seeks to maximize the potentials of all students (Okeke, 2010). UNICEF (2005) proposed that all children should be in the same classroom and in the same community or school. Lilla (2017) explained that administering inclusive education concerns itself with decision making, planning, organizing, communicating, controlling, coordinating and evaluating school activities bearing in mind the specific and general needs of all learners.

Operationally, administering inclusive education refers to the process of using available human, financial and material resources to ensure equitable learning opportunities regardless of the observed differences in the learning abilities, and challenges while discreetly handling individual problems in a professional manner. Burden (2000) observed that inclusive education of student calls for persuading the school to accommodate all learners and advocate radical changes of attitude to encourage inclusiveness. An inclusive education aspect is one cardinal issue that borders on having attitudinal orientation values, to promote equity, and ensures that all students have equal opportunity for education, accommodation and acceptance (Swart, 2001). Inclusive education aim to combat discrimination and create a school culture that welcomes and values all students (Ozor, Ugwanyi & Aneke, 2015). The concept of administration of inclusive education refers to integration of all learners, teachers or non teaching personnel contiguous to effective and efficient teaching and learning to inculcate positive attitude towards learners without prejudice, bias, language barriers, ethnicity, disability or gender. According to UNESCO (2005), inclusive education for students recognizes the fact that all people in school system have the rights, privileges, and obligations to treat and be treated fairly and equitably which encompasses. Recognition of the rights to education and its provisions in non-discriminatory manner; Recognize and value the uniqueness of each student; Ensure that all students have equal access to education; All students are not discriminated on the basis of gender line; All are treated fairly and without prejudice; Have a culture of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs, ethnicity, language, HIV status, race, sexuality while recognizing all people can learn in the same

environment; Use schedules and data records to monitor students health and well-being; Use of language that is inclusive; Ensure that every student is fully included in all aspects of school life; and Ensure that teachers monitor students' progress based on acceptable standards

Administering inclusive and Special Education Needs (SEN) is a continuing challenge because of the lapse in meeting the needs of all concerned. According to Fokolade, and Adeniyi (2015), an inclusive education may face a number of challenges ranging from lack of facilities and equipment, negative attitude of the school personnel towards students especially to the special needs students, lack of technical and managerial expertise to handle inclusive education environment for proper teaching and learning. With these in mind, teachers and principals' behavioural and attitudinal dispositions matters in school organization and in influencing the learning outcomes of the students (Pierce, 2010). Attitudinal disposition is a psychological construct that determines actions or inactions of teachers towards their students that influences overall behavioural outcomes (Johnson, 2014). The school principal occupies an important position in administration of school enterprise (Suzanne, 2015). It is generally believed that principals have the capacity to determine the nature and extent to which implementation of an inclusive learning environment can be made possible. According to Lilla (2017), this will require a further training of the teachers and principals about inclusive education principles, right attitudes and approaches to inclusive education. Training should be an on-going process may be through the mandatory continuing professional development program (MCPD) thus equipping personnel to: Have proper orientation on inclusive schooling through the paradigm shift from the medical model to a human rights model of learner with special educational needs; To grasp the full meaning and understands the demands of its application in the school administration; Have positive attitude towards inclusion as an educational programme; Receive adequate management training in inclusive education for principals and other education personnel; Training on how to adapt the curriculum to the individual learner's needs; Recognize and accept diversity; Master methods and models of inclusive practice; Become well trained as a resource person; and Being able to accept that everyone in the school is his/her responsibility rather than assuming someone else will do it.

Effective inclusive education depends on the availability of high quality professionals and facilities to meet the needs and aspirations of a diverse school population. Cagney (2016) argued that teachers' poor attitude towards inclusive students' learner environment are due to the fact that they were not adequately trained to cope with the exigencies of such fragile learners disequilibrium. The problem of this study therefore is concerned with the general tone of the schools in Nsukka Education Zone. The attitudes being portrayed by teachers and the administrative milieu within which students have to learn within the available facilities pose disturbing scenario. The attitudinal disposition of teachers appears to be exemplified in low-commitment, intolerance, abuse of students' rights, lack of equity and fairness in dispensation of punishment, assessment of students' performance suggest a reassessment of attitudinal disposition of teachers for inclusive education of students in the school system.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Since the return of democracy in the fourth republic, successive administration in Nigeria had struggled to implement various developmental agenda with low success, impact and sustainability. There is also the problem of abandonment of institutions, structures and inability to restructure existing institutions to meet up with growing challenges of poor

inclusive education for sustainable development. There are indications of various levels of government's inability to fund education which resulted in abandonment of any request for setting up suitable structures for inclusive education for those children with disabilities. Lack of specially trained school administrators and teachers, facilities, materials and unfavorable attitudes towards students with special needs have negative impact on school administration and learning outcomes. The gaps in students' learning abilities, structural challenges in terms of physical, psychological, emotional issues create a widening gap difficult to be accommodated by teachers in one accord for effective teaching and learning and made worse by the avalanche of poorly trained and ill-equipped teachers have serious implications for inclusive education system in Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The aim of this study was to investigate administration of inclusive education for students' health, social well-being and sustainable development in Nsukka Education Zone. Specifically, the study determined:

1. the attitudinal dispositions of teachers towards promoting inclusive education for students' health and social well-being; and
2. the administrative traits exhibited by principals for promoting inclusive education of students health and social well-being

### **Research Question**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the attitudinal dispositions of teachers towards promoting an inclusive education for students' health and social well-being in secondary schools?
2. What are the administrative traits exhibited by principals for promoting inclusive education of students' health and social well-being in secondary schools?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses guided the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the attitudinal disposition of teachers for an inclusive education of students' health and social well-being.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the administrative traits exhibited by principals for promoting inclusive education of students health and' social well-being.

### **Methods**

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. A descriptive survey design seeks to document and describe what exists or the present status of existence or absence of what is being investigated (Nworgu,2015). It was used in this study to describe the prevailing attitudinal dispositions of teachers and principals for promoting inclusive education in schools for sustainable development in health and social well-being of students. The population of the study was 8695 (Source: Post Primary Schools Management Board, Nsukka Zonal Office 2024).. The sample was 462 respondents made up of 345 teachers and 117 principals. Proportionate simple random sampling technique was used to compose the sample for the study. The instrument for data collection was; A 24 item questionnaire which was developed from the literature reviewed was used to obtain data for the study. The scale for the questionnaire was Strongly Agree (SA), Agree, (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with values 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The structured

questionnaire title, ‘Attitudinal dispositions of teachers and Administrative traits of principals Questionnaire’ were face validated by three experts, two in Special education and one in Measurement and Evaluation, all knowledgeable in school administration and management of special education. Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire which yielded coefficients of .91, .79 with overall reliability of 0.82 were obtained for the two clusters. Weighted mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while z-test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses. The criterion mean of the scale of the items is 2.50. Any item with a weighted mean value of 2.50 and above was considered accepted while any weighted mean of less than 2.50 was considered not accepted. The null hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted for any cluster whose z-calculated value was less than the z-table value for the two hypotheses.

## Results

**Table 1:** Mean ratings of teachers and principals on attitudinal disposition of teachers towards promoting inclusive education.

S/N	Items	Teachers			Principals		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	DEC	$\bar{X}$	SD	DEC
1	Teachers recognize the rights of students to education.	1.57	0.34	NA	2.4	0.52	NA
2	Teachers treat students in non discriminatory manner.	2.49	0.26	NA	2.22	0.67	NA
3	Teachers criticisms to students are constructive and based on high sense of responsibility	3.58	0.60	A	2.18	0.46	NA
4	Teachers ensure that all students have equal access to education	2.45	0.70	NA	2.21	0.62	NA
5	Teachers ensure that all students are treated fairly and equitably	3.51	0.51	A	2.53	0.41	A
6	Teachers recognize the unity of students in diversity	2.41	0.31	NA	2.49	0.33	NA
7	Teachers actively monitor all students health and social well-being	1.56	0.2	NA	1.78	0.24	NA
8	Teachers use inclusive language in teaching	2.41	0.40	NA	2.58	0.28	A
9	Teachers ensure that all students are included in all aspects of school life	2.55	0.35	A	1.37	0.46	NA
10	Teachers have a culture of addressing and responding to diversity of needs.	2.18	0.71	NA	2.34	0.59	NA
11	Teachers monitors students progress based on acceptable standards without prejudice or bias	2.43	0.6	NA	2.46	0.49	NA
12	Teachers do not discriminate students on health ground or deformities	2.86	0.62	A	3.41	0.16	A
Cluster mean		2.48	0.54	NA	2.42	0.45	NA

**Key**  $\bar{X}$  = mean, SD = standard deviation. DEC = Decision. NA = Not Accepted A = Accepted.

The data presented on Table 1 revealed that teachers have very poor attitudinal dispositions towards inclusive education in school administration. Their attitudes towards inclusive education were indicated by the mean ratings of principal and teachers in which case the majority of items scored below 2.50. This is a clear indication that teachers' attitude do not portray positive lights towards inclusive education in school environment. Actions that may lubricate good social cohesion and academic rivalry are found to be poorly implemented hence negative attitudinal disposition towards students' inclusive education and social well-being.

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of teachers and principals on the attitudinal dispositions teachers towards inclusive education for Students' health and social well-being.

**Table 2: Summary of z-test analysis of the differences between the mean ratings of teachers and principals on attitudinal disposition of teachers towards inclusive education**

S/N	Status	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Level of Sig.	Z-cal	Z-tab	df	Dec
1	Teachers	345	2.48	0.54	0.05	0.98	1.96	460	NS
2	Principals	117	2.52	0.45					

Given the above table, it is observed that the null hypothesis was accepted since the calculated z-value of 0.98 is lower than z-critical value of 1.96 at 460 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. There is therefore, no significant difference between the mean ratings of teachers and principals regarding the attitudinal dispositions of teachers towards inclusive education for students' health and social well-being. The implication of this finding is that the difference between teachers and principals' attitude towards inclusive education is not significant hence negative attitude towards inclusive education exists in the schools.

**Table 3: Mean ratings of Teachers and principals on the administrative traits of Principals for promoting inclusive education for students' health and social well-being**

S/N	Items	Teachers			Principals		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	DEC	$\bar{X}$	SD	DEC
13	Principals exhibit equity and fairness without fear or favour to all students in the discharge of duties	2.46	0.95	NA	2.53	0.34	A
14	Principal conduct proper orientation for teachers on inclusive school administration.	2.48	0.41	NA	2.33	0.72	NA
15	Principal give necessary advise to teachers having difficulties in meeting the needs of various learners	2.47	0.76	NA	2.43	0.32	NA
16	Principal show maximum consideration for feelings and circumstances of all his students	2.35	0.15	NA	2.42	0.19	NA
17	Principal exhibit positive attitude towards inclusion as an educational programme	2.49	0.21	NA	2.48	0.58	NA
18	Principals have managerial capacity to lead individuals with diverse background	2.46	0.28	NA	2.51	0.43	A

19	Principals ensure training of teachers on how to adapt the curriculum to individual learner's needs	2.14	0.13	NA	2.47	0.46	NA
20	Principals recognize and accept diversity	2.45	0.41	NA	2.11	0.60	NA
21	Principal accepts that everyone in school is his/her responsibility and not someone else	2.91	0.35	A	2.62	0.53	A
22	Principal master methods and models of inclusive practice	2.35	0.17	NA	2.45	0.40	NA
23	Principal demonstrate evidence of being well trained and resourceful in inclusive school administration	2.27	0.45	NA	2.44	0.48	NA
24	Principal organize seminars and workshop for teachers on human rights model of learner with special educational needs.	2.45	0.21	NA	2.49	0.53	NA
<b>Cluster Mean</b>		<b>2.47</b>	<b>0.32</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>2.46</b>	<b>0.45</b>	<b>NA</b>

The data presented on table 3 reveal that almost all the items had their mean values less 2.50, an indication that both teachers and principals agree to not exhibiting adequate behavioural and administrative traits for promoting inclusive education. The implication is that Principals exhibited administrative traits that are not in tandem with inclusive education for students. Critical areas that affected attitudinal dispositions include lack of managerial and administrative skills for adapting curriculum to the learners' needs, poor orientation lack of advice to the teachers on inclusive education.

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of Teachers and principals administrative traits exhibited by principals for promoting good attitudinal disposition towards inclusive education.

**Table 4: Mean ratings of Principals and Teachers on the administrative traits exhibited by principals for promoting inclusive education in schools**

S/N	Status	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Level of Sig	Z-cal	Z-tab	df	Dec.
1	Teachers	345	2.47	0.32	0.05				
2	Principals	117	2.46	0.45		0.45	1.96	460	NS

From the Table 4 above, it can be seen that the null hypothesis was accepted because the calculated z-value of 0.45 is lower than the z-critical value of 1.96 at 460 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. There is therefore no significant difference between the mean ratings of teachers and principals on the administrative traits of principals for promoting inclusive education. The data presented on Table 3 show that almost the whole items had mean value less the cut-off point, an indication that principals did not exhibit worthwhile administrative traits for promoting inclusive education.

## Discussions

The result of research question one as summarized on Tables 1 and 2 showed that there are strong indications of poor attitudinal dispositions of teachers towards inclusive education for students in schools. This situation might have affected the inclusive education in schools towards sustainable development of education in the zone. This could be so because poor attitudinal and moral disposition of teachers affect their commitment to the job. This is in line with finding of Ozor, Ugwuanyi and Aneke (2015) that students learning is being affected by some elements of attitudes being exhibited by principals and



teachers such as administrative aloofness and non-challant attitude on the part of teachers towards their students' academic progress. The findings also agree with Cagney (2016) who reported that negative attitude of teachers affect students' academic performance when it is unfriendly and not caring for individual learner's specific and general needs. Similarly, the findings agree with that of Christopher (2014) who maintained that lack of professional training and attitudinal re-orientation and practices remains the bane and contribute significantly to students' difficulties in learning and towards inclusive education for teaching and learning experience in classrooms of varied learners' abilities.

This reason could be so and supported by the fact that training and retraining of teachers is very important in order to ensure that teachers continue to meet up with emergent demands and needs of every individual and general students so as to achieve the over all goals of education. The culture of looking at peculiar needs of individual student as not worth pursuing should be discouraged through an inclusive education policy enforced by the government. The findings also reinforce Okeke (2010) who opined that observed that disability should not be the basis for denying any child of the right to education as it is enshrined in the constitution of Nigeria that no child should be denied the right to education on account of actual or perceived disability. The testing of hypothesis 1 revealed that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean ratings of teachers and principals on the attitudinal disposition of teachers towards inclusive education of students and hence the null hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted going by the commonality of both opinions of teachers and principals.

The findings of the research question two indicate that that principals' behavioural/administrative traits fall short of the standards that would encourage inclusive education for students. This is in consonance with Singh (2016) who reported that the administrative traits of principal must be such that can provide a positive framework for inclusive education of learners by making sure that the manner and attitude exhibited are in line with the tone commensurate to inclusive teaching and learning environment. Hence, in this study, it was found that, principals exhibited poor behavioural traits and attitudes which are not favourable to inclusive education setting. The result indicates that behavioural traits and administrative quality exhibited by principals scarcely encouraged inclusive education of students and social well-being. This is due to the fact that some schools may lack facilities and specially trained manpower to handle special needs and some teachers may also not be inclined to undertaking extra burdens for students with special needs or disabilities. The findings agree with the view of Lilla (2017) who posited that inclusive education is a trust in the principals with the right leadership qualities and possessing good behaviour traits to ensure that all learners are carried along. By this result, it shows that principals were not very mindful of the condition for inclusive education hence the reason for poor attitudes exhibited by them towards inclusive education. This study also agrees with Suzanne (2015) who revealed that when principals are inadequately equipped with the right attitudes and values, there will be lack of cooperation and low commitment to inclusive education and social cohesion in school environment. Hypothesis 2, revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of teachers and principal with regards to behavioural/administrative traits exhibited by principals for promoting inclusive education for student health and social- well being. It therefore, implies that the principals along with the teachers were lacking in the attitudinal disposition and administrative traits that would encourage inclusive education for social well-being of students.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, it was concluded that administrative traits of principals along with the attitudes of the teachers did not encourage the development of inclusive education which is germane to a sustainable healthy and social environment for teaching and learning. However, certain positive attitudinal and behavioural traits must have to be inculcated and accompanied by enhanced necessary incentives such as provision of school facilities and equipment for teaching and learning, the training and re-orientation of principals and teachers for inclusive education have to be made a priority by government. This is evident from the declining moral and attitudinal values of teachers thus contributing to lack of consciousness for inclusive education. Considering the strategic importance of secondary education, emphasis on teachers' attitude is indispensable. No nation develops without achieving inclusive education of her citizenry built on sound moral and attitudinal values.

## **Recommendations**

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

1. Attitudinal re-orientation of teachers in line with the objectives of inclusive education should be organized in schools.
2. Regular monitoring and supervision of teacher on implementation of inclusive education principles should be established
3. Government should provide enough teaching and learning facilities in schools to address varied learners interests.
4. Adequate administrative training of principals on special and inclusive education principles and practices is needed. This will boost their capacity to manage an inclusive education school setting.

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