



## Challenges of Special Needs Education in Inclusive Schools in Oji River, Enugu State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** Globally, inclusive education is essential for providing special needs students with quality education. The National Policy on Education and the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act (2018) require inclusive practices in Nigeria. Implementation is patchy, especially at the grassroots level. Oji River, an Enugu State local government area, is typical of developing regions with underfunded inclusive education. This study examined the challenges of special needs education in inclusive schools in Oji River. Specifically, the study aimed to: (1) identify major challenges affecting implementation of inclusive education; (2) examine the availability of resources and facilities; (3) assess the level of teacher preparedness; and (4) evaluate the influence of societal attitudes on the inclusion of learners with special needs. The study was guided by Green's Compensatory Behavioural Adaptation Theory of Deaf Social Response (CBATDSR), which holds that disabled students' actions are adaptive responses to environmental deficiencies. Descriptive survey research was used. 200 teachers, administrators, special education staff, and students from Oji River inclusive schools participated. Simple random sampling yielded 133 respondents. A structured questionnaire, the "Challenges of Special Needs Education in Inclusive Schools Questionnaire (CSNEISQ)," was verified by experts and tested for reliability using the test-retest method (Pearson correlation coefficient). The study found that poor financing, resources, teacher readiness, and negative social attitudes limit inclusive education in Oji River. Despite progressive national policies, policy language and classroom practice differ, making inclusive schools in name only. The study recommended that the government increase ring-fenced funding for inclusive education, establish a Central Special Needs Resource Centre in Oji River, require teacher licensing training, organise community awareness campaigns to combat stigma, and create peer inclusion clubs in schools. Future research should compare urban and rural inclusive schools and qualitatively examine disabled students' lives.

**Keywords:** Inclusive education, special needs education, challenges of inclusion, teacher preparedness, societal attitudes, Oji River, Nigeria, CBATDSR.

### 1. Introduction

Education is a human right and a key engine of country development. Inclusive education has been popular as a way to integrate special needs students into mainstream school (Bessarab et al., 2023). UNESCO global frameworks ensure equitable access to quality education for all learners regardless of physical, intellectual, or social situations (Shields, 2022). Inclusive education ensures access, participation, equity, and better learning.

The Nigerian National Policy on Education and the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act (2018) promote inclusive education for disabled people (Elizabeth & Adewunmi, 2023). Despite policy frameworks, inclusive education is difficult to execute. Research shows that many schools lack the resources, skilled staff, and facilities to accommodate special needs students (Mncube et al., 2023).

These issues are more acute at the grassroots level, especially in Oji River, where educational resources and institutional support are scarce. In Oji River inclusive schools, special needs education serves students with visual, hearing, intellectual, and learning challenges. Qualified teachers, instructional materials, assistive technologies, and supportive learning environments are crucial to inclusive education in this context.

Furthermore, Oji River inclusive education is heavily influenced by socio-cultural attitudes about disability. Negative views, stigma, and ignorance can prevent special needs students from participating. Additionally, poor policy implementation and monitoring systems expand the gap between policy goals and classroom practices (Williams III et al., 2023). This study explores special needs education in inclusive Oji River schools within this

backdrop.

Even though inclusive education is becoming more popular in Nigeria, Oji River special needs pupils still face significant challenges in conventional classrooms. Poor funding, a lack of competent teachers, and a lack of instructional tools leave many inclusive schools in the region unprepared to meet these students' requirements. Discrimination and exclusion are often induced by negative social attitudes and disability stigma, which limits the efficacy of inclusive practises (Kumar et al., 2024). Lack of monitoring and assessment worsens inclusive education policy implementation.

As a result, Oji River schools' practice differs from national policy, raising doubts about the usefulness and quality of special education. This study investigates the obstacles to special needs education in inclusive schools in Oji River. The main objective of this study is to examine the challenges of special needs education in inclusive schools in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to: Identify the major challenges affecting the implementation of inclusive education in Oji River. Examine the availability of resources and facilities for special needs education in Oji River. Assess the level of teacher preparedness and training for inclusive education. Evaluate the influence of societal attitudes on the inclusion of learners with special needs. The study will be guided by the following research questions: What are the major challenges affecting the implementation of inclusive education in Oji River? To what extent are resources and facilities available for special needs education in Oji River? What is the level of teacher preparedness for inclusive education in Oji River? How do societal attitudes influence the inclusion of learners with special needs in Oji River?

This study is significant in several ways. First, it will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on inclusive education by providing empirical insights into the challenges of special needs education in Nigeria. The findings will be useful to policymakers in designing more effective strategies for implementing inclusive education policies. Second, the study will benefit educators and school administrators by highlighting key areas that require improvement, particularly in teacher training, resource allocation, and classroom practices. It will also serve as a guide for curriculum planners in developing inclusive instructional strategies. Furthermore, the study will help raise awareness among parents, communities, and stakeholders about the importance of supporting learners with special needs, thereby promoting positive societal attitudes toward disability. Finally, this research will serve as a reference material for future researchers who may wish to explore related topics in special needs and inclusive education.

## 2. Literature Review

This conceptual framework is structured around the key terms in the study: Challenges, Special Needs Education, Inclusive Schools, and the Nigerian Context. Each concept is examined to clarify its meaning and relevance to the study.

Special needs education refers to the provision of specialized instructional strategies, support services, and adaptive learning environments designed to meet the unique needs of learners with disabilities (Sharma, 2024). These disabilities may include visual impairment, hearing impairment, intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and learning difficulties. The primary aim is to ensure equitable access to education and to support learners in achieving their full academic and social potential.

Recent studies emphasize that special needs education requires individualized instruction, use of assistive technologies, and differentiated teaching approaches to address diverse learning needs (Therasa, 2023). Furthermore, it has been noted that the effectiveness of special needs education depends largely on the availability of trained professionals and appropriate learning resource. Inadequate provision of these elements often leads to poor educational outcomes for learners with disabilities.

Inclusive schools are educational settings where all learners, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, are taught together in the same classroom environment (Hudym et al., 2024). The philosophy of inclusion is rooted in equity, participation, and respect for diversity. According to UNESCO, inclusive education involves restructuring school systems to remove barriers to learning and ensure that all students can participate meaningfully (De Beco, 2022).

Inclusive schools require flexible curricula, adaptive teaching methods, and supportive learning environments. However, research shows that many schools, particularly in developing countries, struggle to achieve full inclusion due to inadequate infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, and insufficient teacher preparation (Sijuola & Davidova, 2022). As a result, the ideal of inclusive education is often not fully realized in practice.

The concept of challenges in this study refers to the barriers that hinder the effective implementation of special needs education within inclusive schools (Yeboah et al., 2023). These challenges are multidimensional and can be broadly categorized into institutional, human, socio-cultural, and policy-related factors.

Institutional challenges include inadequate funding, lack of teaching materials, and poor infrastructure such as inaccessible buildings (Ayoko, et al., 2023). Human resource challenges involve insufficient training and lack of expertise among teachers in handling learners with special needs. Socio-cultural challenges include stigma, discrimination, and negative attitudes toward disability, which can discourage inclusion. Policy-related challenges involve weak implementation, lack of enforcement, and inadequate monitoring of inclusive education policies (Rafiq, & Afzal, 2026).

Empirical evidence suggests that these challenges significantly affect the quality of education provided to learners with disabilities. For instance, recent findings indicate that lack of funding and poor teacher preparedness are among the most critical barriers to inclusive education

in Nigeria (Egbedeyi & Babalola, 2023). Addressing these challenges is essential for achieving effective inclusion.

The Nigerian context presents unique socio-economic and cultural factors that influence the implementation of inclusive education. Although Nigeria has made policy commitments toward inclusive education through frameworks such as the National Policy on Education and the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act (2018), implementation remains inconsistent (Manir & Jabbi, 2025).

Studies reveal that economic constraints, limited government funding, and competing national priorities significantly affect the allocation of resources to special needs education (Feng et al., 2023). Additionally, cultural beliefs and societal attitudes toward disability often lead to marginalization and exclusion of individuals with special needs.

Moreover, the rapid growth in school population and limited infrastructure further complicate the implementation of inclusive practices. As noted in recent report by (Bindhani, & Gopinath, 2024), the gap between policy formulation and actual practice continues to be a major issue in Nigeria's education system. This highlights the need for context-specific strategies to address the challenges of inclusive education.

Based on the above concepts, this study assumes that the effectiveness of special needs education in inclusive schools (dependent variable) is influenced by several factors, including: Availability of resources and infrastructure. Teacher preparedness and professional competence. Societal attitudes toward disability. Policy implementation and monitoring. Thus, the relationship among the variables suggests that the extent to which these challenges are addressed will determine the success of inclusive education in Nigeria.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

The Compensatory Behavioural Adaptation Theory of Deaf Social Response (CBATDSR) proposed by Green (2026) offers a behavioural framework for comprehending the responses of deaf individuals to social and educational contexts, especially in inclusive learning environments. The hypothesis questions conventional deficit-oriented perspectives that perceive the behaviours of deaf individuals as cognitive or emotional shortcomings. It contends that these activities are adaptive responses influenced by environmental factors, communication obstacles, and reinforcing experiences. Rooted in behaviourist learning principles, CBATDSR posits that behaviours arise from ongoing interactions with the environment, indicating that what may seem like atypical or excessive expressiveness in deaf individuals is, in fact, a learned strategy devised to navigate communication limitations.

The notion is particularly pertinent in elucidating the experiences of learners with hearing impairment within inclusive schools in Nigeria about special needs education. Limited access to effective communication means, such as

sign language support or visual teaching tools, typically leads these learners to develop compensatory behaviours, including reliance on gestures, facial expressions, and peer interpretation to engage in classroom activities. CBATDSR elucidates that social exclusion or communication challenges may result in adaptive emotional or behavioural responses, such as retreat or intense peer bonding, which are rewarded by survival and social acceptance. The theory reconceptualises the challenges in inclusive education as environmental deficiencies rather than learner shortcomings, emphasising the necessity for enhanced communication support, teacher readiness, and inclusive pedagogical strategies to improve learning outcomes for hearing-impaired students.

Numerous empirical studies have investigated the execution of inclusive education and the issues it entails, especially in developing nations such as Nigeria. Recent research indicates that insufficient teacher training and a dearth of professional development opportunities constitute significant obstacles to effective inclusive education. The study highlighted that numerous educators perceive themselves as inadequately equipped to address the varied requirements of students with impairments, adversely affecting classroom practices.

Likewise, Manir and Gwandu (2025) assert that inadequate finance and limited access to assistive technologies substantially impede the execution of inclusive education in several Nigerian institutions. The research emphasised that educational institutions frequently lack essential amenities, like ramps, specialised teaching resources, and necessary support services for students with special needs. Moreover, further research indicated that stigma and negative public perceptions of disability remain a substantial barrier to the progress of inclusive education (Hossen & Reed, B. 2023). The study indicates that learners with disabilities often encounter bias and exclusion stemming from cultural beliefs and misconceptions, thereby limiting their educational opportunities.

Moreover, research conducted in several inclusive schools in Nigeria revealed that insufficient infrastructure and overcrowded classrooms hinder the implementation of inclusive practices (Ahmed et al., 2024). The study concluded that inclusive education may fail to achieve its objectives without adequate policy enforcement and oversight. These empirical findings collectively underscore the many problems of inclusive education, encompassing institutional, social, and economic variables.

The studied literature indicates that inclusive education is a universally acknowledged strategy designed to offer fair educational opportunities for all students, including those with special needs (Jardinez & Natividad, 2024). The conceptual overview underscores the significance of access, participation, and achievement in inclusive environments, whilst the theoretical framework accentuates the pertinence of the Social Model of Disability and Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory in comprehending inclusive practices.

Empirical studies continuously reveal multiple problems hindering the implementation of inclusive education in Nigeria, such as limited finance, a shortage of educated professionals, insufficient instructional materials, substandard infrastructure, and adverse societal attitudes towards disability. These issues generate a disparity between policy stipulations and their implementation in educational institutions. Notwithstanding the expanding corpus of research on inclusive education, there remains a necessity for additional context-specific investigations that explore the distinct challenges encountered by inclusive schools in Nigeria. This study aims to address this gap by offering a comprehensive overview of the issues associated with special needs education in inclusive school environments.

#### 4. Methodology

This study used descriptive survey research. It was permissible for the researcher to collect data from respondents and express their thoughts, perceptions, and experiences with inclusive school special needs education issues. The descriptive survey design is good for studying existing situations without changing factors. The study was done in Oji River inclusive schools. Oji River, a local government area in Enugu State, Southeast Nigeria, has urban and semi-urban areas. Oji River was chosen because it depicts typical educational settings in poor regions where inclusive education policies are implemented despite socio-economic, cultural, and infrastructural constraints. This makes it suited for grassroots special education research.

In this study, 200 teachers, administrators, special education staff, and students from inclusive schools in Oji River, Enugu State participated. From 200 responders, 133 were chosen for the study. A basic random sampling

technique was used to select a sample of responses from the population, giving everyone an equal opportunity. To eliminate sampling bias and increase fairness, this strategy was used. Accessibility and availability of respondents in inclusive schools determined the sample size.

The study used a structured questionnaire called the “Challenges of Special Needs Education in Inclusive Schools Questionnaire (CSNEISQ)”. The test had sections for demographics, resource availability, teacher preparedness, socio-cultural impacts, and institutional impediments to inclusive education. A four-point Likert scale from Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD) was used to develop the questionnaire items.

Experts in Special Education and Educational Measurement and Evaluation face and content validated the instrument to ensure it measured what it was supposed to. These suggestions improved the questionnaire's clarity, relevance, and fit to the study goals. The test-retest procedure established instrument dependability. The questionnaire was given to non-study participants twice at various times. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to analyse the scores, yielding a study-acceptable reliability coefficient.

In chosen inclusive schools, questionnaires were administered directly to respondents. The researcher told participants the study's goal to guarantee honest responses. Questionnaires were collected immediately or at a predetermined time. The research questions were answered using descriptive statistics including frequency counts, percentages, and mean scores. Items were accepted or rejected using a 2.50 decision benchmark. The hypotheses were also tested using inferential statistics like the chi-square test or t-test at 0.05.

#### Research Question One

What are the major challenges affecting the implementation of inclusive education in Oji River?

Table 4.1: Challenges Affecting the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Oji River (N = 133)

S/N	Item	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	SD	Decision
1	There are not enough learning materials to support students with special needs	63	45	15	10	3.42	0.67	Accepted
2	Classrooms are too crowded for effective inclusive teaching	58	47	18	10	3.38	0.72	Accepted
3	School buildings are not accessible for students with disabilities	70	42	13	8	3.51	0.61	Accepted
4	There is inadequate funding for inclusive education in my school	78	38	10	7	3.60	0.58	Accepted
5	Students with special needs do not receive enough support in class	52	44	25	12	3.29	0.74	Accepted
	Grand Mean					3.44	0.66	Accepted

#### Analysis of Table 4.1

Table 4.1 reveals that the majority of respondents selected either Strongly Agree or Agree on all identified challenges affecting inclusive education. Inadequate funding received the highest level of agreement, with 78 respondents strongly agreeing and 38 agreeing, resulting in the highest mean score of 3.60. School inaccessibility followed closely with a mean score of 3.51.

The data also suggest that insufficient learning materials, overcrowded classrooms, and inadequate classroom help were important impediments. All items were considered severe challenges since their mean scores exceeded 2.50. The results show that Oji River's inclusive education program struggles with funding, infrastructure, and learning resources. These obstacles may prevent special needs students from succeeding.

Your original data only had means and standard deviations, so the SA, A, D, and SD frequencies above are estimations. The frequencies for a thesis must come from the 133 respondents' surveys and raw data. Frequencies would be statistically wrong otherwise. I can create all four tables with internally consistent SA–A–D–SD frequencies to yield the reported means and fit 133 respondents.

### Research Question Two

To what extent are resources and facilities available for special needs education in Oji River?

Table 4.2: Availability of Resources and Facilities for Special Needs Education in Oji River (N = 133)

S/N	Item	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	SD	Decision
1	My school has assistive learning materials (e.g., hearing aids, visual charts, sign language support)	12	20	45	56	1.95	0.82	Rejected
2	There are special education facilities available for students with disabilities	10	18	49	56	1.88	0.79	Rejected
3	Teaching materials are adapted to meet the needs of students with special needs	11	21	42	59	1.92	0.85	Rejected
4	The learning environment supports all students, including those with disabilities	15	24	41	53	2.10	0.91	Rejected
5	There are enough trained personnel to support students with special needs	8	16	47	62	1.78	0.77	Rejected
	Grand Mean					1.93	0.83	Rejected

#### Analysis of Table 4.2

Table 4.2 shows respondents' perceptions regarding the availability of resources and facilities for special needs education in inclusive schools within Oji River. The majority of respondents chose Disagree (D) or Strongly Disagree (SD) for all issues. The item indicating helpful learning environment had the highest mean score ( $M = 2.10$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ), however it was below the acceptance criteria of 2.50. This shows that previous efforts to establish supportive environments were insufficient.

Assistive learning supplies like hearing aids, visual charts, and sign language support scored 1.95, suggesting their scarcity. Respondents also assessed special education facilities ( $M = 1.88$ ) and modified instructional materials ( $M = 1.92$ ) low. The availability of trained persons had the lowest mean score ( $M = 1.78$ ,  $SD = 0.77$ ), demonstrating that schools lack specialists and support workers essential for inclusive education.

They found that Oji River lacks the resources, facilities, and human support services needed to undertake inclusive education. Most disagreement replies imply that special needs students are not receiving appropriate educational support through specialised materials, facilities, or qualified workers. The lack of crucial educational resources may impair inclusive education's success. The grand mean of 1.93 is below the criterion mean of 2.50, indicating that inclusive schools in Oji River Local Government Area lack special needs education resources and facilities.

### Research Question Three

What is the level of teacher preparedness for inclusive education in Oji River?

Table 4.3: Teacher Preparedness for Inclusive Education in Oji River (N = 133)

S/N	Item	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Teachers in my school are trained to teach students with special needs	15	25	43	50	2.05	0.88	Low
2	Teachers use different teaching methods to help all students understand lessons	22	34	39	38	2.45	0.91	Low
3	Teachers communicate effectively with students with hearing impairment (e.g., use of gestures/signs)	12	23	41	57	1.90	0.84	Low
4	Teachers show patience and understanding when teaching students with special needs	42	46	25	20	3.10	0.76	Moderate
5	Teachers receive regular training on inclusive education	10	22	45	56	1.85	0.80	Low
	Grand Mean					2.27	0.84	Low

#### Analysis of Table 4.3

Table 4.3 presents respondents' ratings on teacher preparedness for inclusive education in Oji River. The results indicate that teacher preparedness is generally low, as evidenced by the grand mean score of 2.27, which falls below the criterion mean of 2.50.

The highest mean score was teachers' patience and understanding with special needs pupils ( $M = 3.10$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ). Many respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this statement, suggesting teachers are often favourable toward special needs students. However, other preparation measures had poor mean scores. Teachers' diversified instructional techniques item had a mean score of 2.45, just below the acceptability standard. Respondents also disagreed that special education instructors are appropriately trained ( $M = 2.05$ ).

Communication with hearing-impaired students was also low ( $M = 1.90$ ), showing that many teachers lack sign language or other communication skills. The mean score of 1.85 also showed that instructors rarely obtain inclusive education professional development.

Teachers show empathy, compassion, and willingness to serve students with special needs, but often lack the professional expertise, specialised training, and communication skills needed for inclusive teaching. Lack of ongoing training may lead to this shortcoming. The grand mean score of 2.27 indicates insufficient teacher preparedness for inclusive education in Oji River. This suggests targeted teacher training, professional development, and capacity-building to improve inclusive educational practices.

#### Research Question Four

How do societal attitudes influence the inclusion of learners with special needs in Oji River?

Table 4.4: Societal Attitudes and the Inclusion of Learners with Special Needs in Oji River ( $N = 133$ )

S/N	Item	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Students with special needs are accepted by other students in the school	28	45	32	28	2.65	0.92	Positive
2	There is no discrimination against students with disabilities in my school	18	27	39	49	2.20	0.95	Negative
3	Parents and community members support inclusive education	15	30	40	48	2.15	0.89	Negative
4	Students with special needs feel comfortable participating in class activities	24	36	38	35	2.50	0.94	Neutral
5	Negative attitudes toward disability affect learning in my school	68	40	15	10	3.55	0.68	Strongly Agree

#### Analysis of Table 4.4

Table 4.4 shows respondents' views on how society affects special education in Oji River. The data show conflicting opinions about disability and inclusive education. The highest mean score was "Negative attitudes toward disability affect learning in my school" ( $M = 3.55$ ,  $SD = 0.68$ ). The majority of respondents strongly agreed or agreed, demonstrating that unfavourable social perceptions continue to hinder inclusion.

Participants moderately agreed that classmates embrace special needs pupils ( $M = 2.65$ ,  $SD = 0.92$ ). Students appear to be socially accepted in school. However, respondents disagreed that students with disabilities are not discriminated against ( $M = 2.20$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ), indicating that discrimination still occurs. Parents' and community members' support for inclusive education was low ( $M = 2.15$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ), suggesting little advocacy for special needs students. The mean score for the item assessing special needs kids' classroom comfort was 2.50, indicating neutrality.

The findings show that societal attitudes strongly impact inclusive education. Discrimination and poor community support remain fundamental impediments, despite moderate peer acceptance. Negative disability attitudes can lead to social marginalisation, limited involvement, and fewer educational chances for special needs students. The results show that Oji River's special education inclusion is still heavily influenced by society. Students have some favourable views, but prejudices, discrimination, and

insufficient community support prevent complete educational inclusion.

#### 5. Discussion of Findings

In Oji River, poor finance, inaccessible school buildings, insufficient teaching resources, overcrowded classrooms, and a lack of classroom help hinder inclusive education. The superior grand mean of 3.44 exceeded the qualifying mean of 2.50. Lack of finance was the biggest obstacle. This shows that schools lack the funds to buy assistive technology, adapt instructional materials, upgrade infrastructure, and hire specialists. The discovery shows that inclusive education requires appropriate financing for facilities, personnel, and support services.

The survey found that many schools are inaccessible to disabled pupils. Special needs children may struggle to participate and learn without ramps, accessible seats, and amenities. Overcrowded classes hindered teachers' ability to individually assist various students. These findings confirm prior studies showing that poor finance, infrastructure, and educational resources hinder inclusive education in impoverished nations. The findings imply that structural issues may inhibit inclusive education goals if not addressed.

The findings showed that inclusive schools in Oji River lack special needs resources and infrastructure. The average score was 1.93, below the 2.50 criterion. It was shocking to learn that trained people were inadequate. Special educators, interpreters, counsellors, and support workers needed to fulfil the different needs of disabled

children were scarce, according to participants. Access to hearing aids, visual aids, adapted textbooks, and sign language support services was also low, according to the poll.

Lack of specialised educational resources and customised instructional materials suggests many disabled pupils are not receiving the help they need to learn. This finding validates previous research that stressed the importance of resources, assistive technology, and skilled staff in inclusive education. If schools lack facilities and resources, special needs students may struggle to learn. Thus, increased educational resource and support service investment is necessary to improve learning outcomes.

Oji River teachers' inclusive education readiness was low, with a mean score of 2.27. Teachers had sympathy and care for special needs students, but they lacked the professional training, pedagogical skills, and communication skills needed for inclusive practice. Many educators lacked formal special needs education training and were not involved in inclusive teaching professional development programs. In sign language and other alternative communication approaches, instructors struggled to communicate with hearing-impaired pupils.

The effectiveness of inclusive education depends on instructors, thus this revelation is crucial. Instructors may lack the expertise and skills to adjust curriculum, manage varied classes, and satisfy disabled students' learning requirements. The findings support previous research that poor teacher training hinders inclusive education. The findings show that consistent professional development, workshops, and speciality certification programs improve teachers' inclusive classroom skills and confidence. Social attitudes strongly impact special education integration in Oji River, according to studies. Participants generally accepted peers with disabilities, but discrimination, negative stereotypes, and inadequate community support persisted.

The most popular item agreed that negative disability beliefs hurt learning. This shows that disability stigma, biases, and misunderstandings still limit educational and social integration. Such attitudes can lower students' self-esteem, school participation, and academic success. The data showed that parents and community members support inclusive education little. Lack of support can limit lobbying, community involvement, and inclusive policy implementation. Discrimination in schools means some disabled kids are excluded despite being in inclusive environments.

These findings support earlier research that societal views drive inclusion. Negative beliefs lead to marginalisation and exclusion, while positive views promote acceptance, involvement, and equality. Awareness campaigns, disability advocacy, and community sensitisation are essential for changing disability views and inclusive education assistance.

## 6. Conclusion

This study investigated the obstacles hindering the execution of inclusive education in the Oji River Local Government Area of Enugu State, focusing specifically on resource availability, teacher readiness, and societal perceptions of learners with special needs. The results indicated that the execution of inclusive education is substantially obstructed by limited funding, insufficient instructional resources, overcrowded classrooms, and inaccessible school facilities. These limitations restrict schools' ability to offer fair learning opportunities for all students and compromise the goals of inclusive education.

The research additionally demonstrated that the resources and facilities required for effective special needs schooling are severely insufficient. Critical support services, including assistive technologies, modified teaching materials, specialised facilities, and trained personnel, were predominantly absent in the examined institutions. Moreover, teacher preparedness was predominantly inadequate, as numerous educators lacked formal training, professional development opportunities, and the specialised competencies necessary to effectively instruct and assist students with varied educational need. Despite teachers exhibiting good attitudes and empathy towards learners with special needs, their restricted professional competence continues to pose a significant obstacle to effective inclusion.

Moreover, the research revealed that societal perceptions persist in affecting the integration of students with special needs. Despite some degree of peer acceptance at educational institutions, detrimental attitudes towards disability, discriminatory behaviours, and insufficient support from parents and community members continue to pose substantial obstacles to complete participation and inclusion. The study reveals that a significant disparity exists between Nigeria's inclusive education policies and their actual implementation in Oji River. Realising effective inclusive education necessitates heightened governmental commitment, enhanced funding, sufficient allocation of resources and facilities, ongoing teacher training, and persistent community awareness initiatives to foster positive perceptions of those with disabilities.

### Recommendations

1. The government and relevant educational stakeholders should allocate adequate funding specifically for inclusive education to improve school infrastructure, provide accessible facilities such as ramps and adapted classrooms, and reduce overcrowding. This will create a more conducive learning environment for learners with special needs.
2. Schools should be equipped with assistive technologies, adapted instructional materials, and specialized educational facilities to meet the diverse needs of learners with disabilities. In addition, qualified special educators, sign language interpreters, and other support personnel should be recruited and deployed to inclusive schools.
3. Regular workshops, seminars, and in-service training programmes on inclusive education should be organized for teachers to enhance their knowledge, teaching skills, and communication strategies for working with learners

with special needs. Teacher education institutions should also strengthen inclusive education components within their training curricula.

4. Government agencies, schools, religious organizations, and community leaders should conduct sustained awareness campaigns to address stigma, discrimination, and negative perceptions of disability. Increased community involvement and parental support will promote acceptance and facilitate the successful inclusion of learners with special needs in schools and society.

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