



# Navigating Autism in Inclusive Classrooms: Exploring Teacher Perspectives from Ghana

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## Abstract

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a topic of significant scholarly interest due to its complexity and implications for inclusive education. This study explores the challenges faced by teachers in implementing inclusive education for children with autism (CWAs) in Ghana. It examines the support systems available to CWAs and highlights the barriers educators encounter in inclusive classrooms. Utilizing a quantitative approach, data were collected from a sample of 70 participants, including 30 teachers, 10 teacher aides and 30 CWAs, through structured questionnaires. The findings reveal that while the case study school has implemented structural and environmental adaptations to support CWAs, significant challenges persist. These include inadequacies in the inclusive curriculum, negative societal attitudes towards CWAs, and limited parental involvement. The study underscores the need for targeted interventions such as enhancing teacher training, revising the inclusive education policy, providing specialized resources, and engaging in campaigns to promote public awareness in inclusive education. The study's recommendations aim to create a more supportive learning environment for CWAs—one that addresses systemic barriers including the provision of equitable educational opportunities, improvement in infrastructure, and continuous professional development for special need educators.

## Subject Areas

Educational Technology

## Keywords

Educational Support Systems, Co-Teaching, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Barriers to Inclusion, Special Needs Education, Teacher Challenges, Educational Policy

## 1. Introduction

Globally, teaching different types of learners in a regular school continues to face some child development problems in many educational systems especially in inclusive settings [1]. One such child development problem is the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Often simply referred to as autism, many actors within the educational system including teachers and parents have failed in recognizing and accommodating the unique needs of children with autism (CWAs). The reasons for this status quo have been associated with negative attitudes, the lack of adequate knowledge and training, erroneous perceptions about CWAs and the lack of willingness on the part of stakeholders towards meeting the unique learning and socialization needs of such children [2]. Prior to the beginning of school, many parents use different strategies to track their children's development process in order to help them cope with life demands [3]. As they begin schooling, these children tend to spend most of their time in the school environment under the guidance of a teacher. This change in environment comes with some shock and disorientation for most children and requires that they receive some support to function and learn in school. Accordingly, pupils with special needs require even more exceptional assistance to adjust to the new school environment [4].

Various international legislations and policies exist to safeguard and increase the participation of children with autism in mainstream education [5]. In Ghana over the past few years, successive governments have endeavored to legislate and put in place policies that increased the focus on integrating learners with special needs in the regular classroom. The Education Act of 2008; Act 778 of the Parliament of the Republic of Ghana for instance recommends that learners with mild to moderate learning needs could be integrated with the mainstream schools. Even more recently in 2015, the Government of Ghana launched yet another program dubbed 'Inclusive Education Policy' which was intended to reorganize the delivery of education in a manner that caters for the needs of all kinds of learners including those with special needs. These policies have resulted in an increasing number of special need learners joining the country's mainstream schools.

The increase in enrolment of learners with special needs in mainstream Ghanaian schools has however brought with it additional challenges as the skills and tools of the regular classroom teacher needed to be upgraded to ensure the learning progress of all categories of learners is catered for [3] [6]. The Education Act of 2008, the Persons with Disability Act 715 of 2006 and the Ghana Educational Policy document spanning 2010 to 2020 have all charged schools and educational authorities to cultivate suitable cultures, design policies and implement practices that enhance an inclusive educational environment while ensuring that, pupils with special learning needs are not put to a disadvantage [7]. The ultimate pay-off from these policies, legislative acts and educational reforms however remains elusive perhaps due to the assumption that CWAs and other such learners with special needs will automatically pick up social and mental skills simply because they are exposed to other children in the same school [7]-[13]. Definitely, there must

be a deliberate strategy to equip and position teachers to play such instrumental roles in helping CWAs to learn, interact and successfully integrate with other children in same school systems and to provide support to their instructors [12] [14]-[17]. The purpose of this study is to investigate the unique challenges faced by teachers in implementing inclusive education for children with autism (CWAs) within the context of Ghana's educational system, where cultural, systemic, and policy-related challenges intersect to shape the experiences of both teachers and students and within a background where the integration of children with special needs into mainstream classrooms is still evolving. Ultimately, this study aims to assess the adequacy of support systems in inclusive educational settings and provide actionable recommendations for improvement.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Autism Spectrum Disorder

Autism is a diverse and complex mental disorder which has manifested itself all over the world across different cultures, races, ethnic and social groups [18]. Affecting one in forty-five children aged three through seventeen [19], the condition is defined on a spectrum from mild to severe defects regarding one's difficulty in communication, social impairments, repetitive behaviours and limitedness in sustaining attention [20]. Autism spectrum disorder is a lifelong developmental defect which could impact how people understand what they see, hear or sense and often results in difficulties with social relationships, communication and behaviour [21]. According to [22], the autism condition results in a child's social and communication problems and unusual behavioural manifestations such as repetitive motor movement skills; and the prevalence of which is a global phenomenon with an estimated 4.8% rate in every 10,000 children. Among the categories of ASD disorders are Asperger's syndrome, Rett's disorder, childhood disintegrative disorders and other general non-specified developmental disorders (PDD-NOS) [6]. Although the causes of autism disorders are still being investigated, many researchers attribute the condition to genetic disorders and environmental factors [22] [23].

### 2.2. Inclusive Education (IE)

Some researchers admit the complex and problematic nature of inclusive education emphasizing that the use of the word '*inclusion*' makes the concept quite difficult to define [24]-[27]. The difficulties in defining the concept notwithstanding, it is abundantly clear that, IE is distinguished from the arrangement where children with special learning needs are trained in an exclusively designed school for learners with special needs [28]. Invariably, in the integration or mainstreaming school system, the child with special educational needs (SEN) is integrated into the general educational system and aided to cope with that curriculum on a full-time basis. Hence, it is the SEN child that adapts to the school system and not the school [29].

Most definitions of IE conceptualize it as a process of education which blends special learning needs children with their counterparts in the regular classroom by planning the school system to cater for the unique needs of all categories of learners [30]-[32]. Accordingly, inclusion must be based on a change in every aspect of schooling to fit schools in satisfying the learning needs of all children and reflective of learner diversity [33]-[35]. For the integrative school to achieve success in IE, they must reconsider all the aspects of education—the curriculum, assessment and evaluation methods, pedagogy, child support—in order to remove the hindrances to the different learning needs of the diverse learners [24]. This viewpoint is consistent with the position of [36] which reiterates that, IE should be seen as an incessant and uninterrupted intervention intended to remove the learning and participation barriers for all categories of children in the school system. In the context of this study hence, IE connotes a deliberately designed system of education intended to take away all the exclusionary forces bedeviling the regular learning environment, grant access to and satisfy the diverse needs of all manner of learners [26].

### **2.3. Inclusive Education in Ghana**

Inclusive education has been a key priority in Ghana as the country has always backed international agreements on people's educational rights and how these rights could be safeguarded by constitutional provisions [37]. According to [38], the beginning of IE in Ghana may be traced to the 1951 Accelerated Educational Plan which was later reinforced under the 1961 Educational Act. These Acts demanded of successive governments and stakeholders in education to, among other things, pursue a Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy which resulted in increased enrollment in basic schools [39]. It was however the signing of the Salamanca Statement in 1994 that boosted Ghana's drive to enforcing IE in many public schools [40]. Prior to this, educating SENs was a responsibility entirely reserved for the so-called special schools as the FCUBE policy failed to provide the support and tools needed to run an effective inclusive school system [41] [42]. The contributions of the UNESCO Teacher Education Resource Pack programs of 1995-1996 also became popular in this regard in organizing a series of workshops aimed at facilitating quality teaching for all children of diverse abilities in mainstream schools [42].

In the light of these developments in 2003, the then Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoESS) through the Ghana Education Service (GES) pursued a twelve-year ambitious agenda to safeguard the rights of SENs by putting in place the Education Strategic Plan of 2003-2015. This policy ensured that inclusive education was guaranteed to all who desired it. To add more, the Persons with Disability Act of Ghana, Act 715 legitimized IE placement in mainstream schools. Consequently, refusing to place a child in any of these schools on the basis of their special learning needs became an act punishable by law [26].

Incidentally, various policy documents including the Education Strategic Plan

of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports as well as the Special Educational Needs Policy Framework (SENPF) all came in to advocate for IE [37] [43] [44]. Others remarked that Ghana adopted these policies in IE to fulfill the Education for All (EFA) agenda [45].

The rationale for IE in Ghana re-echoes the nation's commitment to the recommendations of the 1994 Salamanca Statement which was basically intended to restructure schools, make them more accessible, ensure equal opportunities to access education, facilitate good professional partnerships, prepare teachers competently towards optimized teaching and learning, eliminating barriers to teaching and learning, ensuring a more flexible curriculum, implementing a wide-ranging and multi-disciplinary assessment and evaluation criteria as well as promoting parental involvement [45].

The Special Education Division (SpED) of the MoESS was charged with the obligation of executing IE in Ghana from 2003 onwards with the goal of achieving a 100% enrollment of non-severe SENs into the mainstream educational setup by 2015 [43] [44]. In a bid to implement this agenda successfully, [45] reported on a number of institutional and international agency collaborations with the SpED unit of the MoESS. According to [46], the first phase of piloting IE in Ghana was implemented in three regions of the country. Despite a somewhat successful introduction, IE in Ghana is still a journey in progress with five types of inclusive programs including:

- 1) Special units for children with intellectual disability within the regular educational set-up.
- 2) An integrated educational program for children with low or impaired vision.
- 3) Accommodation support and special units for the blind in schools for the deaf.
- 4) Inclusive schools with special resource teacher support systems and
- 5) Inclusive schools without any resource teacher support.

#### **2.4. Educational Support Systems for Teaching Autistic Children**

Special needs education in an all-encompassing school setting is an emerging field of learning that continues to encounter several tests. While the array and complexity of challenges in inclusive education (IE) partly require a change in the teacher training curriculum to include materials and methods that are relevant to meet the difficulties of this special system of education, the teachers' knowledge, attitudes and expertise concerning inclusive education is also of special essence to the successful implementation of IE policies [47]. Admittedly, teaching SEN children comes with a lot of challenging demands within the existing school system and set-up requiring crucial support and tooling to facilitate a seamless inclusive education regime [48]-[50]. As such, a number of scholars [33] [51]-[53] have recommended offering a holistic support system throughout the inclusive school system as a key factor that would enhance a positive teacher attitude and acceptance of inclusion because as the children are identified to benefit from inclusion

around the school environment, it would demand of the teachers to also accept to include these children in their classrooms. Expectedly, positive teacher attitudes towards inclusion are essential prerequisites to having a successful IE administration and giving equitable opportunities to all learners [54].

Accordingly, a few studies suggest that instituting a good teacher support system is one of the fundamental factors that would elicit a positive teacher attitude toward inclusive education [33] [51]. This demands that the entire school system is made to be supportive of and beneficial to the unique needs of the SEN child in all dimensions. Some examples of these support systems for CWAs as identified by [33] include special education and general education collaborations and consultations, in-class support for general education teachers such as the provision of teacher aides and teaching aids, the adoption of various team-teaching strategies, co-teaching, providing ample time for lesson planning and delivery as well as ensuring on-going in-service workshops and personnel development opportunities. With these systems of support in place, [54] is of the view that staff of inclusive schools would gain a stronger sense of empowerment and motivation to be less fearful that, they will be unable to handle the different kinds of learners under their care.

## **2.5. Supporting Collaboration and Co-Teaching**

To establish an efficient collaboration and enhance the implementation of co-teaching strategies in inclusive schools<sup>6</sup>, a series of support services must be made available at the disposal of teachers and other staff involved in a collaborative inclusive educational setting [55]. Examples of these support services include the provision of adequate time for mutual planning of instruction delivery, administrative support from the school, provision of appropriate learning materials for diverse learners, continuous training opportunities for personnel and the leeway to make classroom modifications [56]. It is hence crucial for co-teachers to communicate with each other in co-planning and preparing their daily teaching tasks [57]. On the part of educational administrators, [58] highlighted some issues that school overseers must be concerned about including scheduling staff and students' agenda, outlining the mechanisms for problem solving should any complications arise, granting opportunities for flexible classroom modifications, providing teaching aids and supplies as well as sharing the planning time for co-teachers. Providing the appropriate learning materials for addressing the different educational needs of the student, hence, is an indirect measure for facilitating collaboration and co-teaching. Similarly, [55] identified that training can help in a few ways not only towards the direction of creating a positive attitude for the inclusion of students with autism but also towards the direction of familiarizing themselves with the practice of collaboration and introducing them to various co-teaching approaches that they can employ. In this light, [59] highlighted that, training the staff of inclusive schools increases their feelings of self-esteem and self-efficacy.

Equally important, [6] advocated that, to make the autistic student feel included

in the inclusive classroom and school setting and for their teachers to be able to employ any suitable co-teaching approach, it is crucial that, classroom modifications are accommodated. Permitting an altering of the classroom environment [23] observed, would aid the co-teacher achieve various goals with one stroke where an environment for improving the academic and social skills of the children with different learning abilities is created and thereby creating an atmosphere where every child feels welcomed, respected and hence, become their optimal selves.

## 2.6. Challenges in Teaching Autistic Children

According to [60], carrying out inclusive education demands some considerable changes to organizational practices and the general societal norms among other things. Largely, the process of IE becomes motivating and encouraging when all factors leading to its success are taken into consideration and acted upon continually for improvement. Such an effort would require the provision of the necessary equipment and materials as well as the people-skill development to support IE. Although some progress has been made in providing support to CWAs in the inclusive class, [61] reported that several obstacles bedevil the inclusion of these children in the mainstream set-up.

While Ghana's special education policy prescribes certain tremendous ways to address some of the often-cited challenges which have become barriers to the inclusion of persons with different abilities into the mainstream school system, a number of those difficulties persist [47].

A few studies have identified some challenges facing autistic children in the setting of IE in Ghana [45] [47] [62] [63]. Chief among these challenges is the issue of negative societal attitudes towards people with autism and other special educational needs. This adverse attitude thrives on the prevalent Ghanaian cultural view of people with different abilities [26]. Autistic and other disabled people are often ridiculed with derogatory folklores and songs which are deeply rooted in the belief that, their conditions are either a punishment from God or a curse from evil spirits [63]. Even worse, [64] and [65] reported some offensive remarks which are used in most of these societies to label people with such different abilities. These pejorative labels consequently find their way into the school system and results in stereotyping, ostracism and the stigmatization of CWAs. To manage this, [66] recommends a good mindset and positive attitude towards inclusive education.

Similarly, some of the teachers do not have the requisite skills and professional acumen to effectively handle children with autism and other special educational needs [67]-[69]. Adding several more of the challenges, [26] highlighted that, inclusive education in Ghana lacked several things including the continuous commitment of successive governments to special education, the lack and inadequacy of educational resources, the absence of appropriate assistive technologies, inadequate funding of inclusive and special education as well as lack of support from stakeholders. Other challenges identified by [26] included large class sizes in the

school set-up, infrastructural deficiencies and the co-implementation of both special and inclusive education.

Some lapses in the legal and statutory framework of the disabilities act were also pointed out [45]. Although the Act (715 of Act 2006) spelt out some civil liberties and privileges of people with different abilities, it failed to specify how these persons could be included or integrated in school. In effect, the policies are deficient in guiding the development and implementation of IE and what roles the various stakeholders must play in this regard. Furthermore, the schools within which the piloting of IE in Ghana was conducted used to be regular schools that enrolled both SEN and non-SEN children. Prior to the piloting of this policy however, [26] noticed that the teachers (and to some extent, children) in those schools were not given any adequate training on IE and the roles expected of them. Similarly, parents of these SEN children were not given any special orientation, training or seminar on IE while little or no efforts were made to seamlessly integrate these new learners into the hitherto mainstream set-up [26]. Undeniably, it is noteworthy that, both teachers and the leadership of schools possess basic knowledge about inclusive education and receive training that equips them with the importance of the practice in the quest to develop a positive attitude towards disabled children and in gaining the knowledge and skills on how to handle them better [67].

## **2.7. Theoretical Framework**

In relating the concept of inclusive education more practically to the basic theme around this study, the Theory of Intergroup Contact (TIC) as propounded by [70] was adopted to reinforce this study's theoretical framework. This theory is used to explain and predict how groups with different characteristics could work together by reducing prejudice and interpersonal or intergroup conflicts [71]. The theory predicts that, four factors facilitate intergroup contact—cooperation, equal status of group members, a common goal and authority support and further suggests that, bringing people from a contradictory background together under the conditions of cooperation, equal status, interpersonal acquaintance and support from one recognized authority would improve people's attitudes and enhance dispositions towards an amicable intergroup coexistence [70]. Further, [72] observed that, these conditions are achieved through a structured intergroup encounter that emphasizes the common attributes that the group or members of the group share.

However, not all contacts between diverse groups may lead to an acceptance of each other as there is no formula to determine what constitutes a successful contact [70]. The theorist however echoed that, prejudice within a group could be reduced by equal status contact between the majority and the minority sects in the pursuit of a common goal especially when this contact is sanctioned by an institutional support system [70] [71]. This framework as prescribed by [70] has widely received a lot of backing across a variety of situations, groups and societies [73]-[75]. Accordingly, the controlled contact between children from different

backgrounds in school may affect their social collaboration in a group setting as each child may identify with the other as they try to cultivate the habit of association which would eventually lead to a healthy social climate [70]. In the field of inclusive education, such a social climate is desired and hence, the huge importance of this theory to this study. The adapted model below summarizes a diagrammatic representation of the theory as relates with reduced prejudice and enhanced harmony as essential necessities for successful inclusive education.

### 3. Methodology

The population of the study comprised of seventy participants from the case study school. Using the purposive sampling technique, thirty students living with autism, thirty teachers and ten teachers' aides were selected for participation. Two data collection instruments were employed in gathering the primary data for this study—the use of questionnaires and scheduled observations. The questionnaires were adapted from [24] [26] [71] and comprised of both close and open-ended items regarding respondents' bio data, their teaching responsibilities, the curriculum, their roles and their opinions on the implementation of inclusive education in Ghana which the teachers and teachers' aides responded to. Due to the peculiar inability of the children living with autism to be surveyed quantitatively, they were assessed through structured observations.

## 4. Data Analysis Results and Findings

### 4.1 Profile of Teachers and Teacher Aides

The demographic data of forty respondents drawn from both the teaching and teachers' aides' group is analysed and presented in this section. Key among the demographic characteristics as discussed here include their gender, age range, marital status, highest level of education completed, number of years of working in the case study school and their work position (See **Table 1**).

**Table 1.** Respondents' demographic characteristics.

Demography	Demographic Characteristics of Respondents		
	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	9	22
	Female	31	78
Age Range	18 - 24 years	2	5
	25 - 31 years	8	20
	32 - 38 years	9	23
	39 - 45 years	11	27
	46 years or more	10	25
Marital Status	Unmarried	12	40
	Married	18	60

## Continued

Highest Level of Education	Certificate	3	7
	Diploma	14	35
	Bachelor's degree	19	48
	Master's degree	4	10
	Doctorate degree	0	0
Years of Work	Less than a year	5	13
	1 - 5 years	8	20
	6 - 10 years	18	44
	More than 10 years	9	23
Current Role	Teacher's aide	10	25
	Teacher	30	75

#### 4.2. Educational Support Systems for CWAs in an Inclusive School

While literature highlights the existence of inclusive educational policies that are being implemented in various integrative school settings, this objective seeks to establish the educational support systems that have been made available in the case study school for CWAs using a one-sample t-test analysis. The responses analyzed from the instructors produced a mean score of 2.86, a standard deviation of 0.63 with  $df = 29$ , level of significance (2 tailed) being 0.00 and consequently, a p-value of 0.00 which is less than an alpha of 0.05. Going by this result, the analysis suggests that respondents believe the school has made efforts to provide support systems that would ensure an easier integration of CWAs. This finding is further supported by the data gathered with the use of the observation schedule which shows that the school environment is suited with good drainage systems, clear pavements, a decent canteen, washrooms, recreational facilities, transport and security. Further, all the twenty-six classrooms observed had good ventilation with decent lighting, spacious classroom size, adequate furniture and good class layout which reinforces [49] and [50] view that, in order to facilitate a seamless inclusive education regime, the school system and set-up would require some essential support and tooling which would in turn, yield positive teacher attitudes [33] [51] [52]. What was however lacking from the observation schedule is teachers' in-class support with regards to team teaching, co-teaching and personnel development (See **Table 2**).

**Table 2.** One-sample t-test analysis on educational support for CWAs.

Test Value = 50								
	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.
Compute	40	2.86	0.63	0.069	-	29	0.000	-43.58
Mean					653.46			

### 4.3. Challenges Faced by Instructors in Teaching CWAs

On the question of the challenges experienced by instructors in implementing inclusive educational policies in an inclusive educational setting, a relative importance index analysis was performed to find out which of the challenges were most pronounced among the respondents. The analysis results show that the major themes prevalent from the responses obtained include challenges with the school curriculum which is not suitably adapted to meet the needs of CWAs, inadequate training and development opportunities for teachers, negative attitudes from the pupils' teachers and peers as well as a lack of adequate educational resources. These are somewhat consistent with the study by [54] who found that, among the challenges often faced by instructors of CWAs, the most prevalent ones include the lack of understanding of the concept of inclusive education, mood swing problems often experienced by CWAs, a blanket curriculum which fails to take care of the special learning needs of CWAs, teacher attitudes towards CWAs, negative attitudes from regular peers and a lack of parents' involvement. The results of this analysis in **Table 3** are summarized below.

**Table 3.** Relative importance index ranking of challenges in teaching CWAs.

Challenges faced by instructors	Category	Relative Index	Rank of Index
CH1. Lessons provided to children does not meet the educational needs of the autistic child	Curriculum	0.821	5
CH2. Children with autism are treated with some fear and discrimination by others	Attitude	0.741	8
CH3. The school environment is not welcoming enough for children with autism	Resource	0.714	10
CH4. The school lacks teaching aids and materials that would help autistic children cope with lessons	Resource	0.718	9
CH5. Autistic children often get bullied and maltreated by other children without disabilities	Attitude	0.806	7
CH6. There is limited participation of stakeholders in educating children with autism	Regulators/Stakeholders	0.698	13
CH7. Negative peer influences against children with autism	Attitude	0.711	11
CH8. Lack of specific instructional materials for children with autism	Curriculum	0.857	2
CH9. Lack of commitment and skill by school administrators to the needs of autistic children in school	Training and Development	0.863	1
CH10. Lack of commitment and skill by other staff to the needs of autistic children in school	Training and Development	0.827	4
CH11. Unavailability of specifically trained teachers in the field of Special Education	Training and Development	0.850	3
CH12. Little or no motivational benefits to staff who excel in teaching autistic children	Regulators/Stakeholders	0.704	12
CH13. Unavailability of special learning appliances and assistive aids for autistic children	Resource	0.819	6

## 5. Discussions

The provision of support systems within the inclusive school premise has been found by previous studies [33] [51] [52] to be the most significant factor that elicits a positive attitude towards an acceptance of learners with special needs. This study discovered that, while the case study school has made a lot of efforts (including the enrolment of all kinds of learners irrespective of their learning defects, age, disabilities, race, religion or economic status coupled with the provision of structures and infrastructure that facilitates a seamless inclusive educational system) targeted at providing support systems that would aid an easier integration of learners with special needs particularly CWAs, these efforts encounter a number of challenges. Prominent among these challenges as highlighted by the respondents include issues with the current curriculum being used, inadequate training and development opportunities for personnel, negative stereotypical attitudes towards CWAs by some of their peers and other personnel as well as the lack of sufficient learning resources that meets the educational needs of the child with special learning needs [54].

To these challenges, it is suggested that the current curriculum is adapted to address specific needs of CWAs by incorporating tailored instructional strategies and learning materials. In addition, there should be an emphasis on teacher training and professional development, parental stakeholder engagement, inclusive education enhancement policies and support systems for special needs teachers. Educational managers should also consider providing adequate teaching aids, assistive technologies, improved infrastructure and embark on a public sensitization and advocacy drive to combat negative societal attitudes towards CWAs and to create a supportive learning environment that meets the learning needs of diverse children.

## 6. Conclusion

The important role of having a safe, inclusive school environment that puts the special educational needs of all types of learners into consideration and helps each of them to maximize their natural talents and abilities cannot be overemphasized. However, despite its significance, inclusive education of autistic learners has not received enough research attention over the years in Ghana and although several policies and legal frameworks exist to regulate this area of education, it is observed that the potential of these learners with special needs have not been fully exploited over the years. As has been already established by this study, some amount of efforts have been made by a number of private and public educational institutions to address this educational gap although a lot needs to be done to fully tap into their full potentials. Overall, it was realized that the lack of a clear policy guideline specifying the roles of stakeholders, the gaps in the educational curriculum, inadequacy of educational support systems and the attitudes of people towards inclusive education need to be reconsidered. Based on these findings, the study recommends promoting fair educational opportunities for special need learners, retooling

inclusive schools with training and other learning resources, review of Ghana's inclusive education policy as well as an emphasis on public sensitization and education.

## 7. Opportunity for Future Research

This study has unveiled some existing research gaps with regards to family influence and the role of parents of children with special educational needs in inclusive education in Ghana. Further, there is need to also investigate the attitudes of the regular peers of these children with special learning needs towards inclusive education as well as the nature of the training special education teachers receive.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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