

**TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION (A CASE STUDY
OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS IN RAMOTSWA VILLAGE
IN THE SOUTH EAST DISTRICT OF BOTSWANA)**

By

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DECLARATION

I V.N.Ntswe declare that this study for Master of Education (Special Education) at North West University hereby submitted, has not previously been submitted by me at this or any other University and that it is my own work in design and that all material herein has been duly acknowledged.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'V.N.Ntswe', is written over a horizontal line.

SIGNATURE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank God Almighty for having sustained me thus far.

I am grateful to my supervisor, Mr. M. Sebegu for his supervision, encouragement, and fatherly spirit.

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To All I say , Pula! Pula! Pula !

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my beloved mother, Mildah, my cherished son Lcungo and daughter Aobakwe for what they are, and how they have touched my heart. Without their love, support, and encouragement, I would not have completed this research study.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate and describe the perceptions held by Special Education teachers about inclusive education in Ramotswa Village in the South East District of Botswana.

It primarily utilized a qualitative approach, but with a quantitative element in support and was conducted in two primary schools in Ramotswa Village, where participants were only those teachers who had been exposed to special education either during pre-service or in-service training. Data were collected through questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Sixty teachers participated by responding to questionnaires whilst twenty-four were interviewed. Analysis of the findings was done via the theoretical framework that guided this study. Qualitative data was analyzed through a process which involved reading the notes several times then coding plus categorizing them by topics and describing them in narrative form. Quantitative data on the other hand was analyzed through descriptive statistical parameters, including frequencies and percentages. The results were interpreted in narrative form.

The results of the study reveal that Special Education teachers did not acknowledge that all children could learn despite their differences. This may lead to negative perceptions towards inclusive education. They also indicate that Special Education teachers are not yet ready and prepared to include learners with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms. Furthermore, the findings have shown teachers believe inclusive education to require inter alia:

- Appropriately trained teachers;
- Modification of the learning environment;
- Appropriate and relevant curricula;
- Provision of relevant support services.

Key terms used in this investigation were:

- Perceptions;
- Inclusive education;
- Mainstreaming;
- Integration;

- Factors needed for the implementation of inclusive education;
- Strategies to facilitate the implementation of inclusive education.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CSIE:	Center for Studies on Integration in Education
N.C.E.:	National Commission on Education
N.D.P.8:	National Development Plan 8
N.D.P.9:	National Development Plan 9
N.G.O.:	Non-Governmental Organisation
NCESS:	The National Committee for Education and Support Services
NCSNET:	The National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training
R.N.P.E.:	Revised National Policy on Education
T. T. & D:	Teacher Training and Development
UNESCO:	United Nation Educational Scientific and Educational Organisation
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Missionaries who were only interested in teaching people how to read the bible (Evans & Yoder, 1991:90-91; Vanqa, 1999:34), started formal education in Botswana. Later they also helped to establish rehabilitation education centres in certain parts of the country in nineteen-sixty-nine (1969). For example, Ramotswa School for the deaf and the Thuso Rehabilitation Centre were established through the Lutheran Church. Similarly, the Dutch Reformed Church established the Pudulogo Rehabilitation Centre plus Lenchwe Primary School and Molefi Secondary School in Mochudi Village for the visually impaired secondary school students (Evans & Yoder 1991:91; Vanqa, 1999:34).

Then after independence, Botswana established her own formal education system though developments during that period were limited. This resulted in the government focusing on the education of non-disabled people and little was done to make the same opportunities accessible to people with disabilities (Evans & Yoder, 1991:90-91; Vanqa, 1999: 34). The earliest efforts at provision of education for such people were undertaken by Non-Governmental Organizations (N.G.Os.) in the early 1970s as indicated above. This led to the establishment of several special education centres such as:

- The Society for the Deaf, which operates Ramotswa School for the Deaf in Ramotswa village and carries out countrywide identification, treatment and referral. It also undertakes home visits and parent-child training.
- The Camphill Trust, established within the Camphill Community as a residential and training centre for people with mental and the physical disabilities. It also operates the Thuso Boswa programme in Thamaga village and has centres in Serowe village and Gaborone City Council respectively.
- The Pudulogo Rehabilitation Centre, which operates a rehabilitation centre for the visually impaired in Mochudi (Botswana Government, 1993:234; Zindi, 1997:68).

Historically, special schools provided only for those learners for whom special training would provide skills useful to the society. However, these learners were educated in very restrictive environments because they were segregated from their non-disabled peers. It was only in the early 1980s that Botswana developed an initial policy on education for learners with special educational needs, namely the Revised National Policy on Education (R.N.P.E.) of 1994 (Botswana Government, 1994:64). This policy rejected the notion of separation and became the cornerstone for subsequent policies. It promoted the objectives of equality of educational opportunities and integration of learners with special educational needs into mainstream classrooms. R.N.P.E. also made the following recommendations:

- That all citizens of Botswana, including those with special educational needs have equality of educational opportunities;
- Learners with special educational needs be prepared for integration by placing them, as far as possible, with their peers within mainstream schools.

As a result of these recommendations, most learners with special educational needs are today educated as an integral part and within the existing resources of such mainstream schools. Integration is seen as the least restrictive placement option for such learners, as they learn alongside their non-disabled peers who are said to be “normal”. Thus, there is no separate education structure for those with special educational needs (Zindi, 1997:67). The overriding principle is that the aims and objectives of education be the same for all learners.

Benefits of integration of all learners are the following (Mortimer, 2002:10-11):

- More authentic settings-as non-disabled learners learn to live and survive in a world, which includes peers with differences;
- Improved self-esteem and confidence-as learners with special educational needs take part in normal classroom activities and extra curricular activities;
- Improved social skills as learners with such needs learn to play with their non-disabled peers and share learning materials.

Despite the advantages of integration, it also has its setbacks. These include learners with special educational needs being rejected by their peers. Moreover, such learners have to do so within the existing framework of the mainstream education system, without modifications of the curricula or supplementary aids or support services. As a result of these setbacks, debate recently has focused on inclusive education, which is now replacing integration (Botswana Government, 1994:68). The underlying principle is that, instead of the emphasis being on trying to fit an individual with special educational needs into an existing system of education, the system should instead adapt to suit a wider range of learners.

Unlike integration, inclusive education also has a concomitant obligation to prepare learners with special educational needs for mainstream education through use of supplementary aids and support services, before resorting to options that are more restrictive. It thus focuses on overcoming those barriers in the education system that prevent it from meeting the full range of learning needs (Clark, Dyson & Millward, 1995: iii; South African Department of Education, 2001:17). Consequently, this study has sought to investigate and describe the attitudes and beliefs of Special Education Teachers in Ramotswa Village about inclusive education.

It therefore moves through the following procedures: Statement of the problem, Aim and objectives, Research design, Methodological employed to ensure reliability, Definitions of terms and Programme of the study.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The aim of Botswana education is to produce a society that respects and values diversity amongst its citizens. It is therefore advocated by the Ministry of Education and in particular, the government in general, that equal educational opportunities should be provided for all children in mainstream classrooms hence the move towards inclusive education (Botswana Government, 1994:38; Matala, 2000: [Online]). However, the realization of this aim depends on primary teachers, as they are the ones to take part in its implementation. Moreover, as they are required to become increasingly involved with the

education of learners with diverse needs, their perceptions regarding this phenomenon are very critical to its success. This study therefore addressed the following research questions:

- What are special education teachers' views and opinions regarding inclusive education?
- To what extent are special education teachers prepared to include learners with special educational needs in the mainstream classrooms?
- Which groups of such learners do special education teachers feel should be so included?
- What factors would most ensure the success of an inclusive system of education?
- Are special education teachers aware of the implications of inclusive education?

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To examine the nature and extent of the stated problem by seeking to elicit:

- The opinions of special education teachers about inclusive education.
- The extent of special education teachers' readiness to implement inclusive education.
- From special education teachers' perspectives, which different groups of learners should be included?
- Factors that will facilitate the success of an inclusive system of education.
- If special education teachers are aware of the implications of inclusive education.
- Arising from which, relevant recommendations follow.

1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

The design used in this investigation was a qualitative, descriptive and contextual model, with an element of the quantitative design to support. Its purpose was to provide detailed information regarding the perceptions of Special Education teachers about inclusive education based in the responses of a representative group from Ramotswa Village in the South East District of Botswana.

1.4.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

This approach utilizes a broad theoretical aspect to which a particular study is oriented (Blaxter, Tight & Hughes, 2000:60). The approach used here was qualitative with a quantitative adjunct as support.

1.4.2 The qualitative approach

A qualitative approach was used to describe and explore in as much detail as possible the perceptions of Special Education teachers towards inclusive education in Ramotswa Village. Qualitative methods of data collection such as in-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires were employed to generate the data. The qualitative data was analyzed and interpreted in a textual, narrative form.

1.4.3 The quantitative approach

A quantitative approach was occasionally used to give an added dimension and to further elicit perceptions held by the respondents towards inclusive education. In addition, this approach was used to gather the data needed to describe the respondents on matters such as their biographic information. Such information was essential in helping the researcher to select the ideal population for the purpose of this research. Basically, the quantitative approach was used to supplement data collected through the qualitative approach. Quantitative data was mainly gathered by means of closed-ended questionnaires. The data was analyzed through descriptive parameters such as frequencies and percentages. It was then described in narrative form.

1 4.4 Population

The target population in this investigation was Special Education teachers in Ramotswa village. There are eight primary schools in this area with a total of two hundred and fifty-six teachers at the time of the survey. However, of these, only sixty teachers, who had been trained in special education and who come from just two of the schools, were the population in-group selected.

1.4.5 Selection of the sample

Convenience sampling technique was used in that only those schools most proximate to the researcher were chosen. Purposive sampling was then used to select the sixty respondents, who had been trained in special education either during pre-service or in-service. In order to select those interviewees, simple random sampling technique was used.

1.4.6 Research methods

Literature review and surveys were used as research methods.

1.4.7 Methods of data collection

Questionnaires and in-depth interviews served to collect data. In-depth interviews were the main method of data collection and the questionnaires were used to support the data collected from them. Closed-ended questionnaires were used to gather quantitative data, while qualitative data was gathered by means of in-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires. The researcher had wished to audio record the interviews, however, participants did not consent to this (see Appendix D). Instead, notes were taken down and later compiled into field notes.

1.4.8 Data analysis

Data analysis and interpretation were done within the parameters of the theoretical framework that guided this study.

1.4.8.1 Analysis of the qualitative data

Analysis of qualitative data collected through interviews was done through procedures involving the reading of field notes several times, coding them by topics plus themes and then comparing and contrasting notes falling under a given code. The qualitative data generated by open-ended questionnaires had pre-assigned coding system and the responses from the participants were added together, converted into percentages and frequencies and interpreted in textual, narrative form.

1.4.8.2 Analysis of the quantitative data

Quantitative data was pre-coded and descriptive parameters including frequencies and percentages used to organize, simplify and summarize the data. Data was then interpreted in narrative form.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is hoped that the study will contribute to existing knowledge about inclusive education. It will add new information on what inclusive education is and what it entails. In addition, it is hoped that the study will enhance development of successful inclusive education in the form of strategies used to implement it. The survey will also provide information about perceptions teachers have towards the implementation of inclusive education and how these perceptions may in practice influence the delivery of inclusive education.

Lastly, inclusive education is still a new concept in Botswana. Therefore, it is hoped that information contained in this study will contribute by increasing teachers' knowledge of inclusive education and its implications and thus empower them. It is only through a thorough understanding of what inclusive education entails and its implications that teachers can accept that all children can learn despite their differences. It is also hoped that the study will help them in planning new programmes and thereby improve educational practice as well as the allocation of resources to changing needs in their schools.

1.6 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

1.6.1 Perceptions

Hornby (1999:859) defines perception as the ability to understand something. This writer further defines it as an opinion or way of looking at something from a different perspective. Here perceptions embrace what teachers' opinions and views are towards the provision of inclusive education.

1.6.2 Inclusive education

From the perspective of researchers, Clark, Dyson and Millward (1995:iv), inclusive education can be viewed as a move towards extending the scope of mainstream education

in order to accommodate learners with different needs. These researchers further report that this concept replaces the terms 'integration' and 'mainstreaming'. According to the South African Department of Education (2001:16), inclusive education is about acknowledging that all children can learn and that all children need support. Therefore, this study proposes that inclusive education by definition entails educating all learners in the mainstream classrooms and providing all such learners with appropriate support services.

1.6.3 Inclusion

Bursuck and Friend (1996:410) report that inclusion is the situation in which learners with special educational needs are educated in mainstream classrooms. These researchers further note that such learners should be full members of the classrooms, whether or not they meet the traditional curricular standards of those classrooms. It should be noted that the concepts 'inclusive education' and 'inclusion' are used interchangeably in this study. Since both entail inclusion of special educational needs learners in the mainstream classrooms and providing them with adequate and appropriate support services.

1.7.4 Inclusive school

An inclusive school is one that explores strategies that help to build and develop all members of the learning community. Inclusive schools as Ballard (1999:65) suggests, deliver a curriculum to learners through organizational arrangements that are different from those in schools that segregate some learners from mainstream classrooms. In addition, Slee in Clark, Dyson and Millward (1995:32-35) and Slee (2001:112-115) note that inclusive schools demand reconstructed educational thinking and practice in mainstream schools for the benefit of all children. That being the case, inclusive schools in this study refers to mainstream schools in which the educational needs of all learners are adequately met.

1.7.5 Mainstreaming

Is the process of educating learners with special educational needs in the same learning environment as their non-disabled peers. Choate (2000:13) sees mainstreaming, now generally referred to as 'inclusion', as the process of bringing learners with special

educational needs into daily contact with general education learners in an educational setting, whenever possible. According to Gage and Berliner (1992:98-120) “Mainstreaming is the practice of putting children with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms, whenever possible, so that they will experience the least restrictive environment”. In this study, the term “mainstreaming” refers to the situation in which special educational needs learners are placed in mainstream classrooms without any special support services. Support is also not extended to pertinent teachers. In this case, learners are simply made to fit into the existing system of education rather than have it adjust to them.

1.6.6 Learners with special educational needs

Different scholars define learners with special educational needs differently, since learners can have special needs due to physical, sensory, cognitive, or emotional disabilities. Included are also those with learning disabilities, mental disability, behavioural disorders, speech and language impairments, physical and health impairments, and sensory impairments as well as the gifted and talented (Drew & Hardman, 1997:98; Kirk, Anastasiow & Gallagher, 1997:2; Choate, 2000:11-12). According to Mukamambo, Shaibu and Lesetedi (2001:203), definitions of disability differ from country to another. They report that some countries use a form of scale to determine the level and severity of the problem, whilst others use community perceptions of disability as a yardstick and this may well be the case in Botswana too. Definitions of learners with special educational needs alluded to above will be used in a similar manner in this study. They therefore refer to those learners who learn with ease, such as those who are gifted and talented, along with those who experience varied degrees of learning problems due to physical, health, sensory impairments as well as those with mental disability.

1.7 PROGRAMME OF RESEARCH

This report is organized into five chapters outlined as follows:

- Chapter One presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, sets out the aim plus objectives of the study and makes reference to research design, significance of the study, definitions of terms and the programme itself
- Chapter Two focuses on literature on inclusive education which has been reviewed
- Chapter Three presents research design and methodology
- Chapter Four discusses data presentation and analysis
- Chapter Five discusses the summary plus major findings, conclusions and recommendations stemming from the study along with the unavoidable limitations constraining the scope of the research.

CHAPTER TWO

PERCEPTIONS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As already mentioned in Chapter One, the Botswana Government has aligned itself with the current international trend of providing universal basic education to its citizens. Botswana, like other developing countries, is signatory to all the major international declarations, including the Jontiem World Conference: “Education for All” (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 1990), the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) and the Dakar World Education Forum: “Education for All” (UNESCO, 2000). These Declarations proclaim the right of all citizens to an appropriate education regardless of their differences. According to Martin (1992:8), Article 26 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 states, “Every citizen has the right to education”. Similarly, the Jontiem World Conference of 1990 called on all nations to provide education to all. Furthermore, the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action 1994, as well as the Dakar World Conference of 2000 called on all national governments to adopt the principle of an inclusive education system of education (Burden, 1999:18; Matala, 2000: [Online]; Loate & Mathibe, 2004:10-12). The key challenge, therefore, is that a broad vision of “Education for All” as an inclusive concept should be reflected as a matter of course in national government.

The basic premise is that education is a basic human right, and thus all have the right to receive it. As a result, the Government of Botswana has responded by advocating that all children should have access to free universal education. This is reflected in the report of the National Commission on Education (N.C.E.) of 1993 which led to the formulation of the Revised National Policy on Education (R.N.P.E.), Government Paper No 2 of 1994 which called for “Free Universal Basic Education for All” (Botswana Government, 1994:234). The idea of educating all learners, including those with special educational

needs, is also supported by Non-governmental Organizations (N.G.O.) such as the Ditshwanelo Centre for Human Rights and the Botswana Council for the Disabled (Botswana Government, 1994:234). Interest in people with special educational needs in Botswana is not only seen as humane, but it also a fundamental requirement of any nation claiming to be educated and informed. Botswana's vision is to have a just and caring society where each individual citizen is educated, informed and able to integrate with the global community (Botswana Government, 1997b: 16).

The purpose of this chapter therefore, is to review literature related to the nature and scope of inclusive education. It is important to note that the terms "inclusive education" and "inclusion" are used interchangeably in this study. Also to be presented is the concept of inclusive education and other concepts related to it, factors needed for the successful implementation of inclusive education, perceptions of teachers towards inclusion as well as the implications of an inclusive system of education. The chapter will also highlight an overview of research studies on inclusive education in developing countries such as South Africa and Kenya. Lastly, an overview of the move towards inclusive education in Botswana will be presented.

2.2 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The idea of inclusive education has become part of the discussion on development in education at an international level (Booth, Nes & Stromstad, 2003:67; Rouse & Kang'ethe, 2003:75). Dupoux, Wolman and Estrada (2005:43) report that the reform of basic education, as it pertains to the integration of learners with special educational needs, has become an international movement.

According to research findings from Dupoux, Wolman and Estrada (2005:43), different governments and educational organizations, Botswana included, adopted the Salamanca "Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs", which argues that integration is best achieved within inclusive schools. In line with this, the Botswana Government had already taken a first step by setting up a National Commission on Education, which was to review and re-examine the entire education system at different levels (Botswana

Government, 1994:294; Matala, 2000: [Online]). The National Commission on Education has been directing Botswana education policies and programmes. In its report, the Commission indicated, *inter alia* that the education of learners with special educational needs needed immediate attention (Botswana Government, 1993:307; Seisa & Youngman, 1993:45; Zindi, 1997:67). The Commission recommended the formulation of a policy on education that seeks to make education accessible to all, including those with special educational needs hence the move towards inclusive education. The implementation of the policy was intended to cover a time-frame of twenty-five (25) years, given the fact that its recommendations had been designated for implementation in the short, medium and long term respectively (Botswana Government, 1997a: 337). The theme of inclusion is a timely one, as governments and non-governmental organizations are fighting for the rights of every citizen in most, if not all the countries of the world. Indeed, it can be argued that inclusion is an international trend designed to build a more just society and that inclusion is both a result of and a vehicle for this reform (Booth in Clark, Dyson & Millward, 1995:96-98; Botswana Government, 2003:269).

2.3 WHAT IS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION?

The term “inclusive education” is open to different interpretations and differing opinions. Lorenz (2002:2) notes: “Interpretations of what exactly is, and isn’t, inclusive education vary widely and may have little to do with equality of opportunity or universality”. According to Dyson (2001:45), there is no single accepted interpretation of the concept of inclusive education. Dyson (2001:45) reports that inclusive education has various meanings for different people in differing times and contexts. Similarly, Tilstone, Rose & Florian (1998:x) note that different researchers and scholars attempt to define inclusive education from their own contexts and countries’ points of view. For example, Naicker (1996:12) defines it in a South African context by relating to the recommendations of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education and Support Services (NCESS) that inclusive education be a system of education that is responsive to the diverse needs of learners. Within a Kenyan context, inclusive education is the meaningful integration of all learners, regardless of their

disabilities, with their non-disabled peers in mainstream classrooms (Rouse & Kang'ethe, 2003:78-80).

In Botswana, inclusive education is viewed in the light of the recommendations of the National Commission on Education (Botswana Government, 1993:307-313) as well as the Revised National Policy on Education of 1994, which state that:

All citizens of Botswana, including those with special educational needs, should have equality of educational opportunities

Matale (2000: [Online]) adopts this interpretation of inclusive education in Botswana context, in regarding inclusive education as a new approach to addressing the diverse needs of individuals within mainstream school setting. She further elaborates that inclusive education is aimed at minimizing all barriers to learning and thus embraces the following:

- Acceptance of children with special educational needs as equal and valued members of the school community;
- Recognition of what children with special educational needs can offer to the school community;
- Structured systems aimed at meeting very ones' needs;
- Support services brought to children within the classroom;
- An emphasis on teachers and other stakeholders working together by supporting each other through professional teams;
- Parental participation or involvement (Matale, 2000: [Online]).

According to the Center for Studies on Integration in Education (CSIE), (1989: [Online]), inclusive education is the process of increasing the participation of students and reducing their exclusion from the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools. C.S.IE.'s position on inclusive education means the restructuring and eventual closure of separate special schools plus the transfer of resources to and restructuring of mainstream schools. To researchers Clark, Dyson and Millward (1995: iii), inclusive education can be understood as a move towards extending the scope of 'ordinary' schools so that they can

‘include’ a greater diversity of children. These scholars report that it is a term which is helping to internalize at least part of the language of special education, replacing terms such as ‘integration’ in the UK and ‘mainstreaming’ in the US (Clark, Dyson & Millward, 1995: iii).

Still other authors like Idol (1997:384-394) define inclusive education as the successful mainstreaming of pupils with special educational needs who, traditionally would, have been placed in special schools. This researcher further argues that, for inclusion to be effective, pupils must actively belong, be welcomed, and participate in the school and community. In short, they should be fully included. Meijer, Pijl and Hegarty (1997:23) stipulate that the term “inclusive education” refers to an educational system that includes diversity of pupils and differentiates education to cater for this diversity. An alternative definition is offered by Wade (2000:78) and Stainback and Stainback (1990b: 22) when they report that inclusive education calls for the merger of mainstream and special education and represents a shift from a continuum of educational placement to a continuum of educational services. These researchers argue that inclusive education means an end to labeling and segregated education, but not the sacrifice of necessary support services. Lorenz (2002:3) encapsulates the definition of inclusive education by stating that not only should children with special educational needs receive education in mainstream schools, but that they should also participate fully with their peers in the curriculum and life of the school.

Advocates of inclusive education seek to change the philosophy and structure of schools so that all children, despite their differences in race, language, culture, ethnicity, economic status, social class, health, gender and ability, can be educated with their peers in mainstream classrooms in their own neighborhood schools (Welch & Sheridan, 1995:23; Booth, Nes & Stromstad, 2003:98). Inclusive education, therefore, is based on the notion that, in providing basic and quality education for all, the education system should accommodate diversity according to the principle of inclusivity. Education in this manner emphasizes that success is fostered in all learners by eliminating barriers that serve to

marginalize some individuals or groups according to such factors (Loate & Mathibe, 2004:3).

One may conclude that, at the heart of inclusive education, lie serious issues concerning human rights, equal opportunities and social justice (Armstrong, Armstrong & Barton, 2000:60; Wade, 2000:78). According to Ainscow (1995a: 95) and Ainscow (1999:120), inclusive education aims to reform schools in order to respond to the learning needs of all learners. This researcher further postulates that inclusive education recognizes that any learner can experience difficulty in learning either on a short or long- term basis at any time during his/her school career. Therefore, to deal with this, the school should continually evaluate itself in terms of the extent to which it meets the needs of its learners.

From the above views and definitions, one may conclude that inclusive education is broad and cuts across individual differences, so that its ultimate aim is clearly to create a society where all members of the society are seen as equal and valued citizens. Dyson (2001:48) summarizes the above discussion on what inclusive education is by postulating that inclusive education is viewed as an agenda that aims at fundamental educational transformation with a view to developing an equitable society. To conclude the discussion as to what inclusive education is all about, Clark, Dyson and Millward (1995: viii) offer the following, so-called dimensions that represent the basis of an agenda within which inclusive education can be delineated and defined:

- Policy which will involve formulation of a national strategy for inclusive education plus examination of the relationship between it and practice present at both school and classroom level;
- Organization which will include inter alia establishing those characteristics in schools necessary to enable them to respond to diversity;
- Teacher development which will include the essential characteristics of teachers able to respond positively to diversity in the classroom;
- Resource dimension which will involve how educational resources (materials and human) can be so managed as to promote inclusion;

- Curricular which will be concerned with what is taught and how;
- Values which will represent a philosophical stance regarding human rights and discrimination.

The conclusion that can be reached from the views and opinions of Clark, Dyson and Millward (1995: viii), is that, for inclusive education to be implemented successfully, the above dimensions should first be put into effect as they are seen to be critical to the effective implementation of inclusive education. Their findings also show that this type of education system should be dealt with as a multifaceted and holistic phenomenon, rather than as an atomistic one (Clark, Dyson & Millward, 1995: viii).

2.3.1 Mainstreaming

Many different terms have been used to describe the process of educating learners with special educational needs in the general education system for example, mainstreaming. According to Doorlag and Lewis (2003:3-4), the term “mainstreaming” was used in the 1970’s and 1980’s to mean educating learners with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms. From these researchers’ perspective, “inclusion” is a more modern term that replaced “mainstreaming” in the 1990s. They, however, allude to the fact that these terms differ somewhat in meaning to what:

Mainstreaming refers to the inclusion of students in general education and full inclusion calls for reform of practices that excludes and segregates individuals with disabilities.

Mortimer (2002:42) stipulates that learners are considered mainstreamed if they spend any part of the school day with general education class peers. In this case, learners with special educational needs participate in the instructional and social activities side by side with their classmates, but they also receive additional support from a special education teacher, either in a mainstream classroom or outside it in a facility such as resource room. Mortimer (2002:45) however, differentiates between these terms by stating that, inclusion implies that not students leave the mainstream classroom to receive special services, but rather that support is provided to them within the same classroom setting. On the other hand,

mainstream means that learners leave the classroom to receive support services in a different learning environment.

To Abosi, Obani and Ogbue (1991:4) and Choate (2000:13) mainstreaming is synonymous with inclusive education. According to these professionals, inclusion has come as a result of a change in terminology. To support her argument, Choate (2000:13) says “Mainstreaming—now generally referred to as inclusion allows that students with special educational needs should be taught on a ‘stay put basis’ in mainstream classrooms”. Similarly, Abosi, Obani and Ogbue (1991:4) report: “The term “mainstreaming” or “open education” describes the process of educating all students, regardless of their physical or mental disabilities, along with their non-disabled peers in the mainstream classroom”

2.3.2 Integration

Research findings from Choate (2000:13) show that the term “integration” is often used in conjunction with or as a synonym for mainstreaming. This researcher, however, notes that integration limits any attempt to create access to mainstream schools. According to the South African Department of Education (2001:17), integration is seen, as a means of finding ways to support diverse learning needs in unchanged mainstream schools and classrooms. In this case, learners are placed at a separate site in the mainstream school and the move is aimed at changing learners to fit into the system, rather than adopting the environment to suit them. Clark, Dyson and Millward (1995: i) report that integration is a term used in the United Kingdom, while mainstreaming is used in the United States, but both basically mean the same thing. According to Doorlag and Lewis (2003:3), and Alderson (1999:98), integration can take different forms as outlined below:

- **Locational:** – where special provision is available as a separate entity on the same site and learners with special educational needs are not part of the mainstream classroom;
- **Social:** – where children with special educational needs remain in their special class/unit for core subject teaching, but attend mainstream classes for some subjects;

- Functional: – where children with special educational needs are full members of the mainstream class and class teachers take full responsibility for their education.

Kirk, Gallagher and Anastasiow (1997:51) comment that integration is also characterized by the following:

- Normalization: - the creation of as an normal as possible learning and social environment for the exceptional learner;
- De-institutionalization: – the process of releasing as many exceptional learners as possible from the confinement of residential;
- Mainstreaming: – means the process of bringing exceptional learners into daily contact with their non-disabled peers in the educational context.

From the definitions and interpretations discussed above, one is led to observe that inclusive education is aimed at providing all learners with equal educational opportunities backed by appropriate support within mainstream classrooms. Integration and mainstreaming on the other hand focus on changing the learner to fit into his/her existing education system. The implications of these findings are that learners in an inclusive environment do not have to leave the mainstream classroom to receive support services, but can depend instead on services provided within the mainstream classroom, while the integrative or mainstream approach implies that learners should leave the mainstream classroom to receive support outside it. A clear distinction between these concepts: integration, mainstreaming and inclusive education has been enunciated by the South African Department of Education (2001:17) as shown in table 1 below:

Table 1 Distinction between mainstreaming/integration and inclusive education

Mainstreaming or integration...	Inclusion...
Is about getting learners to fit or integrate into an existing system.	Is about recognizing and respecting the differences between all learners and building on similarities.
Is about giving some learners extra support so that they can be so fitted or integrated into the 'normal' situation. Learners are assessed by specialists who diagnose and prescribe technical interventions, such as the placement of learners in specific and relevant programmes.	Is about supporting all learners, educators and the system as a whole so that the full range of learning needs can be met. The focus is on teaching and learning, with the emphasis on the development of good teaching strategies that will be of benefit to all learners.
Focus on changes that need to take place in learners so that they can 'fit in'. Here the focus is on the learner.	Focuses on overcoming barriers in the system that prevent it from meeting the full range of learning needs. There emphasis is on necessary adaptation of support systems available in the classroom.

(South African Department of Education, 2001:17)

Inclusive education therefore, is a process of making schools as supportive as possible, while integration and mainstreaming focus on making an individual learner with special educational needs fit into mainstream classrooms without any modifications. The one changes the environments whilst the other changes the individual.

2.4 PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Literature indicates that, over the years, teachers have always had negative attitudes towards learners with special educational needs (Dart, Didimalang & Pilime, 2002:18). In this study, teachers also indicate different views regarding the best possible placement of learners with special educational needs. There are those educators who advocate that all

learners, including those with special educational needs, belong to mainstream classrooms. On the other hand, there are those who believe that the mainstream classroom is not suitable for learners with special educational needs (Choate, 2000:15; Doorlag & Lewis, 2003:435).

Research finding from Pijl in Clark, Dyson and Millward (1995:59) show that educators welcome the meaningful integration of learners with special educational needs in principle, and therefore consider that such learners should grow within mainstream classrooms with other peers of the same age group. However, whenever integration is given concrete form by placing a learner with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms, educators start to worry and make objections. Choate (2000:15) takes a similar view as she writes that:

From the beginning, many teachers have been apprehensive about the integration of students with disabilities into regular education and some have vigorously resisted it.

Similarly, Abosi, Obani and Ogbue (1991:9) indicate that, over the years both society and teachers in particular have had a negative attitude towards learners with special educational needs. In a study of the attitudes of primary school teachers carried out by Mushoriwa (2001:19) in Harare, Zimbabwe, it is clear that teachers have negative attitudes towards learners with special educational needs, especially those with visual and mental impairments. In that study, Mushoriwa mentions countries such as Uganda, Malawi, and some developed countries like Australia where some teachers also do not welcome children with special educational needs, especially those with intellectual impairments. In a similar study conducted by Jahnukainen and Korhonen (2003:178) in Finland, it was found that teachers do not readily welcome learners with special educational needs, the report states:

Teachers' perceptions of integration have not changed in Finland as elsewhere. General education teachers in particular have taken a negative attitude towards integration. The most subjected groups have been students with intellectual disabilities and students with emotional and behavioural disorders.

Reading further one discovers that teachers are resistant to inclusion for various reasons. Some see inclusion of learners with special educational needs as personally threatening, as they do not possess the knowledge and skills needed to accommodate diverse needs in a mainstream classroom. Other teachers still have the feeling that the responsibility for teaching learners with special educational needs lies with special education teachers (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996:59-60). In a study conducted by Rouse and Kang'ethe (2003:80) in Kenya on working together for inclusion, the results have revealed that negative attitudes to disability still exist especially in rural areas. Similar attitudes are also prevalent in Botswana, where the birth of a child with a disability is always viewed as a curse to the family and, as such, disabled people are either hidden away or denied the right to education (Mukamambo, Shaibu & Lesetedi, 2001:207).

However, not all teachers are anti-inclusionary. Some are of the view that all learners belong in the mainstream education system regardless of their differences. Such educators contend that, as long as they are adequately trained, they do not see the need to discriminate against some learners on the basis of their learning behaviours (Choate, 2000:15).

In accordance with the above, it can be pointed out that teachers' perceptions towards inclusive education are a decisive factor with regard to its success or failures. It is teachers who implement inclusive education in all countries and if their attitudes are not positive, its success is far from being assured.

2.5 BENEFITS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Pertinent literature shows that there are several benefits to inclusive education for all learners, since a growing amount of research indicates that a purely inclusive system of education, if properly implemented, can bring great educational rewards (Kisanji, 1998:55-71; Choate, 2000:14; Wall, 2004:47; Derby, 2004: [Online]).

The essence of inclusive education is to create a just and united society, where every member is seen from an equal and humane angle. According to Bursuck and Friend

(1996:120), inclusion maximizes the potential of most learners and ensures their right to an appropriate and quality education it is therefore a preferred option where possible. In support for inclusion, Lorenz (2002:3) notes that, not only are inclusive classrooms the least restrictive environment for learners with special educational needs, but also that inclusive schools will raise standards, increase learners' achievements, enhance positive self-esteem, encourage strong social relationships and enable students to develop the knowledge and skills to become lifelong, independent learners. These researchers further extrapolate that inclusive schools do not focus on disability or inability, but rather on ability. Similarly, Shaw (2001:110) stresses the advantage of inclusive schools that learners with special educational needs remain with their peers. They are not segregated from the normal activities of the mainstream school. Labeling is also de-emphasized and non-disabled learners come to accept those with special educational needs. In addition, inclusive schools and classrooms combat discrimination, promote human dignity and broaden social benefits for all learners (Morris, 2000: 81-82; Dupoux, Wolman & Estrada, 2005:43)

In addition to the above-mentioned benefits, Kruger and Adams (1998:234) note that the World Conference on Special Needs in Education held in Salamanca, Spain in 1994 concluded that inclusive education reflects:

- A society that allows individuals the right to equal and full citizenship irrespective of race, class, disability, language, learning style, gender and other differences;
- An education system that enables all learners to participate and successfully engage with educational processes, so that they may develop their potential and lead worthwhile lives as members of societies and communities;
- Schools that accommodate all learners, regardless of their physical, intellectual social, emotional, linguistic and other differences;
- Schools that create welcoming communities, where all learners are seen as needed members of the learning community in all respect;
- Educators, parents and other community members who work together to develop supportive learning communities plus the values of social justice and equity;

- The right of all learners to participate in and have access to a single education, “all inclusive”.

In Botswana, the above principles are reflected in the recommendations of the National Commission on Education (N.C.E.), as well as the Revised National Policy on Education (R.N.P.E.) which emphasize free universal and compulsory education for all, irrespective of culture, gender, health status, ethnicity, disability or any other differences (Botswana Government, 1994:38). These documents also emphasize the vital need for the collaboration of all stakeholders in a particular education system, including the parents as well as the students. The R.N.P.E. therefore recommends that:

The support and active participation of the children's parents and community be ensured through motivational awareness campaign

From the above definitions and interpretations of what inclusive education entails, one may conclude that its implementation is likely to reflect what each country, influenced by researchers, perceives to be the best possible way of providing appropriate and quality education for learners with special educational needs. Further to this, Doorlag and Lewis (2003:15) write that:

Sometimes inclusion is used as a synonym for mainstreaming. It is important to determine what each speaker and writer means by the term inclusion

However, it should be emphasized that most researchers, including international organizations, advocate that mainstream education with classroom with suitable support services is the most appropriate setting for all learners irrespective of their culture, disability, race, learning style, ability, or other differences. It can also be deduced from the literature that a purely, inclusive education system will require changes to the entire education structure within that new education and how it is delivered (Moll, 1994:178-179; Alderson, 1999:98; Morris, 2000:81-82; Shaw, 2001:110).

2.6 THE PLACE OF LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Researchers Doorlag and Lewis (2003:4) note that learners with special educational needs include students formally identified as having disabilities, as well as students without disabilities, who nevertheless demonstrate the need for special accommodation in the classroom. Literature shows that, throughout the centuries, various labels have been used to describe such learners as either 'hard-to teach', or the 'hard-to reach', or 'least-privileged' or 'disabled' (Falvery, 1995:17; Sebba & Sachdev 1997:38; Wade, 2000:112). However, Swart in Eloff and Ebersohn (2004:235) cautions that "Many 'disability labels' bring to mind images and feelings that perpetuate negative, stereotypical perceptions. These perceptions, in turn, create a powerful attitudinal barrier to inclusion". Inclusionists, therefore, believe that words used to describe learners with special educational needs reflect and reinforce negative attitudes and perceptions towards such learners. Whether learners have disabilities, or are at risk, or are low achievers or are marginalized for some reasons, all such students have traditionally been placed in programmes that excluded them from mainstream education. In accord with this observation, Vislie in Clark, Dyson and Millward (1995:44) says,

History tells us that, over time, our societies have reacted to them first by liquidation, later by isolation.

This used to be the case in Botswana, as various texts show that the family saw the birth of a disabled child as a disgrace or punishment from God and such children were accordingly denied education and kept in isolated settings. Supporting this, Mukamambo, Shaibu and Lesetedi (2001:316) report this:

There are cultural factors that may result in people viewing disability as a curse or punishment for family misconduct. In some Botswana culture, people with disabilities may be hidden away by family members. This may result in the family concealing the child from the public in fear of discrimination and ridicule.

Today, due to research that has facilitated a better understanding about the needs of such learners, the overall impression is that there has been a marked change in society's attitude towards those with special educational needs. Sayer and Jones (1985:26) see this change in attitudes as a social revolution saying:

The status of disabled has altered from discrimination to derogation through custodial and philanthropic concerns, and on towards the goal of integration.

As a result of social revolution, there is now a change in attitudes as well as the terminology used to describe such learners. Today they are called learners with special educational needs or exceptional learners (Drew & Hardman, 1997:10; Hallahan & Kauffman, 2000:4-8). According to Kirk, Gallagher and Anastasiow (1997:2) an exceptional learner is one who differs from the average or 'normal' child in mental characteristics, sensory abilities, communication ability, behaviour and emotional development as well as physical characteristics. Similarly, Mavundukure (2002:5) and Abosi (2002:12) report that special education research in Botswana has elicited that between 16% and 21% of children in that country experience learning problems. These are children who may deviate from their average or ordinary counterparts in:

- Mental characteristics;
- Sensory abilities;
- Neuromotor or physical characteristics;
- Social behaviour;
- Communication abilities;
- In addition, some may even have multiple disabilities a condition of all several of the above.

Mavundukure (2002:5) and Abosi (2002:12) further postulate that modifications of support services must be undertaken to ensure such learners to attend mainstream schools. Such modifications will necessary imply changes in the physical environment and the curriculum as well as instructional methodology.

Research findings from Abosi, Obani and Ogbue (1991:3) indicate that the term 'exceptional' was used in the past to refer only to children with high mental abilities. However, they point out that today this term is an umbrella expression which includes everyone who deviates below as well as above the group norm to an extent that they require support services to attain their potential. Bursuck and Friend (1996:18-19) define learners with special educational needs as all learners with needs in addition to the needs of so-called 'normal' students. These additional needs can be anything on a continuum of additional needs ranging from the needs of the gifted to the needs of those with severe multiple disabilities. They further indicate that such learners need additional support, which can be limited or of an extensive nature. In addition, Eric Clearinghouse (1989: [Online]) claims that a dynamic concept of exceptionality encompasses all children who need a specially tailored education programme in accordance with their potential. Then it is important to emphasize that the deviation of learners with special educational needs should be significant enough to warrant modification of school practice.

Botswana has a population of approximately 1.6 million, including disabled children of primary school going age (5-14 years) (Botswana Government, 2001:225; Mukamamb, Shaibu & Lesetedi 2001:307). Meanwhile, the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimated, in 1991, that more than 10% of the world population could be classified as disabled and that 80% of this population resided in developing countries in Africa (Driedger, 1991: [Online]). As most of these countries, did not and often still do not have any data on people with disabilities, they relied instead on these estimates as a standard level of disability in their programme planning (Mukamambo, Shaibu & Lesetedi, 2001:307). The result originating in the population and housing census carried out in Botswana in 2001 shows that vastly more children with special educational needs attend school thus in urban areas and major villages as opposed to their peers in rural areas. The intention of the government of Botswana is thus to make sure that all children with special educational needs, including those in rural areas, have access to basic education within the next twenty five (25) years (Botswana Government, 2001:298).

2.6.1 The Central Resource Centre (C.R.C.) (1990)

In recognizing that there was need for a comprehensive educational assessment and professional support system for parents of learners with special educational needs, plus relevant schools and the local community, the Ministry of Education established the Central Resource Centre (Horgan, Moss, Kesupile, Maphorisa & Haseley, 1991:92-93; Vanqa, 1999:93). That Centre now is fully operational and mandated to offer the following services:

- An educational needs assessment of the various types of children with special educational needs;
- Guidance and counselling for parents of children with special educational needs;
- Assistance with the incorporation of children with special educational needs into mainstream schools;
- Assistance with the establishment of residential accommodation for children with special educational needs;
- The provision of seminars and workshops for teachers and associated workers on special education;
- The referral of children with special educational needs for medical examination and or treatment;
- The collection and dissemination of information on special education;
- A workshop for the repair and maintenance of special education equipment;
- The production of teaching, assessment and learning materials for special education;
- The setting up of School Intervention Teams, links with other schools, social workers and health clinics throughout the country, so that local staff with initial training from C.R.C. can take responsibility for most assessment of educational and follow up work;
- An active and extensive outreach service, designed especially to harness the resources of the parents and community for early childhood stimulation (Matale, 2002:12).

2.6.2 The Report of the National Commission on Education (N.C.E.) (1993)

To show the necessary commitment to education, a Botswana National Commission on Education, which was the second of its kind, was formed and its report came out in 1993. Its terms of reference required the commission to conduct a broad review of the entire education system. Particular emphasis was on universal access to basic education, vocational education and training, preparation and orientation towards the world of work. The commission was also tasked to re-examine the education structure and make recommendations to the Botswana government (Botswana Government, 1993:1). In its report, the Commission maintains that education is close to the centre of any society's life and concerns (Seisa & Youngman, 1993:9-12). Thus, education should contribute to the social, cultural, political and economic welfare and development of the society within which it exists. In similar vein, Sayer and Jones (1985:43) emphasize the importance of education:

Autonomy, enrichment, the capacity to come to terms with the world and to make it a suitable vehicle for the promotion of our happiness are educational goals, which we set up for each and every child

In this regard, the report of the National Commission on Education notes that access to basic education is a fundamental human right. It therefore set out the following recommendations with regard to the goals of special education (Matale 2002:10):

- Ensuring that all citizens of Botswana, including those with special educational needs, have equal educational opportunities;
- Preparing learners with special educational needs for social integration by placing them as far as possible alongside their peers in mainstream schools;
- Developing governmental standards for construction of all educational buildings so as to make them accessible to learners with special educational needs; and
- **Guarantying that learners with special educational needs receive effective treatment.**

2.6.3 The Revised National Policy on Education (R.N.P.E) (1994)

As discussed above, a Commission was established in Botswana to review the entire education system. The Commission indicated that the education of learners with special educational needs was not given as much attention as that of those without disabilities (Botswana Government, 1994:40-41). The Commission came up with consequent recommendations, which were then adopted by parliament and subsequently became the basis of the National Policy on Education, as contained in the Revised National Policy on Education Government Paper No 2 of 1994. The pertinent literature confirms that, without a proper and a progressive policy, inclusive education is doomed to fail as Bailey in Clark, Dyson and Millward (1995:15) point out:

Without a sound policy, it is unlikely that inclusive education will be implemented effectively.

The Botswana Government is in the right course to formulate such a policy to direct the education of learners with special educational needs. The implementation of the R.N.P.E. (1994) is intended to cover a time frame of twenty-five (25) years given the fact that its recommendations have been classified as short, medium and long term (Zindi, 1997:66-68; Matala, 2000: [Online]). The policy seeks to make education accessible to all, including learners with special educational needs. Since the adoption of the R.N.P.E. in 1994, efforts have been directed towards facilitating integration/mainstreaming and now inclusion of learners with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms (Botswana Government, 2003:303). Furthermore, the policy outlines a systematic approach to developing training programmes for special education teachers and a political commitment to the development of education of learners with special educational needs. Recommendations made in the R.N.P.E., some of which have already been implemented are as follows:

- All teachers should have some element of preparation for special education either during pre-service or in-service training;
- Most special education teacher training should be broad-based rather than focused on a single disability;

- Associated staff, such as classroom assistants, should undergo in-service training in those aspects of special education in which they are engaged (Zindi, 1997:68).

Education in Botswana is seen, not as a privilege, but as a basic human right. The Division of Special Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders has in place programmes aimed at ensuring that learners with special educational needs not only have an equal right to basic education, but also receive appropriate, quality education as recommended in the R.N.P.E.

2.7 STRATEGIES TO FACILITATE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

According to Morris (2000:81-82), there is controversy about the ideal strategy for an inclusive system of education. Similarly, Derby (2004: [Online]) acknowledges that there is no special or magic pedagogy, which has been shown to be effective in including all children into the mainstream schools. In support of this dilemma in deciding which strategy of an inclusive system of education is most appropriate, Dyson (2001:45) indicates that the meaning of an inclusive system of education is subjected to different interpretations at different times and in different contexts. However, literature shows that an inclusive system of education constitutes a breakthrough approach in educating all learners in the same learning environment regardless of their differences (Clark, Dyson & Millward, 1995: iv; Choate, 2000:12).

Research findings by Choate (2000:14) show that accumulated research offers no definitive answers regarding the best strategy for implementing inclusive education. Relevant literature further shows that no clear-cut picture of the most appropriate educational setting for such learners has been provided by decades of so-called efficacy studies. In support of this statement Choate (2000:14) writes:

Some studies suggests that students with disabilities achieve greater gains, social as well as academic, in general rather than in special education programs. Comparable findings have been reported on full-versus part-

time general classroom integration of students with disabilities. In contrast, some investigations reveal no significant difference in performance as a function of classroom setting and report that the instructional strategies, rather than the setting, most affect pupil performance.

In Botswana, inclusive education is still in its infancy, the so called “advocacy stage” and there is a deliberate effort to embrace it (Matale, 2000: [Online]). There is need to mention that the provision of special education in Botswana is currently still characterized by separate special education units/classes within mainstream schools especially at primary level. Other learners with more severe disabilities are even educated still specifically segregated schools, mainly run by Non-Governmental Organizations albeit with financial support from Government (Botswana Government, 1994:19). However, while this is still the practice, there is nevertheless a deliberate effort to move towards inclusive practices. Both the report of the National Commission and the Revised National Policy on Education clearly stipulate that all resources for education should cater for all learners. These learners should be educated alongside their non-disabled peers in mainstream classrooms hence the move towards an inclusive system of education. In addition, National Development Plan 9 stipulates that the specific objective of education is to develop special education as an integral part of the general education system in order to promote inclusive practices (Botswana Government, 1997a: 237). To achieve this, the Ministry of Education has therefore adopted strategies to facilitate implementation of an inclusive system of education, incorporating the following aspects (Matale, 2000: [Online]):

- Human Resource Development (Human Capacity Building)
- School Intervention Team Programmes
- Collaboration with other Stake holders

➤ **Human resource development (human capacity building)**

Training of teachers is of primary importance if the goals of inclusive education are to be realized. This implies that those who deal, either directly or indirectly, with learners who have special educational needs must improve their skills and knowledge even develop new ones. Human resource development in this case, focuses on teacher preparation at both pre-

service plus in-service level and on the in servicing of supervisory personnel, such as school heads, education officers and other support staff (Botswana Government, 1997b: 124; Matala, 2000: [Online]).

Adams (1990:93) and Abosi, Obani and Ogbue (1991:2) indicate that changing teacher behaviour is essential to school reform and teacher education programmes have a major role in promoting such reform. The development of teachers represents the very basis of an agenda within which inclusive education can be effectively implemented. Classroom teachers, therefore, are the main resource for achieving the goals of an inclusive system of education. Given the fact that teachers are the ones to take the major role in the implementation of inclusive education, it is therefore vital that they should be given adequate and appropriate training (Adams, 1990:81-91). For teachers can only be responsive to the needs of diverse needs of learners if they have received adequate and appropriate training both at pre-service and in-service level (Adams, 1990:81-91). Having recognized the importance of having suitably qualified teachers for the implementation of inclusive education, Botswana has already taken steps to train some teachers to handle all learners, including those with special educational needs during pre-service and in-service training (Matala, 2000: [Online]; Zindi, 1997:68).

Pre-service training

Training special education teachers in Botswana is, as elsewhere, viewed as of great importance, and that being so, the Department of Teacher Training and Development (T. T. & D.) within the Ministry of Education has introduced an element of special education as part of the curriculum in all colleges of primary education (Zindi, 1997:62). The aim is to create awareness thereby enabling prospective teachers to identify and meet the requirements of all learners including those with special educational needs, in mainstream classrooms. Literature generally supports this attitude for as Adams (1990:89) points out, it is vital that all teachers should be alert to the existence of children with special educational needs in their classrooms. He elaborates further that teachers should be trained in ways that will allow them to respond in positive, optimistic and relevant ways to situations they will meet. It is, therefore, of paramount importance that teachers be adequately trained since the

successful implementation of inclusive education is dependent upon them. In addition, Matala (2000: [Online]) notes that, “It is through the preparatory stage that the Ministry of Education hopes to gain teachers’ commitment to full inclusion”. The following primary colleges of education offer special education to future primary school teachers in Botswana: Lobatse, Tlokweng, Francistown and Serowe.

In-service training

Historically, teacher-training colleges have not provided systematic training to future general education teachers on how to adapt their classrooms to meet the instructional requirements of learners with special educational needs. As a result, it has been recommended that those teachers who did not receive prior training in special education should now receive it through in-service channels (Botswana Government, 1994:42). To which end, there is already a two-year diploma and four-year long degree in special education, targeting especially primary school teachers offered at the University of Botswana. In addition, some serving teachers continue to be released to take up such training in other countries, while others study through distance education (Zindi, 1997:63; Matala, 2000: [Online]).

In-service training of Senior Management staff (School Heads and Education Officers)

The Government of Botswana, through the Ministry of Education, has recognized that only training teachers cannot meet the implementation of inclusive education; it also necessitates developing school heads and Education Officers. These are the critical members assigned to ensure that policy on inclusive education gets off the ground at school and regional level. In such case, these personnel continue to receive in-service training through seminars, workshops, and conferences (Matala, 2000: [Online]). Supporting the need for appropriate training of administrators, Adams (1990:92) writes that governors and head teachers of every school must be able to assume full responsibility for ensuring that the needs of learners with special educational needs are met to the end, and management courses should include this responsibility.

Training of Support Staff

Human development has been extended to include the training of support staff to support the recommendation by the National Commission on Education that all associated staff, such as classroom assistants, should undergo in-service training, in those aspects of special education in which they are involved. These support personnel include educational psychologists, speech therapists, teacher aides, and assistant braillists being just some of the personnel who provide support services to all learners and teachers in an inclusive environment.

➤ School Intervention Team Programme

For inclusive education to be effective and successful, teachers should collaborate and work as a team. The school intervention team is a group of teachers working together towards a common goal. Its task in this case, is to assess and recommend appropriate teaching strategies for those learners with special educational needs (Botswana Government, 1994:41; Doorlag & Lewis, 2003:28).

➤ Collaboration with Stakeholders

For inclusive education to be implemented effectively and for it to be a success, there should be consultation and collaboration between the Ministry of Education and all parties concerned about the education system in Botswana. Matale (2002:10) reports that the Ministry of Education has developed a detailed policy, which emphasizes integration and collaboration between the following Ministerial Departments:

Ministry of Health

There is consultation and collaboration between the Ministries of Health and Education since both are concerned about the education and rehabilitation of learners with special educational needs (Botswana Government, 1993:243; Matale, 2002:10). For instance, Ministry of Health is responsible for providing splints and appliances such as wheelchairs, crutches, hearing aids and optical devices. Through its physiotherapy and occupational

therapy departments, it also assesses affected body parts like limbs. In fact, it attends to all medical needs, which, if not addressed, may interfere with learning.

Ministry of Local Government and Lands

The Ministry of Local Government and Lands also works in partnership with the Ministry of Education and is responsible for the following:

- Erecting or allocating infrastructure such as classrooms;
- Maintaining primary schools;
- Providing instructional materials and equipment; and
- Supplying transport to move learners with special educational needs to and from school.

Thus the role played by this Ministry has not only enabled learners with special educational needs to attend school, but has also ensured their comprehensive basic education as citizens of Botswana (Matale, 2002:9).

Non-Governmental Organizations (N.G.O.s)

The Ministry of Education works hand in hand with both the private sector particularly Non-Governmental Organizations, to ensure that even those learners with severe special educational needs are not left behind in terms of access to basic education. For example, the Cheshire Foundation, the Society for the Deaf and the Camphill Trust to mention just a few, provide special education and training for learners with severe, special educational needs.

Parents

Parents/guardians are often an untapped resource in education, although they are the ones who bring up children, and who choose whether to send a child to school or not. The

importance of involving such resource in the implementation of inclusive education cannot be over-emphasized, as they are a valuable source of data about their own children (Mortimer, 2002:134). Parents can provide the school with relevant information about the child's functioning level within the family, or the neighborhood and in other social interactions. This input is vital, as it can be used at all stages from assessment to daily instruction (Doorlag & Lewis, 2003:35). In line with this, the R.N.P.E. advocates that parents should be meaningfully involved at all stages of the education process. For if parents are so involved, they are likely to buy into the visionary mission of an inclusive system of education and be thus, encouraged to facilitate the implementation process.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education is trying to provide basic education to learners with special educational needs, there are some constraints, which hinder this development. These are outlined below (Matale, 2000: [Online]):

- Shortage of trained personnel especially in the area of assessment;
- Scarcity of specialized instructional materials and equipment not locally available,
- Unsuitable curricular.

Ainscow in Clark, Dyson and Millward (1995b: 76) offers strategies and a description of what seems to happen in schools that move towards more inclusive policies and practices. Such strategies as listed below may be tried by schools in moving towards an inclusive education system:

With respect to leadership:

- Establish a clear vision for the school that emphasizes individuality;
- Emphasize values and utilize task-relevant experience;
- Encourage staff to take on leadership roles
- Find ways of building consensus without sacrificing critical thinking.

With respect to involvement:

- Creates policies that specifically involve pupils, parents and the wider community;
- Encourage overall access through the creation of an open climate;
- Develop practices that facilitate the full participation of all pupils during lessons.

With respect to planning:

- Link plans to an overall vision of the school in the future;
- Recognize that planning (i.e. of information) is as important as plans;
- Regularly modify and update plans.

With respect to co-ordination:

- Develop effective methods of communication;
- Foster collaborative ways of working without reducing teacher discretion;
- Emphasize talk about teaching and learning in order to encourage the practical improvement.

With respect to enquiry and reflection:

- Collect and use information to inform decision-making;
- Establish strategies for reviewing the progress and impact of school policies plus initiatives;
- Encourage the involvement of staff in processes of data collection and analysis.

With respect to staff development:

- Regard professional development as essential to improvement;

- Allocate time for staff upgrading and maximization activities;
- Emphasize classroom partnerships (Ainscow in Clark, Dyson & Millward, 1995b: 76).

Sources indicate that the question of which strategies are the most appropriate to implement inclusive education is extremely controversial. Research findings by Choate (2000:14), show that accumulated research offers no definitive answers regarding the most appropriate strategy for implementation of inclusive education. Choate (2000:14) further suggests several possible explanations for variable results in the efficacy of attempts to foster inclusion namely:

- Schools and their systems vary in their practice of mainstreaming or inclusion;
- Uniform guidelines for making decisions about the inclusion process are scarce. For example, no two schools are likely to have the same assessment information available when deliberating over a placement decision. Nor will they offer the same placement options;
- Methodological differences are common in efficacy research. For example, the instruments employed to determine the effects of a particular placement may vary across studies, making it practically impossible to compare the results of different investigations;
- The contradictory verdicts of some researchers may well be attributable to the variable characteristics of the specific group of students under investigation.

In addition, Doorlag and Lewis (2003:4) comment that, according to the Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC) Policy on Inclusive Schools and Community Settings (1993):

A continuum of services must be available for all children, youth and young adults. C.E.C. also believes that the concept of inclusion is a meaningful goal to be pursued in our schools and communities. In addition, CEC believes children, youth and young adults with disabilities should be served whenever possible in general education classrooms, inclusive neighborhood

schools plus community settings.

One may, therefore, conclude that, though mainstream classrooms are regarded as the most suitable placement options for learners with special educational needs, various research findings show that not all learners benefit from them and this calls for a continuum of service placement options (CEC, 1993; Doorlag & Lewis, 2003:4-5).

2. 8 WHY IS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION CONTROVERSIAL?

Literature shows that the nature of what constitutes an appropriate educational placement for learners who are identified as learners with special educational needs has continued to be a matter of great controversy (Doorlag & Lewis, 2003:437). Some professionals have questioned the appropriateness of including such learners in mainstream classrooms, while others have advocated it. The call for full inclusion, therefore, has both strong advocates and critics (Mortimer, 2002:34; Doorlag & Lewis, 2003:15). Considerable debate continues also about which learners should be part of mainstream classrooms and how much time they should spend there (Mortimer, 2002:35; Doorlag & Lewis, 2003:23). At one extreme, there are those who contend that all learners belong in mainstream classrooms all the time (Lipsky & Gartner 1989:3-15; Stainback, Stainback & Forest, 1989:30; Stainback & Stainback 1990b: 3-23). At the other extreme are those who believe that only learners who meet certain standards should permanently be members in mainstream classroom. For example, Kauffman, Gerber and Semmel (1988:6-11) plus Kauffman, Llyod, Baker and Riedel (1995:542-546). This shows that there are two schools of thoughts regarding the education of learners with special educational needs. Proponents, many of whom are themselves associated with learners with severe and profound special educational needs, talk in partial terms and address the right of students with special educational needs to the social benefits and quality of life, issues associated with inclusion.

By contrast, opponents cite the un-preparedness of schools for inclusion and tend to focus on quality of instruction academic standards when discussing the requirements of learners with special educational needs (Kauffman, Llyod, Baker & Riedel, 1995:542-546).

Those researchers who advocate for inclusive education make the following points:

- With support, all students benefit from education in inclusive settings. For instance, even students for whom traditional academic requirements are not relevant can still learn social skills by observing the appropriate behaviours of other students and will come to learn that full class members are not second-class citizens. In addition, inclusion benefits non-disabled children by teaching them to accept others who are different;
- When students leave a mainstream classroom to go into a special education setting, their classmates stigmatize them and they carry the labels associated with having disabilities;
- Teaching approaches used in special classes are not, in many ways, significantly different from those provided in mainstream classrooms (Stainback & Stainback 1992:120; Lipsky & Gartner in Stainback & Stainback, 1996:3-15).

On the other hand, there are those researchers who believe that inclusive education depends on certain conditions and they offer the following arguments:

- To say all students should be in mainstream educational settings is to deny the unique characteristics of students with special educational needs. Treating all students alike also denies those with special educational needs the right to individualized or specialized education and violates Federal Special Education Law (Lieberman in Stainback & Stainback, 1992:134; Council for Exceptional Children, 1993:4); and
- Mainstream classrooms and teachers who work there are not necessarily equipped to manage the learning needs of the full range of students with special educational needs (Kauffman, Gerber & Semmel, 1988:6-11).

Despite the controversy, today an inclusive philosophy has become central to the educational policies of large numbers of developed and developing countries and has emerged as an important aspect of international discussions about how best to respond to

learners who experience difficulties in school (Paul, Churton, Morse, Dunchnowski, Epanchin, Osnes & Smith, 1997:56-57).

2.9 CRITICAL FACTORS NEEDED FOR THE EFFECTIVE AND SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Calls for an inclusive education system require significant changes in entire education systems (Evans in Paul, Churton, Morse, Duchnowski, Epanchin & Smith, 1997:65-66). For it to be implemented successfully, several factors need to be considered. Harris and Evans in Paul, Rosselli and Evans (1995:62) have identified several such factors critical to the successful implementation of inclusive education and these include inter alia: school restructuring, strong administrative support, and changes in regard to educators' attitudes. Other factors to be considered include proper and sufficient training of teachers, the provision of adequate and appropriate curricula plus supplementary instructional materials and support services, partnership with parents and preparation of students (Evans & Yoder, 1991:123; Matala, 2000: [Online]).

2.9.1 School restructuring

In order for inclusive education to be implemented successfully, there is need for schools to be restructured to accommodate the diverse needs of learners. A change in the organization and restructuring of schools relates to the administrative decentralization of school systems (Harris & Evans in Paul, Rosselli & Evans, 1995:62). According to Murphy (1991:15), the most common strategies for restructuring schools involve shared decision making at the school level. Decisions at this level will include, among others matters; personnel, the budget and curriculum content. Further to this, David (1991:45-53) suggests that any restructuring of schools represents actions that permit and promote expectations of students and teachers. He elaborates by listing the requirements and advantages of such restructuring namely that it:

- Is teacher centred and student centred;

- Alters the way teachers teach;
- Is applicable to all learners including those at risk of failing;
- Affects both organization and curriculum;
- Requires that everyone within the school subscribes to the same central vision;
- Is supported by all segments of the community.

The implications of restructuring of schools, therefore, encompass and ensure systematic changes in organizational structure and work redesign such as changes in roles, responsibilities, and relationships as between teachers and administrators. In such case, if decisions are made and shared by all stakeholders, teachers are less likely to view inclusive education as yet another possibly responsibility over and above their current duties. Rather, they are likely to view it as simply an integral part of a larger comprehensive effort towards improving the performance of learners.

2.9.2 Strong administrative support

Research shows that the degree of administrative support and vision is the most powerful predictor of successful inclusive education (Mogasha, Le Grand & Tsayang, 1991:59-62). Administrators at school level include the Senior Management Team including the school heads, deputies and heads of department. The support of the Senior Management Team cannot be overemphasized, because they are individuals whose activities, actions, attitudes, and expectations can significantly impact on the success or failure of inclusive education. In support of visionary leadership, Evans (1990:73-74) alludes to the fact that administrators' role is pivotal in expanding opportunities for more inclusionary programming, while ensuring that students with special educational needs receive services that have been planned by the school. Mogasha, Le Grand and Tsayang (1991:63) as well as Harris (1985:76) share this view when they postulate that administrators have a specific responsibility to carry out the goals, objectives and policies of the government to which they are responsible. Thus, they must monitor all activities in a school setting to ensure that the aims and objectives of inclusion are accomplished. Senior Management should

therefore be supportive of teachers and should accept as well the challenge of creating an inclusive environment conducive to all learners. For without the support of such administrators, teachers' attempts at inclusion are likely to be met with obstacles that will be difficult if not impossible to overcome.

2.9.3 Changes with regard to educators' attitudes

Discussion of the attitudes of society towards learners with special educational needs is a common feature in literature reviewed. It is a common belief among writers on perceptions that an understanding of societal attitudes towards those with special educational needs is necessary for the success of any programme, especially if it is new as in the case with inclusive education (Zindi, 1997:78; Mushoriwa, 2001:26). The way in which society especially its teachers view the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in the mainstream classrooms depends largely on its attitudes towards such learners. Teachers' opinions and views regarding inclusive education is thus a decisive factor in making classrooms more inclusive (Abosi, Obani & Ogbue, 1991:54; Hergaty, 1994:120; Zindi, 1997:79). Given the further fact that teachers are the most responsible for implementing policies on inclusive education, it is therefore clearly imperative that their attitudes be positive.

Therefore, with the introduction of inclusive education, it is important for educators to accept and acknowledge that all children can learn, irrespective of the differences. Similarly, the success of inclusive education is dependent on the support that educators receive from the Senior Management Team, as they are the most influential individuals at school level (Loate & Mathibe, 2004:30). Educators in general should therefore:

- Raise questions about the kind of society that is desired;
- Acknowledge education as a basic human right aimed at achieving a just society;
- Understand and have thorough knowledge of policies on inclusive education

Positive attitudes of educators in inclusive programmes, therefore, will reduce the likelihood of resistance to change and maximize opportunities for students to realize the benefits of inclusion (Loate & Mathibe, 2004:32).

2.9.4 Sufficient suitably trained teachers

Any programme that starts without an attempt to prepare teachers leaves out a fundamental building block. Various research studies show that inclusive classes are far more challenging and demanding and without adequate training, teachers will flounder in seeking to provide for the diverse needs of all learners in mainstream classrooms (Choate, 2000:110; Moahi, 2002:12; Doorlag & Lewis, 2003:80-82). Such preparation is therefore vital not only in counteracting negative attitudes towards individuals with special educational needs, but in providing those skills and that information needed to face the challenge of providing for all learners in an inclusive setting (Matale, 2002:10; Abosi, 2002:7; Tlale, 2002:15).

Historically, teacher-training colleges in Botswana did not prepare future teachers on how to adapt their classrooms to meet the instructional needs of learners with special educational needs (Matale, 2002:10). Consequently, in order to counteract this problem, the R.N.P.E. has recommended that:

All teachers should have some elements of special education in their pre-service or in-service training. Those who have not received such training during their pre-service courses should receive it during in-service training.

For without training, teachers are more likely to be frustrated and less confident, thus reducing the potential benefit of an inclusive system of education.

2.9.5 Appropriate and relevant curricula

Various sources show that the most significant barrier to learning for all learners is the curriculum. Moahi (2002:3); Tlale (2002:2); Matale (2002:5) and Doorlag and Lewis

(2003:435) contend that barriers to learning arise from different aspects of the curriculum such as:

- Content (i.e. what is taught);
- Language or medium of instruction;
- How the classroom or lesson is organized;
- Methods and processes used in teaching;
- The pace of learning and the time available to complete the curriculum;
- Learning materials and equipment used;
- How learning is assessed.

Proponents of inclusive education report that this kind of education system can only be realized if the curriculum is accessible to all learners in mainstream classrooms (Abosi, 2002:4; Moahi, 2002:5; Matale, 2002:5). According to Abosi (2002:3) curriculum includes all planned and unplanned activities within the school environment aimed at achieving goals and objectives. This writer further reports that curriculum has to do with the totality of the process and this involves:

- Who we teach;
- What we teach;
- How we teach;
- The outcome of what we teach.

In support of a relevant curriculum, Doorlag and Lewis (2003:435) report that:

What we teach may not be as important as how and what we teach. It is not the location of the teaching act that is crucial, but the quality of the curriculum taught and the instructional procedures used to teach it.

This then, calls for a curriculum that accommodates learners with varying educational needs, learning styles and individual talents in the classroom. Literature further shows that the curriculum in an inclusive classroom should be developed with the needs of learners

with special educational needs in mind. It should be a curriculum that will bring about change in the lives of learners in terms of the acquisition of survival as well as literacy skills (Moahi, 2002:6).

Furthermore, a relevant curriculum should be flexible and allow learners to progress at their own rate of understanding. It should also help to break barriers that may pose obstacles to achieving individual independence (Moahi, 2002:6-7). In addition, Tlale (2002:5) reports that education for all should not only look at quality in terms of facilities and equipment, but must also ensure that learners with special educational needs access the curriculum. It should therefore be:

Balanced and broadly based and must promote spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of all learners and should prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and adult life experiences.

A flexible curriculum therefore becomes a necessity if teachers are expected to adapt it for learners with diverse needs. Thus, the national curriculum must provide the foundation for all requisite skills, which can then form the basis for adaptation to suit different learners (Matale, 2002:10). In other words, a flexible and adaptive curriculum will provide the foundation upon which teachers can build, using their own professional skills and judgments to provide for all learners in an inclusive classroom (Moahi, 2002:6-7).

2.9.6 Adequate provision of supplementary instructional learning materials and support services

Not only will inclusive education be successful through provision of the above-mentioned factors, but also through provision of appropriate supplementary learning materials and relevant support services (Nalumango, 2002:2). Teachers should not be seen as the only instructional resource in inclusive classrooms. Rather, instruction by others is also needed. Including learners with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms will therefore require the services of other professionals on site. These professional services can be either short or long term and will be determined by the needs of individual learners (Abosi,

Obani & Ogbue, 1991:118; Mabote, 2002:15; Doorlag & Lewis, 2003:33-37). Such professionals may include speech and language therapists, psychologists, physiotherapists, school nurses and other specialist experts (Doorlag & Lewis, 2003:37). They should collaborate with classroom teachers to ensure that the needs of learners are met (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1992:378; Wade, 2000:131). Similarly, some learners may need relevant and appropriate, supplementary learning materials and equipment. Items and materials such as braille machines, hearing aids, enlarged reading text books, wheelchairs and crutches to mention just a few, may be variously needed to meet the specific needs of different individual learners (Abosi, Obani & Ogbue, 1991:118; Zindi, 1997:34).

2.9.7 Partnership with parents

The right to make educational decisions does not belong exclusively to educators. Parents should also be involved and their interests are more immediate, personal and enduring than that of educators. Research shows that the meaningful involvement of parents in the inclusion process is an input not to be overlooked. Parents are a valuable source of information as they can provide teachers and other professionals who work with learners with much needed information about these learners (Botswana Government, 1993:45; Doorlag & Lewis, 2003:35). Parents can also assist in establishing appropriate educational goals and can specify which aspects of the programme they can supplement at the home (Mortimer, 2002:41-45). Lack of meaningful involvement of parents can result in a sense lack of ownership of any inclusive programme and this is likely to impede its implementation.

In a study carried out by Mutua (2001:148-159) in Kenya on the importance of parental expectations and involvement in the education of learners with mental disabilities, it has been shown amongst other things, that learners benefit greatly if their parents are fully involved in the learning process. Similarly, Dart, Didimalang and Pilime (2002:18) say parents/guardians are often an untapped educational resource and yet it is they who bring up children, choose whether to send them to school or not and choose which school they will go to. These researchers therefore highlight the importance of parental involvement especially since education is supposed to be a joint venture between parents and teachers.

2.9.8 Students' preparation for inclusion

In preparing for inclusion, particularly in relation to its process and implementation, it is very important that general education learners are prepared for and informed about those with special educational needs and vice versa. Literature shows that the needs of learners are not always fully considered (Doorlag & Lewis, 2003:479). It is also clear that it is often assumed that learners will adjust without any preparation. Yet such preparation is vital to counteract negative attitudes towards those with special educational needs (Choate, 2000:135). The absence of adequate preparation of students for inclusive education can increase anxiety and frustration in those with special educational needs and unfounded fears in general education learners. This, in turn, will impact seriously and negatively on the potential benefits of inclusion.

Consequently, one may safely say that, without most of the critical factors above, inclusive education cannot be effectively and successfully implemented.

2.10 IMPLICATIONS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Inclusive education is a challenge to teachers as implementers, policymakers and the government in general. It also has far reaching implications for each of these role players. According to Abosi (2002:10), the implications of an inclusive system of education should be considered and resolved before going further. Abosi (2002:10) further claims that Botswana adopted this type of education system without having considered its implications. Literature indicates that, for this system of education to be implemented effectively, several changes need to be made in the entire education system (Clark, Dyson & Millward 1995: iii; Choate, 2000:3; Rouse & Kang'ethe, 2003:76-78). This kind of education system requires for instance, changes in the physical infrastructure, curriculum, educators' attitudes, provision of appropriate personnel and instructional materials (Matale, 2000, [Online]; South African Department of Education, 2001:10; Matale, 2002:12; Abosi, 2002:17).

In short, all these sources indicate that inclusive education calls for the entire education system to be redressed. Consequently, mainstream education should not be seen as isolated

from special education, rather the two systems should be seen as one (Clark, Dyson & Millward 1995: iii; Tlale, 2002:13).

The implications of the above findings are that special education and mainstream education should be merged into a unified system. In support of this argument, Ware in Clark, Dyson and Millward (1995:128) notes that a merger of these systems to form a partnership between mainstream and special education programmes plus blending the intrinsic strengths of both systems will be beneficial, not only to learners, but also to teachers. Special education is pivotal in the education of learners with special educational needs, and therefore learners with special educational needs have been receiving their education in segregated environments. The knowledge, skills, expertise and required facilities for special education are still important in the education of such learners, but the segregation of these learners is now perceived to be unacceptable (Mavundukure, 2002:21). In the context of Botswana, as elsewhere, educators and the Government have both put much effort into the development of special education (Botswana Government, 1994:45; Zindi, 1997:67). However, this view of special education is gradually changing and the intention now is to merge special education with mainstream education in one system. In support of this, special education policy currently indicates that all education resources should cater for all learners. Learners with special educational needs should be educated alongside other learners (Matale, 2000: [Online]).

In addition, inclusive education recognizes that all children can learn irrespective of their differences. This means that teachers should start to recognize and accept that learners with special educational need and general education students together constitute a community of learners for whom all school personnel should share responsibility (Paul, Churton, Morse, Duchnowski, Osnes, Epanchin & Smith, 1997:62-66; Choate, 2000:16). It may be safely concluded, therefore, that inclusive education advocates that all children can learn and should be valued, accepted and supported in that environment most conducive to learning (Burden, 1999:19-20).

2. 11 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Inclusive education is still a new concept in South Africa, just as in other developing countries. But before discussing inclusive education in the context of South Africa, it is necessary to reflect on its education system before independence. Sources indicate that the type of education in South Africa during apartheid encouraged segregation by providing separate structures and departments for different ethnic groups (Zindi, 1997:66-77; South African Department of Education, 2001:6-9; Loate & Mathibe, 2004:9). Departments of Education had their own discriminatory policies, each based on racial characterization. There were also disparities in the way they were funded (Zindi, 1997:77). Upon attaining all democracy, in 1994, South Africa undertook wholesome transformation of its education system. This was aimed at developing a just and united society, whilst correcting the previous inequalities (Zindi, 1997:76; South African Department of Education, 2001:4).

As a result of this transformation, a policy on special education was formulated. This paved the way to inclusion as government started to show commitment to the development of a unified society. In support of this, Naicker (1996:12) reports that the need for inclusive education was emphasized by completion of a policy statement by the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) (South African Department of Education, 2001:3). According to the South African Department of Education (2001:6 & 16), inclusive education and training are about:

- Acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support;
- Accepting and respecting the fact that all learners are different in some way and have different learning needs which are equally valued and an ordinary part of our human experience;
- Enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners;
- Acknowledging and respecting differences in learners, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability or HIV status;

- More than mere formal schooling and consequently acknowledging that learning also occurs in the home plus community and within formal modes and structures;
- Changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricular, and the environment to meet the needs of all learners;
- Maximizing the participation of all learners in the culture and curricula of educational institutions whilst uncovering and minimizing barriers to learning;
- Empowering learners by developing their individual strengths and enabling them to participate critically in the process of learning (South African Department of Education, 2001:6 & 16).

Consequently, the government of South Africa is committed to the education of all South Africans, including those with special educational needs. It is important to note that inclusive education is a continuous process, and in this regard, government has made a long- term plan to facilitate implementation (South African Department of Education, 2001:42-43). In so doing, it intends that inclusive education will be realized through human resource development, modification of physical infrastructure and provision of appropriate resources.

2.12 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN KENYA

Research findings from Rouse and Kang'ethe (2003:63) show that, upon gaining independence in 1963, the government of Kenya struggled to achieve educational goals, such as social equality, collaboration and respect for Kenyan culture. Just as in other African states, Kenya had limited development in terms of education. This resulted in the government focusing on the education of the so-called 'normal' learners and little was done to make the same opportunity accessible to those with special educational needs (Rouse & Kang'ethe, 2003:76).

Interest in the education of learners with special educational needs was started by missionaries and Non-Governmental Organizations (N.G.O.s), as in other developing countries (Kisanji, 1998:55-58). For example, the Salvation Army and the Catholic Church initiated the first special schools. Rouse and Kang'ethe (2003:77) report that since the

1940s, much of impetus for development and maintenance of the special school system has come from churches or local and international Non-Governmental Organizations. In this situation, learners with special educational needs were educated in environments that were least restrictive and segregated (Zindi, 1997:47-48). The contribution made by such organizations was recognized by the government, and, in particular, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

Meanwhile, only a small proportion of learners with special educational needs attended classes in local, mainstream, primary schools. Rouse and Kang'ethe (2003:77) comment that a relatively small number of children with special educational needs attended primary schools and had little or no support. The main reason for non-attendance was the introduction of school fees as Rouse and Kang'ethe (2003:78) put it:

If parents cannot afford to send all their children to school, then they are unlikely to invest in the education of disabled children

The policy of requiring school fees had an immediate impact on special schools, as some children had to drop out due to non-payment. To address this situation, some learners without special educational needs were then admitted into these special schools, which Rouse and Kang'ethe (2003:78) called '*reverse inclusion*'.

Upon the election at the end of 2002, of a new government tasked to make universal education free, school fees were abolished (Zindi, 1997:72). This resulted in large numbers of children, including those with special educational needs attending school. Despite the fact that some learners with special educational needs attended mainstream education, still special no support was extended to them (Rose & Kang'ethe, 2003:80). It should be noted that Kenya like many, if not all African States, is signatory to all international organizations. Therefore, in line with broader international developments such as the call for "Education for All", the government of Kenya, through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology made recommendations to review existing policies and programmes of education. The aim was to make education as inclusive as possible (Karugu, 2002:34; Rouse & Kang'ethe, 2003:78).

In light of the above, the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with Kenyatta University plus Cambridge University through the British High Commission in Nairobi, sought to develop and support such human capacity building (Rouse & Kang'ethe, 2003:78). As a result of this development, the following strategies or activities took place:

- A series of workshops on inclusive education held for District Education Officers, teacher trainers, school heads and teachers involved in assessment.
- Production of new audit and evaluation procedures for use by the Ministry of Education in reviewing existing policies
- Implementation of a revised in-service Bachelor of Education Degree for teachers at Kenyatta University focusing on special and inclusive education;
- Introduction of a new Master's Degree in Special Education, with emphasis on inclusion for potential leaders of the new policy initiative.

The government of Kenya hoped that a new policy on inclusion would result in extending basic education to learners who had previously been excluded from the mainstream education system (Zindi, 1997:58; Kisanji, 1998:55-72). Literature regards some success in this regard already achieved by the Ministry of Education in its efforts to facilitate implementation of inclusive education as indicated by Rouse and Kang'ethe (2003:82) these included:

- Regional workshops designed as part of the consultation process for the new policy on inclusion run jointly by the Ministry of Education, Kenyatta University, and Cambridge University.
- An awareness campaign to promote inclusion (Rouse & Kang'ethe, 2003:82).

Despite such developments, however the Kenyan, is still faced by challenges. According to Rouse and Kang'ethe (2003:80), these include negative attitudes towards those with special educational needs, restructuring of the existing system of education and lack of trained personnel. Arising out which, one may reasonably conclude that the Kenyan government appears headed in its policy on inclusive education. For as Clark, Dyson and

Millward (1995: viii) report that, the policy formulation is crucial in facilitating implementation of inclusive education.

2.13 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN BOTSWANA

As already stated, the government of Botswana is committed to the education of all its citizens including, learners with special educational needs. Education is seen as a basic human right and thus all have to receive it without discrimination (Botswana Government, 1994:55). Discussion in this case focuses on historical developments plus the philosophical rationale for inclusive education. Therefore, this subsection will reflect a little on the history of special education in that country.

Special education in Botswana has a very short history. As with many African countries, its development in Botswana is attributable to the efforts of Non-Governmental Organizations (N.G.Os.) and missionaries (Vanqa, 1999:34-35). In fact the Dutch Reformed church and the Lutheran church made the first provision of special education. For example, the Dutch Reformed church established a Resource Centre for the blind where visually impaired learners were taught for two years before being integrated in the mainstream classrooms. Similarly, Ramotswa Centre for the deaf was attached to Magopane primary school where hearing impaired learners interacted with their hearing peers, mainly during social activities (Evans & Yoder, 1991:12; Horgan, Moss, Kesupile, Maphorisa & Haseley, 1991:90-91).

Texts show that integration or mainstreaming of learners can have disadvantages, as for instance learners with special educational needs are required to fit into existing education systems without modifications. This kind of educational setup is even discouraged by international declarations such as the Dakar "Education for All", the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs, and, as a result prominent recently in the debate have been inclusive education (Martin, 1992:7-8). Government is now advocating that all resources for education should cater for all learners. It also advocates that learners with special educational needs should be educated alongside their peers in mainstream classrooms (Matale, 2000: [Online]; Botswana Government, 2003:267-268). Thus, there is

now a deliberate effort to embrace inclusive practices. National Developments Plan 8 and 9 note that the specific objectives of education during these planning periods are to develop special education as an integral part of mainstream education in order to promote inclusive practices. In this case, the Ministry of Education is currently trying to make mainstream education accessible to all learners, including those with special educational needs. To achieve this, certain strategies are already in place with regard to human capacity building, development of school intervention teams and the fostering of collaboration between all stakeholders (Matale, 2000: [Online]).

Notable achievements in Botswana's effort to move towards inclusive education are the following as outlined by Zindi (1997:68):

- Policy on Special Education is identified and now available;
- A Central Resource Centre is already fully operational;
- All Colleges of Education for primary school teachers offer special education as a component of the curriculum;
- The University of Botswana offers both diplomas and degrees in special education to serving teachers;
- A series of workshops have been organized to sensitize leaders of schools and education officers about inclusive education;
- Support staff, such as, Educational Psychologists, have already been sent to study abroad and upon completion will act in support of both teachers and learners (Horgan *et al.*, 1991:93; Matale, 2000: [Online]).

Yet, despite the achievements noted above, a number of constraints still hinder the move towards inclusive education in Botswana. These include a shortage of trained personnel and of instructional support materials plus an unsuitable curriculum (Matale, 2000: [Online]).

2. 14 CONCLUSION

Literature has shown that inclusive education can be beneficial to all learners if it is properly implemented. However, despite the benefits of inclusive education, it is sad to note that most teachers still have negative perceptions towards it. Teachers generally do not acknowledge that all children can learn in inclusive classrooms. Furthermore, it has been shown that, for inclusive educations to be successfully implemented, critical factors are still missing that are needed to facilitate the process. Sources indicate that inclusive education has far reaching implications, which must first be addressed before the policy is implemented.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, a detailed description of the research design and methodology, along with the context of the study, is presented. In addition, the procedure for data collection and measures to ensure trustworthiness of the findings is discussed. Furthermore, the chapter gives the sampling procedures employed to select participants for the study. Lastly, the chapter highlights how data was analyzed. The central theme in this study was its aim that was to investigate and describe the perceptions of special education teachers about inclusive education at two primary schools in Ramotswa village in the South East District of Botswana.

The research design used here was a general plan or blueprint and structure of the investigation, which the researcher used to obtain evidence to answer research questions. It guided the manner in which the study was conducted and created a framework for involved (Bodgan & Biklen, 1998:49; Marvasti, 2004:9).

The design further was qualitative, phenomenological, descriptive and contextual with a slant towards the quantitative in order to support the initial design. Qualitative research design emphasizes the dynamic, holistic and individual aspects of human experience in their natural settings. The participants were teachers in the two schools mentioned above who had been trained in special education either during pre-service or in-service training. Sixty teachers participated by responding to questionnaires and twenty-four out of these were selected and interviewed within their schools. Through the use of both qualitative approach and quantitative approach, the researcher was able to investigate and describe perceptions respondents had about inclusive education.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

This describes the procedures for conducting the study. It includes when, where, from whom and under what conditions data will be gathered and analyzed (Melville & Goddard,

1996:30; Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2000:58). As stated, the research approach used in this study was qualitative, descriptive and contextual with the quantitative used as support. The research approaches adopted guided the manner in which the study was conducted, as they created a framework for it. The combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches was basically used to cross inform and so fulfill the specific aim of the study. The research designs and the methodological approaches implemented in this study therefore provided the researcher with detailed information about how special education teachers in Ramotswa village perceived inclusive education.

3.2.1 The qualitative approach

The qualitative approach was used in this study to gather detailed information from the respondents regarding their perceptions about inclusive education. The study involved interaction with participants in their natural environment, which were the schools where they worked. Qualitative methods of data collection such as in-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires were employed to generate data. The choice of this research approach and the methodological approaches implemented in this study, facilitated flexibility, whereby participants were able to describe their perceptions from their own frame of reference. This provided the researcher with detailed information about the problem under investigation. As this study was descriptive in nature, the researcher, after empirical investigation, described the perceptions participants had about inclusive education in a textual, narrative form namely recounting of the participants' own words from the data collected through interviews and open-ended questionnaires.

3.2.2 The quantitative approach

The quantitative approach was used only minimally in this study to support the initial qualitative approach. Through data gathered via quantitative methods of data collection, the researcher was able to elicit respondents' views and opinions about inclusive education as well as to establish the perceptions they held about this phenomenon. The quantitative data was gathered through the use of closed-ended questionnaires. Descriptive parameters, including frequencies and percentages, were used to organize and summarize the data. The

data was then interpreted in narrative form to describe the perceptions participants had about inclusive education.

3.3 POPULATION

Neumann (2000:120) and Silverman (2001:122) report that the population includes all members of any defined class of people, events or objects who, for research purposes are designed as being the focus of an investigation. As indicated already in Chapter One, there were two hundred and fifty-six teachers and eight primary schools in Ramotswa village. Two schools were chosen as research sites for this study and the target population was teachers who had been exposed to special education either during pre-service or in-service training. There were thirty-five teachers in one school and twenty-five in the other, making a total of sixty, hence the population of this study.

3.4 SAMPLE SELECTION AND SAMPLE SIZE

Literature shows that no specific rules on how to obtain adequate sample size have been formulated since each situation presents its own problems (Cohen & Manion, 1995:195; McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:177). However, Coleman and Briggs (2003:115) suggest that 30% is the minimally percentage sample size in a study. In contrast, Leedy and Ormrod (2005:144-145) are of the view that 10-20% of the population should be enough for generalization of the results. In a small study like this one, it was practical to study the whole population and the guiding principle was simply to obtain the most widely spread, representative detailed information for the purpose of generalizing of the findings. In order to achieve this, the following sampling techniques were used:

3.4.1 Convenience sampling

The researcher selected two schools within easy reach.

3.4.2 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling techniques were used to select the participants based on the needs of the study. Thus, questionnaires were used to select the sixty teachers who took part. This precise technique was used, because it enabled the researcher to select the participants who

were information-rich being those teachers who had been exposed to special education either during pre-service or in-service training. In support of this, Coleman and Briggs (2003:120) report that purposive sampling allows the researcher to select particular elements that are well informed about the topic under investigation. The technique, therefore, allows the researcher to most fully discover, understand and gain insight on participants regarding the topic investigated.

3.4.3 Simple random sampling

In order to select interviewees from the whole population, simple random sampling was used so that each participant had an equal chance of being interviewed. Twenty-four questionnaires were randomly picked from those completed and respondents who answered them were also interviewed. Eleven teachers were picked from one school, whilst thirteen were taken from the other school thus making the total of twenty-four respondents. In other words, forty percent (40%) of the population was interviewed. The reason for choosing such a high percentage was that the researcher needed the sample to be as representative of the population as possible.

3.5 RESEARCH METHODS

A reading of the relevant literature review plus survey and case study were used as research methods for the purposes of this study.

3.5.1 Literature review

Both primary and secondary sources were an integral part of this study and studied thoroughly. Websites were also consulted to gather relevant information about the topic under investigation. Literature most helped the researcher advance her arguments in relation to the topic under investigation. It also created the framework within which this study was based. For instance, the literature review in Chapter Two presented a framework for comparing the results of this study with those of similar studies. In fact, the problem statement for this study emerged from the reading of literature. Data collection, analysis and interpretation were carried according to guidelines set out in the literature study.

3.5.2 Surveys

Survey research methods were used in this study to establish and describe the perceptions respondents had about inclusive education. One advantage of using such surveys was that they defined the target population from which the sample was selected. This enabled the researcher to choose a sample from the population in ways that extrapolation to the whole.

3.6 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Methods of data collection employed in this study were influenced by research approaches used. In an effort to acquire different facets of the same problem and to obtain detailed information, both questionnaires and in-depth interviews were utilized to collect the data. The qualitative data was generated by means of open-ended questionnaires and in-depth interviews, whilst the quantitative data was gathered by means of closed-ended questionnaires. In-depth interviews were used as the main method of data collection and the questionnaires were used to supplement the data gathered from interviews.

3.6.1 Questionnaires

Melville and Goddard (1996: 43) define questionnaires as a printed list of questions, which respondents are asked to answer to elicit information from them. In this study, the questionnaires were compiled (see Appendix A), and initially pre-tested and administered to respondents in two schools. Questionnaires were used for many reasons in this study: They were the only practical way of covering the population from two schools. They also provided an opportunity for the respondents to remain anonymous and thus more likely to express views and opinions freely. They were completed at the respondents' own convenience and they also provided an opportunity for information to be sought from respondents without being led by the researcher. Lastly, the use of questionnaires in this study helped the researcher to choose the appropriate population for this study.

The questionnaires were divided into three sections. Section A was intended to gather biographical information about each respondent (see Appendix A). This information was essential to understanding what background information respondents had in relation to the problem under investigation. Each respondent was requested to tick appropriate boxes to

reflect biographic information. Section B used closed-ended questionnaires, in these, different statements were set out, designed to establish respondents' opinions about inclusive education. Each such respondent was asked to indicate for each item his or her response to the statement on a four-point scale. The four-point scale that was used was 'Strongly Agree' (SA), 'Agree' (A), 'Strongly Disagree' (SD) and 'Disagree' (D). It was used to indicate the extent to which respondents are in agreement or not of a particular statement. Section C was open-ended questionnaire and generated the qualitative data also needed to investigate perceptions of the respondents on the subject in question (see Appendix A).

3.6.2 Piloting and pre-testing the questionnaires

In order to ensure that the questionnaires measured what they were supposed to measure, the researcher compared questionnaires to known literature on the topic and took pains to make sure that the tool accurately represented the literature. Furthermore, a few friends who were familiar with inclusive education were asked to evaluate the content validity of the questionnaires to ensure that it was representative of the area intended to be covered. As the content of the questionnaires was found to be acceptable, these were then piloted and pre-tested. The importance of piloting and pre-testing instruments before administering them to respondents cannot be overemphasized (Mertens, 1998:87; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:185) since it allows them to be revised accordingly. Piloting and pre-testing was also done to check for clarity, possible ambiguities, flaws and possible misinterpretations of the questionnaire items.

Ten primary school teachers from Botswana, studying special education at the North West University, were asked to complete the questionnaires. Comments from this pilot group helped the researcher to shape the final questionnaires as some of the questionnaire items were reworded, modified and rephrased. For example, question 8.10 in Section C was initially phrased as: "*Do you think inclusive education can be beneficial to learners?*" After the pilot study it was rephrased as: "*How do you think all learners can benefit from learning together in the same classrooms? Give reasons.*" Similarly, question 8.12 also in Section C was rephrased from "*What problems do teachers have when they are faced with*

a learner with special educational needs in the classrooms?” to: “What challenges do you think teachers experience when there is a learner with special educational needs in the mainstream classrooms?”

3.6.3 Administration of the questionnaires

The final questionnaires (see Appendix A) were distributed together with consent forms (see Appendix D) to the respondents face-to-face. The importance of distributing the questionnaires was that it allowed the researcher to explain the purpose of the study and the conditions under which it was to be conducted. Respondents completed the questionnaires at their own pace. Questionnaires were collected two weeks later as previously agreed between researcher and respondents.

To simplify contact with those who were to be chosen for interview, the researcher with the permission from school heads, obtained cell phone numbers and names from respondents as the completed questionnaires were collected.

Once the sample had been selected, the researcher phoned those teachers selected to be interviewed, giving details about the conditions in which the interviews were to be conducted as outlined in the consent forms they had signed (see Appendix D). The researcher and the respondents set a schedule and time on when they could be interviewed.

3.6.4 Interviews

Together with the questionnaires, one-on-one in-depth, interaction interviews, or open-ended interviews as Silverman (2001:125) calls them were used as the main method of data collection. As stated, these questions had already been pre-tested (see Appendix B). The same pilot group that was used to pre-test the questionnaires was also used to test the interview guide. In this case, results from the pilot study did not warrant changes and it was considered appropriate to use the research instrument as initially designed.

The interviews were planned and effected as follows:

Informed consent was first obtained (see Appendix D) and a schedule was set with those selected for interview. Interviews themselves were conducted in the schools where respondents worked. They communicated with the researcher introducing herself and reiterating the aim of the study and giving an assurance that confidentiality would be maintained. Pseudonyms were used to protect identities. Furthermore, respondents were informed that participation was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw at any time. As respondents did not consent to be audio recorded, notes were taken instead during the interview process. These notes were later transcribed into field notes for analysis. Some respondents were interviewed again at their convenient time on different occasions to clarify uncertainties when there was need. To ensure that data captured accurately depicted what respondents said, interviewees had access to the researcher's field notes.

As stated, general questions were used merely as a guide during the interview process. Interviewees were given the opportunity to expand on the topic as they saw fit as well as relate it to their own experiences. Some general questions were even reformulated during the interview process. For example, Question 2 was reformulated to become as:

How do you think all learners can benefit from an inclusive system of education?

Respondents were interviewed individually in their schools at their convenience. Each respondent was assigned a pseudonym to conceal his/her identity and for the record. Respondents were interviewed on different days and at variable times. Each session lasted approximately fifteen to twenty minutes. Interviews were useful, since they allowed the researcher to understand how people reacted in considering a topic. Interviews also permitted much greater depth than questionnaires, as probing was possible and this helped expand responses plus generate spontaneity during the interaction. For example, respondents were asked probing questions such as: "*Why do you say that some groups of learners can not learn?*" "*Explain why you think that all learners can benefit from inclusive education*" All interviewees responded to all questions and they often elaborated or expressed views and opinions, these often revealed similarities of thought. Interviews also helped to clarify uncertainties and allowed for digging for deeper information when initial responses were not satisfactory.

3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

Trustworthiness is the need to describe accurately the experiences of a phenomenon. The use of multiple sources and different methods of data collection for this study enhances its trustworthiness in terms of the credibility and dependability of data. Trustworthiness can be adduced if a researcher provides authentic information that shows credibility, reliability and validity (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995:104). In an attempt to fulfill this expectation, this researcher investigated the data collected and its analysis for precisely for those requirements. A thorough review of the relevant literature was also undertaken to ensure that questions asked adequately represented the literature. Colleagues were consulted too in examining the content of the questionnaires, thus increasing the validity of the instruments. Piloting and pre-testing both methods of data collection, several days of interviewing and re-interviewing respondents, rephrasing, repeating and expanding on questions on different occasions as well as member checking increased the credibility, reliability and validity of this study.

3.7.1 Credibility, Reliability and Validity of the findings

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998:205), credibility serves to establish confidence in the truth of the findings as well as the context of the study. In this study the truth of the findings is revealed by the nature of the research designs used, character of the informants and the context of the study. Validity means the extent to which a particular method of data collection measures exactly what it is supposed to measure, whilst reliability refers to the extent to which a particular method of data collection will produce the same kind of results whenever it is carried out (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995:105).

In this study, both reliability and validity of the instruments were considered. Before administering the final instruments, an extensive review of literature and consultation with colleagues to examine the content of the questionnaires in the light of the aim of the study was also done. Piloting and pre-testing data collection methods also helped to take care of this. In support of this, Bell (1999:104), notes that the checking of reliability comes at the time of question wording and of piloting the instruments. The use of more than one type of question (closed as well as open-ended) alongside in-depth interviews (triangulation)

strengthened the credibility of the findings obtained. The fact that some of the informants were interviewed again when necessary, allowed the researcher to test and re-test information previously given, thus further increasing the validity and credibility of the findings.

Strauss and Corbin (1990:98) maintain that all researchers need to be fully aware of their inherent biases or preconceived ideas about participants during a research process. To which end, the researcher sought to distance herself both during data collection and its analysis, so as not to tint nor misinterpret findings with prejudice or pre-conceived ideas about respondents. Information, obtained therefore was authentic and this was reinforced through member checking whereby the research material was revealed to participants so that they could check its accuracy. Selected strategies employed to ensure trustworthiness of the findings are summarized in table 2:

Table 2 Strategies employed to ensure trustworthiness of the findings

Strategy	Description of the strategy	Application of the strategy
Evaluation of the questionnaire content (content validity)	On the field of investigation, literature on the facts of investigation was reviewed and colleagues consulted to evaluate whether the content of the questionnaires both covered and was relevant to the topic investigated.	Literature was reviewed so as to ensure that it was adequately represented by questions asked. Colleagues examined all aspects of the questionnaire to check if they adequately covered the topic under investigation.
Piloting and pre-testing research instruments	A pilot group was used to check the validity and reliability of the instruments	A pilot study was conducted to check if the instruments could be used as they stand or needed modification
Triangulation	Multiple sources of data and methods of data collection were used in this study	Questionnaires and in-depth interviews were utilized to collect needed data
Member checking	Respondents were consulted and then re-interviewed to clarify uncertainties	Participants were re-interviewed when necessary. Research materials were revealed to them to ensure accurate translation of their responses into raw data.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis may be described as an attempt to organize, account for and provide explanations of data so that some kind of sense may be made from them (Hutton, 1990: 56; Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995:295). The analytic phase of the qualitative research is characterized by the important role the researcher plays in the production and analysis of the data (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2001: 208). Strauss and Corbin (1990:98) warn that qualitative researchers generally enter the field with certain assumptions and attitudes and these are likely to influence the process of data collection and analysis. In an attempt to prevent this dilemma, is researcher distanced herself as far as possible from her beliefs and attitudes until the end of the investigation. Thus she, entered schools with a clear mind and an intuitive approach to data collection and analysis.

As stated, this study has utilized both the qualitative and quantitative approaches and thus analysis of the data took place within the parameters of these approaches. Creswell (2003:7) reports that qualitative and quantitative approaches have a tendency to shade into each other so that it is rare to find reports that do not include both numbers and words. Similarly, in this study, both numbers and words were used to analyze and interpret data.

3.8.1 Analysis of the quantitative data

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize, simplify and present the data. As this was a small-scale study, it was more efficient to perform computation or simple calculations of the quantitative data manually rather than through a computer. Here, raw data was pre-coded by categories and arranged in ascending array according to numerical values. The score obtained from all respondents were added together to obtain frequencies and these were converted into percentages. The results obtained were presented in frequency tables and interpreted in narrative form. Similar descriptive statistics were performed on scaled, fixed responses. Thus, the scores for all fixed questionnaire items were calculated into frequencies, converted into percentages, and interpreted in words. Descriptive parameters, including frequencies and percentages were therefore used to organize and summarize quantitative data.

3.8.2 Analysis of the qualitative data

Data gathering and data analysis were integrated so as to use what was deduced in the interviews. The data was analyzed sequentially as it was collected. As the researcher captured verbally words, phrases and statements that were repeated plus were meaningful and relevant to the investigation, she also redefined ideas, rephrased some statements, and questioned points as a way of trying to see underlying reasons and causes. The researcher also reviewed plus highlighted important information and other pertinent points were written in the margins as advised by Strauss and Corbin (1990:61) and Gordon (1996:96). The researcher started a new page for each day of the research process and the notes were prefaced by the date. After that, the researcher read the field notes on procedures outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990:61). This process involved reading and re-reading the raw data several times in order to get meaning out of it. These small units of meaning were used as themes and were given codes according to their differences and similarities. After that, the data was coded according to topics and related to questions asked during the interviews. Responses from interviewees were added together, converted into percentages, and described in a textual, narrative form.

The coding system used in this study was comprised of an identity assigned to a specific respondent and the reference page number of the transcription that was analyzed. For example, the coding system used was “**R.1/4**” where “**R.1**” represented first respondent and “**4**” the page number of the analysis transcription of the data.

In order to analyze the qualitative data gathered by means of open-ended questionnaires, the responses from participants were added together, converted into percentages and interpreted in a textual, narrative form. The compiled field notes from interviews were compared to what was derived from the questionnaires as well as literature and the results consolidated.

3.8.3. Consolidating

Consolidation refers to the combining of categories that reflect the purpose of the study to form a conceptual whole as highlighted by Bodgan and Biklen (1998:172-173). The data

gathered from questionnaires and interviews was combined to identify relationships in meaning among all the categories, including the research objectives, and linking these with the literature reviewed about the perceptions respondents had towards inclusive education. More information on consolidation of the data is found in chapter 5.

3.9 RESEARCH ETHICS

Research ethics relates to the communication of all possible or adequate information as accurately as possible about the research, its purpose, procedures and possible benefits to prospective participants. Given such kinds of information, the respondents choose whether to participate in the process or discontinue such participation. Before embarking on this study, the researcher was aware that, at every stage of the research process, there would be ethical issues to be considered as outlined by different sources (Marvasti, 2004:67; Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2005:56-68). Such ethical principles guided the researcher throughout the research process and taken into account as follows:

- **Administrative procedures**

Permission to conduct research was first sought from the Department of Educational Foundations, North West University, through the Head of Department.

- **Access to the schools and informed consent**

The researcher negotiated access to the two schools chosen through the School Principals and was granted permission to meet with teachers. It was during these meetings that the researcher introduced herself, explained the purpose of the study and the conditions under which it was to be conducted. After a thorough explanation of the conditions of the study, the researcher distributed the questionnaires (see Appendix A) together with the consent forms that outlined the conditions of the study (see Appendix C). Participants in this study were adults who were able to give informed consent. Respondents read and signed the consent forms. They also answered the questionnaires and the researcher collected these two weeks later. The intention of the researcher was to choose only participants relevant to the study and questionnaires assisted in this regard.

- **Voluntary participation**

The assumption behind informed consent was that, given sufficient information on which to make an informed decision, the participants' consent to participate would be free and voluntary. Informed consent further implies that research participants should not be coerced into involving. Respondents' participation in this study was therefore strictly voluntary and they were freed to withdraw at any time. This was explained to them before the study began.

- **Anonymity and confidentiality**

Silverman (2001:110) suggests that anonymity and confidentiality imply that no one, including the researcher should subsequently be able to identify any participants in the study and such considerations apply to this study. Also namely strict confidentiality and the total anonymity of respondents was also involved. To achieve this, pseudonyms were used instead of names both for the individuals and schools.

- **Protection from harm**

It has been acknowledged that participants can be harmed both physically and emotionally when they participate in research (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2001:420). Although emotional harm has been acknowledged to be far more difficult to predict or determine than physical harm (Marvasti, 2004:69), the need to protect from emotional harm was also taken into account here. Therefore, everything was done to assess the ways in which participation might be stressful in terms of respondents' normal everyday activities, especially during the interview process.

3.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented an overview of the research design used in this study plus its rationale. It has also explained how the study was conducted and steps that were taken to ensure reliability of findings. Ethical aspects were also taken into account.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present and analyze the findings obtained from respondents regarding their perceptions towards inclusive education. Data was derived from various sources, including questionnaires (Appendix A) and in-depth interviews (Appendix B). The findings are presented and analyzed according to sections. **Section A** provides data related to respondents' biographic information whilst **Section B** is based on responses to closed items. The results are presented in tables, frequencies, and percentages in the tables below. **Section C** is related to open-ended items regarding respondents' perceptions of inclusive education. Data gathered from respondents through interviews is also presented. The findings are discussed below:

4.2 DATA OBTAINED THROUGH QUESTIONNAIRES

SECTION A: RESPONDENTS' BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

The following is data gathered from educators trained in special education:

Question 1 (see appendix A)

Table 3 Distribution of respondents according to gender

1 Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
1.1 Female	45	75
1.2 Male	15	25
Total	60	100

The results from Table 3 show that 75% (45) of the participants in this study were females, whereas 25% (15) were males.

Question 2 (see appendix A)

Table 4 Distribution of respondents according to age.

2 Age	Frequency	Percentage %
2.1 Below 30 years	5	8
2.2 30-34 years	15	25
2.3 35-39 years	10	17
2.4 40-44 years	30	50
2.5 45 and above	0	0
Total	60	100

Data gathered in table 4, shows that the 30 respondents whose age ranged from 40-44 (50%) were in the majority followed by the 15 in the age group 30-34 years (25%). The results further show that those who were within the range of 35-39 years formed 17% (10) of the participants whereas those who were below 30 years were 8% (5) of the respondents.

Question 3 (see appendix A)

Table 5 Distribution of respondents according to academic qualifications

3. Academic Qualifications	Frequency	Percentage %
3.1 Primary School Leaving Examinations	4	7
3.2 Junior Certificate	36	60
3.3 Botswana General Certificate of Education	20	33
3.4 Others (specify)	0	0
Total	60	100

Table 5 shows that 60% (36) of respondents in this study had gone up to Junior Certificate level. It also indicates that 33% (20) of the respondents passed the Botswana General Certificate of Education. Only (4) 7% of the respondents had gone up to Standard Seven.

Question 4 (see appendix A)

Table 6 Distribution of respondents according to professional qualifications

4. Professional Qualifications	Frequency	Percentage
4.1 Bachelor of Education (Primary Education)	3	5
4.2 Bachelor of Education (Special Education)	2	3
4.3 Diploma in Primary Education	15	25
4.4 Diploma in Special Education	11	18
4.5 Primary Teachers' Certificate	26	43
4.6 Primary Higher Certificate	2	3
4.7 Primary Lower Certificate	0	0
4.8 Others (specify)	1	2
Total	60	100

Table 6 shows that 43% (26) of the respondents held a Primary Teachers' Certificate, while 25% (15) passed a Diploma in Primary Education, 18% (11) had a Diploma in Special Education. About 5% (3) and 3% (2) had gone as far as Bachelor of Education in primary and special education respectively. Only 3% (2) still held a Primary Higher Certificate and just 2% (1) had trained as a secondary school teacher.

Question 5 (see appendix A)

Table 7 Distribution of respondents according to teaching experience

5 Experience	Frequency	Percentage %
5.1 Less than 5 years	3	5
5.2 5-10	6	10
5.3 11-15	8	13
5.4 16-20	16	27
5.5 21-25	10	17
5.6 25 and above	17	28
Total	60	100

The data collected from respondents in relation to teaching experience shows that respondents had a wide range of teaching experience. The results have revealed that 28% (17) of the respondents had more than 25 years experience, followed by those who ranged from 16-20 who constitute years 27% (16). Only a few of the respondents 5% (3) had been in the teaching profession for less than five (5) years.

SECTION B: RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF AND ATTITUDES ABOUT INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

This section presents and analyzes responses from participants based on closed-items regarding their perceptions towards inclusive education. The scale used was Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD), and Disagree (D). The results are presented in Table 8:

Table 8: Perceptions of the respondents about inclusive education

Perceptions	SA		A		SD		D		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	N	%
6.1 All children can learn irrespective of their differences	3	5	4	7	27	45	26	43	60	100
6.2. Learners with special educational needs should be educated alongside their non-disabled peers in the mainstream classrooms.	3	5	2	3	34	57	21	35	60	100
6.3. All children can benefit from an inclusive system of education.	8	13	7	12	29	48	16	27	60	100
6.4. Learners with special educational needs should be educated either in special class/units or in separate schools as is the current situation.	36	60	15	25	5	8	4	7	60	100
6.5. Learners with special educational needs will retard progress of those without disabilities if they are included in mainstream classrooms.	23	38	19	32	8	13	10	17	60	100
6.6. Educating special needs learners in mainstream classrooms will necessitate extra work on the part of teachers.	36	60	22	37	0	0	2	3	60	100
6.7. All teachers are capable of teaching learners with special educational needs.	5	8	3	5	24	40	28	47	60	100
6.8. Only special education teachers are capable of teaching learners with special educational needs.	26	43	31	52	1	2	2	3	60	100

SA=Strongly Agree SD=Strongly Disagree**F=Frequency****A=Agree****D=Disagree****%=Percentage****N=Total Number**

Item 6.1: All children can learn irrespective of their differences

From the results in Table 8, out of 60 respondents 5% (3) strongly agreed, 7% (4) agreed, while 45% (27) disagreed and 43% (26) strongly disagreed that all children could learn despite their differences. The findings indicate that respondents did not acknowledge and accept that all children are capable of learning. The implications may be that they are less likely to accept learners with special educational needs in their classrooms.

Item 6.2: Learners with special educational needs should be educated alongside their non-disabled peers in the mainstream classrooms

The results from Table 8 show that respondents were against the aide of educating learners with special educational needs alongside their general education peers in the mainstream classrooms. This was evidenced by 57% (34) of respondents who strongly disagreed and 35% (21) who disagreed. Only a few of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with the statement. These findings are in line with literature as it shows that over the years, teachers have always had negative attitudes towards learners with special educational needs (Choate, 2000:45; Doorlart & Lewis, 2003:425). Similarly, Abosi (2002:10) reports that many teachers have expressed reservation about inclusion of persons with special educational needs despite its advantages.

Item 6.3: All children can benefit from an inclusive system of education

This item sought to find the respondents' views and opinions regarding the benefits of inclusive education. The results show that most respondents did not think that all children could benefit from an inclusive system of education. This was indicated by 48% (29) of respondents who strongly disagreed, and 27% (16) who disagreed that all children could benefit from an inclusive system of education. The remaining 13% (8) and 12% (7) strongly agreed and agreed that inclusive education could be beneficial to all children.

Item 6.4: Learners with special educational needs should be educated either in special classes/units or in separate schools as is the current situation

Item 6.4 was aimed at finding perceptions of respondents regarding the present situation in which learners with special educational needs are educated in segregated environments

such as special classes/units or special schools. The results revealed that despite the fact that inclusive education is high on the policy agenda in Botswana, respondents felt that the status quo should remain whereby learners with special educational needs should not be included in mainstream classrooms. According to Table 8, 60% (36) of the respondents strongly agreed and 25% (15) agreed with the idea of separating learners based on their differences, while only 8% (5) strongly disagreed and 7% (4) disagreed with the idea. The results, therefore, have revealed that the respondents may be not yet ready to accommodate special educational needs learners in mainstream classrooms.

Item 6.5: Learners with special educational needs will retard progress of those without disabilities if they are included in mainstream classrooms

From the results in Table 8, a higher percentage of respondents felt that if learners with special educational needs were to be included in mainstream classrooms, they would retard the progress of those without disabilities. This was indicated by 38% (23), of respondents, and 32% (19) who strongly agreed and agreed respectively to the above statement. About 13% (8) and only 17% (10) strongly disagreed and disagreed that such learners would retard the progress of others.

Item 6.6: Educating learners with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms will necessitate extra work on the part of teachers.

From the data collected, most respondents were of the view that learners with special educational needs would necessitate extra work on their side. The results show that 60% (36) of respondents strongly agreed, that such learners would be an extra work for them, and 37% (22) also shared a similar view as they had agreed to the statement. Only, 3% (2) did not see such learners as a liability as they disagreed. In a similar study carried out by Dupoux, Wolman and Estrada (2005:78) on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of learners with special educational needs in Finland, the results also revealed that even there, teachers felt that learners with special educational needs would add another load to their work.

Item 6.7: All teachers are capable of teaching learners with special educational needs

This item was aimed at finding the respondents' capability to implement inclusive education in primary schools. The findings show that the respondents were not yet ready or well prepared for the implementation process. The results indicate that out of 60 respondents, only 8% (5) strongly agreed and 5% (3) agreed to the suggestion that all teachers can teach all learners including those with special educational needs. The remaining respondents who formed the majority, 40% (24) and 47% (28) were of the view that not all teachers were capable of teaching learners with special educational needs as they strongly disagreed or disagreed respectively. These perceptions might be due to the fact that respondents might be feeling that they did not possess the skills needed to handle learners with special educational needs as shown in Section C item 8.9. However, it can be pointed out that these perceptions are in line with literature (Adams, 1990:92) which shows that one of the critical factors for the effective implementation of inclusive education is suitably trained teachers.

Item 6.8: Only special education teachers are capable of teaching learners with special educational needs.

The data gathered in relation to this item shows that respondents, especially those who were exposed to special education through in-service courses like workshops view special education teachers who trained full time during pre-service as the only experts most qualified to handle learners with special educational needs. This was indicated by 43% (26) of the respondents who strongly agreed and 52% (31), who agreed with the above statement. Mostly, these were respondents who held a Primary Teachers' Certificate and Diploma in Primary Education. About 2% (1) and 3% (2) strongly disagreed and disagreed that it is only special education teachers who could handle learners with special educational needs. These were respondents who were fully trained in Special Education hence some of them hold Bachelor of Education in Special education. The higher percentage of respondents, who are of the view that it is only properly trained special education teachers who are capable of teaching learners with special educational needs, are in line with literature. For example, Abosi, Obani and Ogbue (1991:7) argue that it is unreasonable to expect teachers to change or practice inclusive education without

substantial training. Similarly, Doorlag and Lewis (2003:80-82) report that inclusive education is challenging and demanding and without appropriate training, teachers are likely to find it difficult to provide for diverse needs in their classrooms.

Table 9 Perceptions held by the respondents towards groups of learners to be included in mainstream classrooms

	SA				SD		D		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	N	F
7.1 All learners irrespective of their language, learning styles, culture or disability	3	5	4	7	27	45	26	43	60	100
7.2 Only learners with mild disabilities	40	67	16	27	2	3	2	3	60	100
7.3. Only learners with sensory disabilities (i. e those with visual and hearing impairments)	6	10	9	15	34	57	11	18	60	100
7.4 Only learners with mental disability	0	0	0	0	50	83	10	17	60	100
7.5 Only learners with learning difficulties	22	37	30	50	5	8	3	5	60	100
7.6. Only learners with physical disabilities and health problems such as HIV	29	48	22	37	5	8	4	7	60	100
7.7. Only learners with behaviour problems	2	3	4	7	30	50	24	40	60	100
7.8 Only learners who are gifted and talented	43	72	15	25	0	0	2	3	60	100

Key: SA=Strongly Agree

A=Agree

N=Total Number

SD: Strongly Disagree

D=Disagree

F: Frequency

%=Percentage

Learners with special educational needs are a heterogeneous group and the items in Table 9 were aimed at gathering from the respondents' perspectives whom amongst them, should be included in the mainstream classrooms. The results are presented below:

Item 7.1: All learners irrespective of their language, learning styles, culture or disability

Table 9 reveals that out of 60 respondents 5% (3) strongly agreed that all learners irrespective of their differences should be included in the mainstream classrooms. Those who agreed were 7% (4), while those who strongly disagreed formed 45% (27) and those who disagreed formed 43% (26). The findings show that most respondents were against the idea of including learners with different learning styles, cultures and disabilities in the mainstream classrooms.

Item 7.2: Only learners with mild disabilities

According to the data gathered, out of 60 respondents, 67% (40) of the respondents strongly agreed and 27% (16) agreed to the statement that only learners with mild disabilities should be included in the mainstream classrooms. Only 3% (2) of the respondents strongly disagreed and 3% (2) disagreed with the suggestion. This might imply that such learners are likely to be included in the mainstream classrooms with less resistance.

Item 7.3: Only learners with sensory disabilities that is, (those with visual and hearing impairments)

From the results obtained as indicated in Table 9, 10% (6) of respondents strongly agreed that learners with sensory disabilities should be included in mainstream classrooms. About 15% (9) of them agreed that they should be included. On the other hand, 57% (34) strongly disagreed and those who disagreed were 18% (11).

Item 7.4: Only learners with mental disabilities

From Table 9, the results show that out of 60 respondents, none of them either strongly agreed or agreed to the suggestion that such learners should be included in the mainstream

classrooms. Out of 60 (n =60), 83% (50) strongly disagreed and only 17% (10) disagreed with the suggestion. The results clearly indicate that the respondents were of the view that such learners should not be included in the mainstream classrooms.

Item 7.5: Only learners with learning difficulties

In response to the above item, 37% (22) of the respondents strongly agreed, 50% (30) agreed that learners with learning difficulties should be included in mainstream classrooms. In contrast, 8% (5) strongly disagreed whilst 5% (3) disagreed with the statement. The findings show that most respondents were for inclusion of this group. Thus, the respondents may be more willing to accommodate such learners in their classrooms.

Item 7.6: Only learners with physical disabilities and health problems such as HIV

The data collected in relation to the inclusion of such learners, showed that 48% (29) of the respondents strongly agreed and 37% (22) agreed that learners with physical disabilities and health problems should be included in mainstream classrooms. On the other hand, 8% (5) strongly disagreed whilst 7% (4) disagreed. The results, therefore, reveal that the respondents were of the view that such learners should be included in mainstream classrooms. A similar trend was revealed in a study carried out by Mushoriwa (2001:19) in Harare, Zimbabwe, where it was shown that teachers are more accepting towards learners with physical disabilities and health problems than those who need academic modifications. This may imply that such learners are likely to be more welcome in inclusive settings.

Item 7.7: Only learners with behaviour problems

When responding to this item, the majority of the respondents were of the view that such learners should not be included in the mainstream classrooms. This was indicated by only 3% (2) of the respondents who strongly agreed and 7% (4) who simply agreed. The remaining 50% (30) and 40% (24) were of the view that such learners should not be included as they strongly disagreed and disagreed. The results tally with those of Matechara (2002:52), where it was also revealed that school management teams in both

mainstream and special schools in the North West Province of South Africa were against the idea of including these learners in mainstream classrooms.

Item 7.8: Only learners who are gifted and talented

Learners who are gifted and talented were the most welcome group for the respondents as indicated by the results obtained. Out of 60 respondents, 72% (43) strongly agreed and 25% (15) agreed that such learners should form part of the mainstream classes. Few respondents were of the view that the gifted and talented learners were not the only ones to be included in the mainstream classrooms. A reasonable explanation for this high percentage on the strongly agreed and agreed scales, would be that such learners may not be a problem to respondents as they learn with ease, and in most cases manage to do their academic work on their own as shown by Choate (2000:33-34) and Doorlag and Lewis (2003:366-368). This then implies that they are likely to be welcome in inclusive classrooms as compared to other groups.

In conclusion, one may hasten to say that the type as well as the severity of the disability determined the acceptance of learners with special educational needs by respondents. The milder the disability, the more acceptance by respondents. Out of the eight groups of learners provided, only the respondents could possibly accept four and these were:

- The gifted and talented;
- Learners with mild disabilities;
- Those with learning difficulties; and
- Those with physical disabilities as well as health problems.

Among the four groups, the gifted and talented, those with physical disabilities as well as those with health problems, and those with mild disabilities ranked the highest in favour of inclusion in mainstream classrooms. On the other hand, the less favoured were learners with mental disability, followed by those with behavioural problems. The findings suggest that acceptance of learners to be included depended on the type and severity of disability.

SECTION C: OPEN-ENDED ITEMS

This section presents and analyzes responses from the respondents based on open-ended questions. The section consisted of thirteen items each focusing on a different perception of inclusive education. Below is a presentation and analysis of each item in this section.

Item 8.1: Are you aware of the policy on inclusive education as per the recommendations of the Revised National Policy on Education of 1994 (R.N.P.E.)?

This item sought to find out if respondents were aware of the recommendations on inclusive education as recommended by the policy in special education. It was important to find respondents' awareness of inclusive education, as it is still a new concept in Botswana. The findings from the study have revealed that the majority of the respondents were aware that the policy states that in future, all children should be educated together in mainstream classrooms. This was shown by (55) 92% of the respondents who had indicated "yes", whilst only (5) 8% had said "no" to question. The higher percentage of awareness was a positive sign as it showed that the respondents might be aware that, in future, they have to implement inclusive education in primary schools.

Item 8.2: Do you think it is possible to educate learners with special educational needs in the mainstream classrooms? Please comment.

When responding to this question, about (45) 75% of the respondents clearly indicated that it was not possible to educate learners with special educational needs in the mainstream classrooms. Only (5) 8% responded by stating that only learners with mild disabilities could be educated in the mainstream classrooms while (10) 17% reported that not all learners with special educational needs could be included except those with learning difficulties. Some of the general comments given regarding why such learners could not be educated in mainstream classrooms were given as follows:

- It would take long for the education system to be changed to accommodate learners with special educational need
- Teachers are not fully trained to handle learners with special educational needs

- The mainstream curriculum has many objectives, which cannot be achieved by all learners with special educational needs
- Learners with special educational needs are difficult to handle
- Some teachers did not see the reason why such learners should be removed from where they are educated at the present moment that is, in special schools and special classes/units
- There are no appropriate resources to cater for learners with special educational needs in primary schools

Some of the above comments made by the respondents are in line with literature. The implementation of inclusive education according to the R.N.P.E. is intended to cover a period of twenty-five (25) years. Literature also informs us that for inclusive education to be implemented effectively, relevant and appropriate resources should be available as well as the entire education system restructured (Matale, 2000: [Online]). Without some of these critical factors, it would not be possible to effectively implement inclusive education in Botswana primary schools especially, in Ramotswa Village.

Item 8.3: Do you think educating learners with special educational needs with those without disabilities in the mainstream classrooms will adversely affect the progress of those without disabilities? Give reasons.

Seventy percent (42) of the respondents said yes to this question, which clearly indicates that the respondents felt that learners with special educational needs would hinder the progress of other learners if they were educated in inclusive classrooms. The remaining (18) 30% indicated that they would adversely affect the progress of those without disabilities. The reasons given by those who were of the view that they would hold back the progress of others were given as follows:

- Learners with special educational needs have low concentration span;
- They take a long time to grasp concepts
- Some would disrupt other learners by their unbecoming behaviours

- They would take much of the teachers' attention and time, thus denying other learners the opportunity for individual attention
- They progress at a slow pace and consequently the class would not finish the syllabi, thus affecting the progress of other learners negatively

In contrast, those respondents who did not believe that learners with special educational needs would affect the progress of those without disabilities gave the following reasons:

- As long as teachers give them work relevant to their abilities, instead of giving them work which is given to the whole class, they would not affect the progress of others; and
- For learners with special educational needs not to affect the progress of others, they should be allowed to progress at their own pace and rate of learning.

The general findings from this item show that the respondents felt that they would inhibit the progress of other learners. The implications of this may be that respondents are likely to ignore and will not try their level best to provide for all learners who might be in their classrooms.

Item 8.4: From your point of view, which is the best possible placement for learners with special educational needs? Give reasons.

This item sought to find out the views and opinions of the respondents regarding the best possible placement of learners with special educational needs. In response, (15) 25% of respondents indicated that placement of learners with special educational needs should be determined by the nature and severity of the condition. However, (26) 43% stated that the best possible placement of such learners should be special schools, whilst (19) 32% mentioned that they should remain where they are currently i.e., special classes/units and resource rooms. None of the respondents mentioned that such learners should be placed in the mainstream classrooms. The reasons given for placement options in the special schools and special classes/units were given as follows:

- There are specialists teachers in special schools and special classes/units;
- There are appropriate resources in special schools and special classes/units;
- The number of learners in such centres is few, and teachers can provide for individual learners; and
- If learners with special needs are placed in the special classes/units, they will integrate with those without disabilities during break time and, as such, they will not be segregated from their peers.

The findings from this item are in line with literature, which shows that the ideal placement of learners with special educational needs is a very controversial issue (Doorlag & Lewis, 2003:14). Some researchers have questioned the appropriateness of including some learners with special educational needs in the mainstream classrooms, whilst others have advocated it (Stainback & Stainback, 1990b: 3-23; Kauffman, Llyod, Baker & Riedel, 1995: 542-546). It is interesting to note that even respondents in this study, who had trained in special education, also felt that learners with special educational needs should be educated in segregated environments.

Still on the issue of appropriate placement of learners with special educational needs, researchers in this area, as already mentioned, also have different views and opinions just like some respondents in this study. For example, Leinhardt and Pally (1982:264) reviewed the results of research on a range of educational environments such as special classes, resource programmes, mainstream classes with support services, and mainstream classes with no support services. The conclusion that they reached was that:

There were several examples of successful programs for mildly handicapped students that used isolated environments. Among the two isolated environments, resource rooms and self-contained classes, there is weak evidence that the less restrictive of the two, the resource room may be superior. There are also examples of successful programs, which help non-achieving students in the mainstream without removing them from the regular class.

The conclusion that can be reached from the respondents and literature are that there is no one optimal placement for all learners with special educational needs. For some learners the mainstream classrooms with support are the most appropriate whilst for others, special classes/ units and resource rooms would be more appropriate.

Item 8.5: Are there any appropriate resources in the primary schools to facilitate the implementation of inclusive education? Yes/No

Literature indicates that for inclusive education to be implemented effectively, appropriate and adequate resources should be provided (Evans in Paul *et al.*, 1997:66-67). The above item was aimed at finding out if resources were available to effect the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools in Botswana, especially in Ramotswa village. All respondents answered “No” to this question. In support of respondents’ views regarding lack of appropriate resources in the primary schools, Matala, 2000: [Online] notes that there is a shortage of special materials and equipment in schools in Botswana. He further reports that this is partly due to the fact that such materials are not available locally and it makes it difficult to readily obtain them. These findings are contradictory to the recommendations of the R.N.P.E. as it specifically states that all resources for education should cater for all learners (Botswana Government, 1994:34).

Item 8.6: If no, offer suggestions on how to improve the situation.

This question was a follow up of the above regarding how the situation could be improved if resources were not available. The following were some of the suggestions offered by the respondents:

- Human resources such as training of teachers should be intensified;
- Appropriate instructional materials should be available;
- Class size should be reduced to a manageable number of learners for example, one (1) teacher to twenty (20) learners;
- The physical environment should be modified e. g classroom entrances be made wide enough to accommodate learners who are wheel-chair bound and ramps to be built on school premises; and

- Support from Central Resource Centre should be made accessible to all schools.

These suggestions by respondents show that the entire education system needs to be restructured if inclusive education is to benefit all learners. In support of this, Evans in Paul *et al.*, (1997) and Harris and Evans in Paul, Rosselli and Evans (1995:67) point out that for inclusive education to be realized, schools need to be modified to accommodate all its learners, teachers be adequately trained and appropriate instructional materials be provided. The findings, therefore, show that without appropriate and adequate resources, inclusive education cannot be implemented effectively in primary schools in Botswana especially in Ramotswa village.

Item 8.7: Do you think the mainstream curriculum is suitable for learners with special educational needs? Give reasons.

This item intended to find out respondents' views and opinions regarding the relevancy of the mainstream curriculum in relation to learners with special educational needs. The findings show that the majority of respondents were of the view that the mainstream curriculum was not relevant and appropriate to such learners. Out of 60 respondents, (50) 83% indicated that it was not relevant to learners with special educational needs. About 10% (6) said it was relevant to a certain extent for learners with mild disabilities. The remaining respondents reported that the curriculum could be relevant if learners were taught at their own pace, but were forced to complete the syllabus within a given period of time.

8.8 Have you ever received any training in special education? If yes, how did that training prepare you to teach learners with special educational needs?

The aim of this item was to find out if the respondents had been trained in special education and how that training had prepared them to handle learners with diverse needs. The results revealed that all respondents had been exposed to special education during both pre-service and in-service training. Out of sixty respondents, (33) 55% were exposed to special education through in-service training as an awareness course. The remaining (27) 45% had acquired special education during pre-service training. About (2) 3% of them had

trained as special education teachers up to Degree level, that is Bachelor of Education in Special Education, while (11) 18% trained up to a Diploma in Special Education. The remaining (15) 25% were exposed to special education when doing thier Diploma in Primary Education which special education was a component of their curriculum.

The implications of these findings are that thirteen (13) of the respondents are special education specialists. The remaining forty seven (47) trained as general education teachers but were exposed to special education as an awareness course, as recommended in the R.N.P.E. that “All teachers should have some elements of special education, and this should be provided to them either during pre-service or in-service training”. From the results obtained in this study, all respondents had been exposed to special education, which is a good development on the part of the government. However, it needs to be mentioned that it is unfortunate that such training did not equip respondents with adequate skills needed to cater for learners with diverse needs and this may lead to negative attitudes towards learners with special educational needs.

Item 8.9: If no, how do you provide for learners with special educational needs in your class if there are any?

This item was a follow up of the aforementioned question, and was aimed at establishing how respondents provided for learners with special educational needs without having trained to teach them. In response to this item, (52) 87% reported that they did not have such learners in their classrooms. Only (6) 10% indicated that they had only learners with mild disabilities and they modified the content according to the level of performance of such learners. Examples of how the content was modified included giving learners work below their grade level e.g. a learner in Standard Four (4) would be given work for Standard Two (2) or Standard Three (3) Grade. Some respondents mentioned that at times they referred such learners to special education specialists to help them suggest strategies to be used. The remaining (2) 3% indicated that they found it difficult to provide for such learners and they usually ignored them.

The findings therefore, show that most respondents in this study did not have the experience for teaching learners with special educational needs. The possible explanation for this lack of experience might be due to the fact that most learners with special educational needs in Botswana receive their education in segregated environments, such as special schools and special classes/units. Those respondents who happened to have such learners lacked the skills to provide adequately for them. The implication, therefore, is that without appropriate and adequate training of teachers, the goals of inclusive education will not be realized.

Item 8.10: How do you think all learners can benefit from learning together in the same classrooms? Give reasons.

Item 10 sought to investigate the respondents' views and opinions regarding the benefits of having inclusive classrooms. When responding to the question regarding this, respondents expressed different views and opinions. The results reveal that there were three schools of thought in relation to the benefits of inclusive education. From the study, the findings show that (25) 42% of respondents felt that all learners could benefit from learning together in mainstream classrooms. Examples given on how inclusive education could be beneficial to all learners were listed as follows:

- Learners with special educational needs would not be discriminated against.
- It would enhance disabled learners' positive identity;
- Learners with special educational needs would form friendships with those without disabilities;
- Learners with special educational needs would learn from their non-disabled peers; and
- Those without disabilities would learn to accept their classmates with disabilities.

On the other hand, there were (29) 48% of respondents who did not see the benefits of having inclusive classrooms. The reasons given included comments such as:

- Learners with special educational needs would not cope with the academic work in the mainstream classrooms and they would always be left behind;

- Learners with special educational needs progress at a slow rate and they would remain behind;
- Non-disabled peers might reject those with disabilities;
- Teachers might fail to adequately provide for learners with special educational needs; and
- There are in appropriate resources in the primary schools to adequately cater for learners with special educational needs.

The remaining (6) 10% were of the view that it would be only learners with special educational needs who would benefit from inclusive education, as they would gain social skills from their peers, whilst those without disabilities would not gain much from their peers with special educational needs.

The findings therefore show that respondents did not see the essence of inclusive education. A few who were for inclusive education, were of the view that only learners with special educational needs would benefit by gaining social skills but not academic skills.

Item 8.11: What suggestions do you think can make the implementation of inclusive education possible in the primary schools?

Respondents were requested to offer suggestions on how to make the implementation of inclusive education possible in primary schools in Botswana. The following were the suggestions offered:

- Teachers to be adequately trained to handle learners with diverse needs;
- The school environment should be changed to accommodate learners with special educational needs. For example, ramps should be built, classroom entrances should be wide enough to allow learners on wheelchairs to move freely;
- The number of learners in the classrooms should be reduced e.g. one (1) teacher to twenty (20) learners;
- Appropriate resources should be provided;

- The mainstream curriculum should be changed to make it accessible to all learners; and
- The number of subjects should be reduced to a manageable number.

The above were suggestions offered by respondents on how to make inclusive education possible in Botswana primary schools. This may suggest that respondents were still skeptical about inclusive education when they look at the current situation in primary schools where resources were very scarce and not appropriate to learners with special educational needs, and this may result in negative attitudes. The respondents had further indicated that there were too many subjects taught in a day in the primary schools, the curriculum was not appropriate to the needs of all learners and above all, they lacked the relevant skills.

Item 8.12: What challenges do you think teachers experience when there is a learner with special educational needs in the mainstream classrooms?

This question sought to explore the challenges respondents faced when there is a learner with special educational needs in their classrooms. In response, (52) 87% of the respondents indicated that they have never had any learners with special educational needs during their teaching careers. However, they reported that possible challenges teachers might face include failing to adequately provide for such learners due to a lack of skills, learners with special educational needs taking much of the teacher's time as they take much longer to understand and poor Standard Seven results since some of these learners are poor performers. Also mentioned was that learners with special educational needs would demoralize teachers because they might increase the number of failures in their schools and learners without disabilities may fail to socialize with learners with special educational needs thus leading to stigma and discrimination.

The challenge is that inclusive education is still a new concept in Botswana, and, as such, respondents were apprehensive about inclusion of learners with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms.

Item 8.13: Do you think it is possible to merge special education and mainstream education into one system of education? Please comment.

From the results obtained for this item, most of the respondents (43) 72%, reported that they did not see the reasons why the two systems should be merged into one. The item required the respondents to comment and their comments were as follows:

- Special education and mainstream education are two different fields so there is no way these two can be treated as one
- The two systems cannot be merged because special education requires special equipment, special methodology, and special facilities, and these are not available in mainstream classrooms
- Already teachers, pupils and the community understand these systems to be different, and if they were to be merged together, it might take them a long time to change their mindsets and
- If special education and mainstream education were to be merged together, all children are likely to be treated the same, thus denying learners with special educational needs the special treatment that they deserve.

The above comments were from the respondents who were against the merger of special education and mainstream education. The findings show that they are likely not to welcome inclusive education as it calls for the merger of the two systems of education. On the other hand, only a few respondents were of the view that the two education systems could be merged and treated as one. However, they were for the view that the two systems could be merged on condition that they be properly trained first, appropriate resources be provided and the curriculum be changed to suit all learners. When giving comments, this was what they highlighted:

- The goals of education are the same for all learners, and as such all children should attain these through one system of education
- If learners receive their education through a separate education system, it would encourage discrimination and segregation; and

- Before the introduction of special education, all children learnt together so why should they be separated now.

The findings to this item show that respondents had different views and opinions regarding the merger of mainstream and special education. The results revealed that most respondents felt that special and mainstream education should not be treated as one system of education. This was based on the premise that learners with special educational needs need to be treated and taught in a special way using special methodology. In line with this, Abosi, Ogbue and Obani (1991:2) argue that even though special education is an integral part of general education, there are certain provisions that distinguish it from mainstream education and these are specially trained teachers, special curricular content, special methodology and special instructional materials. The implications of these researchers' findings are that if special education was to be merged with mainstream education, all teachers should be adequately trained to handle learners with diverse needs, special equipment and materials be provided and the curriculum be made accessible to all learners.

In conclusion, the general findings have revealed that one of the major fears of respondents was a lack of the needed skills and knowledge to provide adequately for learners with special educational needs. Also revealed was a lack of appropriate and relevant resources in the primary schools and all these would negatively impact on the effective implementation of inclusive education, unless they were addressed before the implementation process. All these fears are likely to lead to negative perceptions of respondents towards inclusive education.

4.3 DATA OBTAINED THROUGH THE INTERVIEWS

This section presents and analyses the findings obtained from the respondents through in-depth-interviews (see appendix B). As already indicated in Chapter three, Twenty-four respondents were selected from two schools in Ramotswa village in the South East District of Botswana. In-depth interviews were carried out to solicit information from them regarding their perceptions on inclusive education. Some issues arose during the interview and the respondents were given the opportunity to expand and explain issues that they felt

were important from their own perspectives regarding the topic under investigation. The findings from the interviews therefore are presented:

Question 1: The policy on Special Education is that all children including those with special educational needs should be educated in the mainstream classrooms. What are your views and opinions regarding this?

In relation to this question, first the respondents were asked if they were aware of the policy on Special Education. In response to this, most respondents stated that they were aware that in the future inclusive education would be implemented in all the primary schools in Botswana. When further asked what their views and opinions were regarding this, and if they would accept such learners, the respondents expressed different perceptions. Out of the 24 respondents, 33% (8) were of the view that all children should learn together in the same classrooms. One of the respondents commented:

Why should we raise a future society where children from the beginning are not taught to accept each other? Just next to our school, there is a special school for children with hearing impairments and they are isolated because they are by themselves and that is discrimination

Still in relation to the respondents regarding their views regarding the policy, about 21% (5) of respondents stated that the policy might be all right, but the government should ensure that all the necessary resources needed to educate learners with special educational needs in mainstream classroom were made available. When asked to elaborate on what they felt should be put in place before the implementation of the policy, the respondents mentioned that they should be adequately trained to handle learners with special educational needs one of them reported that:

I don't want to attend a workshop or seminar, but rather, I prefer full-time training, and that is when the policy can be put into practice

Other factors that the respondents felt should be put in place for the effective implementation of the policy were issues such as provision of appropriate resources and

modification of the physical infrastructure. The respondents were further requested to mention the resources they felt might be necessary to facilitate the implementation of the policy. These were mentioned as follows:

- Appropriate training of teachers to enable them to handle learners with special educational needs;
- Provision of appropriate instructional materials;
- The school environment should be changed, for example, classrooms should have in-built toilets and rails; and
- Support staff such as teacher aides should be provided in each and every class where there is a learner with special educational needs.

The remaining 46% (11) of interviewees were of the opinion that it was not possible to educate all learners, including those with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms. When probed to elaborate on why it was not possible to do so, some mentioned that learners with special educational needs need more time to complete tasks, they progress at a very slow rate and they need special equipment and instructional materials which were not available in primary schools. Some respondents mentioned that the government keeps on introducing new policies and innovations, one after the other, and right now, it was inclusive education. In relation to this, one of them said:

The policy makers have a tendency to formulate policies on education but we are never involved nor consulted as teachers and yet we have to implement such policies. How do they expect us to teach learners with disabilities when we do not have the necessary skills?

The implications of these findings are that most respondents did not accept the policy that states that all children should be educated in mainstream classrooms. Those who were not against the policy reported that they should be adequately trained first, and that appropriate resources should be provided in the primary schools. The result of this study falls in line with that of Chris, Graham and John (1996:119-133), whereby they indicate that even in Australia, primary school teachers who were closely associated with the move towards inclusive education, were not accepting of the policy on inclusive education.

These perceptions of the respondents are in line with what literature says as it shows that teachers usually welcome inclusion of learners with special educational needs in principle, and they are of the view that such learners should grow in mainstream classrooms with other peers of the same age group. However, whenever inclusion is given a concrete form by placing such a learner in mainstream classrooms, teachers start to worry and object.

It may, therefore, be concluded that if the respondents of this study do not acknowledge inclusion of learners with special educational needs as stipulated by the policy, there is no way this policy can be effectively implemented. According to the Revised National Policy on Education, one of the goals of education in Botswana is to prepare children with special educational needs by including them as far as possible in mainstream classrooms. Similarly, National Development Plan 9 shows that the goal of education is to develop special education as an integral part of the mainstream education system to promote inclusive practices (Botswana Government, 2003:276). This recommendation and goal could be a sign of commitment by the government in an effort to provide basic education to all, but educators' opinions and views regarding the policy on inclusive education is a decisive factor in making this possible. This lack of acceptance on the part of the teachers may result in negative attitudes, thus leading to failure to provide adequately to learners with special educational needs. In support of this, Abosi (2002: 8) notes that maintaining learners with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms depends critically on the attitudes and actions of educators. This researcher further elaborates on how educators' attitudes may impede the implementation of inclusive education by alluding to the fact that all the necessary resources may be made available, but if teachers do not support the effort to achieve inclusion, the placement of special needs learners in mainstream classrooms may end up frustrating such learners. With the introduction of inclusive education, it is therefore very important for educators as implementers to accept the policy.

Question 2: How do you think all learners can benefit from an inclusive system of education?

The aim of this question was to find out if the respondents saw the essence of inclusive education. In response to this question, the majority felt that not all learners would benefit

from inclusive education. When asked to give reasons, some respondents mentioned that not all learners with special educational needs would benefit from being placed in mainstream classrooms because they would be forced to follow the same curriculum as those learners without disabilities and as such, they would not benefit much academically. When probed to explain why such learners would not benefit academically, respondents alluded to the fact that the mainstream curriculum was not relevant to learners with special educational needs. Seventy-five percent mentioned that the mainstream curriculum was mainly taught in abstract without any concrete materials to enable learners to form clear concepts of what was taught. For example, one of the respondents reported that:

How can a hearing impaired child be expected to listen to a reading comprehension exercise and after that answer questions from it. Really, it would be frustrating to both the teacher and the child. It will be better if such learners are not placed in mainstream classrooms because really academically, they will not benefit much

Further, others mentioned that there are too many lessons in primary schools, for example, it was reported that eleven (11) subjects were supposed to be covered per week, and some respondents felt that would be taxing some learners with special educational needs. Also mentioned was that the average pace of learning was very fast as the syllabus was supposed to be completed within a stipulated period of time and this would put too much of pressure on learners with special educational needs. These perceptions by the respondents reconcile with literature as it indicates that the most significant barrier to learning for all children, especially those with special educational needs, is the curriculum (Tlale, 2002:2; Moahi, 2002:6-7).

On the other hand, a few respondents 25% (6) felt that inclusive education could benefit all learners. When asked to explain how all learners could benefit, respondents mentioned that children would play together, learn together, share materials, learn to accept one another and thus develop social skills. It was further reported that this would reduce the stigma and discrimination against learners with special educational needs. These positive views about the essence of inclusive education by the respondents correlate with literature. Lorenz (2002:3) argues that inclusive classrooms will not only be the least restrictive environment

for learners with special educational needs, but also enhances positive self-identity as well as encourages strong social relationships. Similarly, Morris (2000:81) and Shaw (2001:109) report that inclusive education will enable learners with special educational needs to remain with their peers as they will not be segregated from the normal activities of the mainstream school.

The results obtained from this question show that most respondents were of the view that inclusive education would not be beneficial to all learners. One of the major fears of respondents who opposed inclusive education was that learners with special educational needs would be placed in mainstream classrooms without any adequate support. From the data gathered from those interviewed, and the review of literature, it can be concluded that learners with special educational needs would mostly gain social skills rather than academic skills in inclusive settings.

Question 3: Have you ever taught a learner with special educational needs? If yes, what was your experience and if no what possible challenges do you anticipate?

In response to this question, 88% (21) of respondents indicated that they had never taught learners with special educational needs. When asked why not, some mentioned that such learners were placed in special education classes/units, which were within their schools and therefore were educated there. Others mentioned that they have never had such an opportunity to teach such learners because Central Resource Centre Staff either referred them to special schools or special classes. When asked if they would accept them if they were to be referred to their classes, the respondents had different opinions. Most of them answered by saying that they were willing to accept them but the problem was that they were not sure as to whether they would be able to provide for them. When further probed to clarify their views, out of the 21 respondents who stated that they had never taught any learner with special educational needs, 57% (12) reported that they had never received adequate and appropriate training in special education and as such lacked the necessary skills. Nine respondents (43%) mentioned that the kind of training they had received while still at college had not adequately prepared them to handle learners with diverse needs. The remaining respondents 3 (12%) reported that they once had an opportunity to teach

learners with special educational needs. Two (8%) of the respondents mentioned that they once taught learners with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia) and the only problem they encountered was when it was time for reading lessons as those learners read without any comprehension. The last respondent indicated that she once taught a learner with slight mental disability and that the learner was out-going and was accepted by his classmates. The only problem was that such a learner found it difficult to cope with the mainstream curriculum and as such was transferred to a special class. The respondents were asked if any support services were offered to either the children or them within the mainstream classrooms. They responded by stating that no support was offered to them.

Furthermore, respondents were asked to mention some of the possible challenges they anticipated when there is a learner with special educational needs in their classrooms. The following were some of challenges anticipated:

- Failing to provide adequately for such a learner;
- Making learners without disabilities accept the one with special educational needs
- Lack of relevant equipment/materials to adequately provide for the learner with special educational needs
-
- Having to modify the curriculum for such a learner
- Disciplinary measures such as having to control learners with disruptive behaviour;
- A learner with special educational needs having to cope with the routine of the mainstream classroom

The above were the possible challenges respondents anticipated when there is a learner with special educational needs in the mainstream classroom. Indeed inclusive education is a challenge especially as it is a new concept to the respondents such as those in this study. As a result of this, the respondents were fearful and foresaw possible challenges and obstacles to its effective implementation. This in turn is likely to make them resist it unless they fully understand what it entails and its implications and this can only be achieved through appropriate and adequate training.

Question 4: How has your training prepared you to teach learners with special educational needs?

Question 4 sought to find out if the respondents had been trained to teach learners with diverse needs. In response, 50% (12) of the respondents reported that they were trained when special education had not yet been introduced in the Teacher Training Colleges. These were the respondents who held a Primary Teachers' Certificate and were exposed to special education through pre-service training like workshops. One of them mentioned that:

I have trained a long time back when special education was not offered and if I have a learner with a disability, I will not know what to do especially those who cannot hear and speak because I do not know sign language

Another respondent commented that she learnt about special education through Distance Education, which was just for two hours (2hrs) and this was not adequate enough to equip her with the necessary skills needed to handle learners with special educational needs. Others, 33% (8) indicated that they have received training in special education when they were doing a Diploma in Primary Education while still at college. However, they mentioned that such training was not adequate enough to prepare them to handle learners with special educational needs. When asked to clarify, they mentioned that special education was just an awareness course and very little was done on methods of teaching learners with special educational needs. Out of the eight (8) respondents who did special education while at college, two (2) reported that the special education course they did was very helpful although teaching practice or internship had nothing to do with special education. In this case, they were not given the opportunity to teach in either special classes or special schools which learners are placed there. This, they felt denied them the opportunity to gain experience to teach such learners. The remaining 17 % (4) of the respondents mentioned that they had specialized in different areas of special education while at University of Botswana and they felt that their training had adequately prepared them to teach learners with diverse needs. The only problem mentioned was a lack of appropriate instructional materials in their school to cater for such learners.

The findings reflect that most respondents who were interviewed had been exposed to special education through in-service training such as workshops. Also revealed was that the kind of training they had received was not adequate enough to equip them with the relevant skills needed to provide for learners with diverse needs. In support of these findings, Matala (2000: [Online]) reports that a shortage of properly trained manpower continues to retard the progress toward inclusive schooling in Botswana. This is not in line with what researchers in to inclusive education advocate, as they clearly indicate that it is only suitably trained teachers who can implement inclusive education effectively. This lack of appropriate training might result in respondents failing to adapt the curriculum to meet the diverse needs in their classes, hence leading to negative perceptions as already shown by most of them.

Question 5: Are there any appropriate resources in the primary schools to facilitate the implementation of inclusive education?

From the review of literature, it has been found that appropriate and adequate resources are needed for the successful implementation of inclusive education. That being the case, the respondents were interviewed to find out if these were available in their schools. In response, most of those interviewed mentioned that these were not available. Others commented that the resources might be available, but they were not relevant to some learners with special educational needs. It was reported that some reading material in the primary schools in Botswana was not relevant to the Botswana context and these would be more difficult for some learners with special educational needs, especially those with intellectual disability. When probed to elaborate, some respondents mentioned that some reading material does not reflect content relevant to learners' experiences and backgrounds and these would be more difficult to some learners with special educational needs. When further probed to clarify, it was reported for example that social studies textbooks especially for standard five classes contained content related to the sea, oceans and mountains and these would be more difficult for some learners because there were no such features in Botswana.

Other issues raised included lack of appropriate equipment and apparatus for subjects like agriculture, art and home economics. The respondents stated that such subjects were more relevant to some learners with special educational needs as they were mainly practical, and if resources are not made available, then such learners especially those with mental disabilities would not benefit from mainstream education. The respondents were further asked to mention resources that they felt might be needed for effective implementation of inclusive education. Those were mentioned as follows:

- Changing of the physical infrastructure such as building ramps and installation of rails around the school environment
- Provision of relevant equipment/materials for example hearing aids, walking frames, braille machines, crutches, and splinters etc
- Equipment for practical subjects such as agriculture, home economics, art and craft.

Generally, those questioned have revealed that there are no appropriate resources in the primary schools, and that this will negatively affect implementation of inclusive education unless serious measures are taken. As stated in Section C (item 8.5) and also here, Matala (2000: [Online]) supports these respondents' views by reporting that there is indeed a insufficient special equipment and material in schools to effectively implement inclusive education. Lack of appropriate instructional materials and physical infrastructure in primary schools contradicts recommendation 90 (b) of the Revised National Policy on Education, which states, "Existing primary schools must be modified (e.g. by installing ramps) to allow access for disabled pupils" (Botswana Government, 1994:39). The policy also alludes to the fact that all resources should cater for all children.

Question 6: In your opinion, which group of learners with special educational needs should be included in mainstream classrooms? Give reasons for your answer.

This question was aimed at establishing the views of respondents regarding those learners with special educational needs whom they felt could be included in mainstream classrooms. In replay, all respondents mentioned that only learners with mild disabilities along with the gifted and talented as well as those with physical disabilities should be

included. When asked why, they argued that, though these learners might have some special needs, they could at least cope with the routine of mainstream classrooms. They also mentioned that such learners could benefit from the limited resources currently available in primary schools. It was also pointed out that, meanwhile, the gifted and talented could learn without problems and should therefore also be included in mainstream classrooms.

The respondents were probed to give reasons why they felt other learners with special educational needs, could not be included in mainstream classrooms, various reasons were given. Out of 24 respondents, 46% (11) mentioned that other learners with more severe special educational needs require more specialized instruction and the respondents felt that they were not equipped to provide this. When asked to explain, they gave examples of learners with sensory impairments such as visually and hearing impaired learners who need braille materials and instruction in sign language. About twenty-one percent (5) reported that some special education learners also display behaviours, which are undesirable, and will therefore disrupt other learners. These should not be included in mainstream classrooms.

The remaining thirty-three percent (8) of respondents felt that learners with special educational needs should be placed in their own classrooms and schools. The explanation given was that appropriate resources and adequately trained teachers are available in such centres and, as such, special needs learners would be better provided for if they were placed there. Others reasons given why such learners should be educated in segregated environments were that mainstream curricula are not relevant to their needs, that relevant resources needed to cater for them are not available, and also that they would be expected to write examinations at the end of their primary education, which some of them cannot manage. One respondent commented that:

Such learners cannot cope in the mainstream classrooms given the fact that there is greater academic demand, a lot of competition between classes, too many subjects to be learned, and great demand for high pass rates during primary school leaving examinations. Really some of the

disabled learners cannot cope with these demands and we will be just frustrating them

In support of the above response, (Abosi, 2002:10) reports that the government of Botswana lays a lot of emphasis on the standard and quality of education. Children with special educational needs must also meet that standard and this would have far reaching implications for them. Abosi (2002:10) further reports that the issue of inclusive education in Botswana is one that must be considered with care if we are to avoid frustrating children with special educational needs and fostering inequality in the education system. Regarding the education of learners with special educational needs in segregated environments, respondents were asked if they did not feel that this would be discriminatory. They replied that one must provide quality and relevant education to such learners to enable them to lead independent lives in later life and that could be achieved only if they received the education in settings where resources and expertise are available. Some respondents said:

Why should we keep disabled children in the regular classrooms when we know very well that we will not cater for them?

Answers to this question therefore, show that respondents hold very different views regarding inclusion of learners with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms. There were those who felt that some learners belong in mainstream classrooms, whilst others felt that other placement options should be considered. The findings reveal that, those learners with mild or physical disabilities as well as the gifted and talented were more likely to be welcomed in inclusive classrooms whilst respondents would accept others, with reluctance. In support for this perception, Madden and Slavin (1983:519) note that:

There is no one optimal placement for all students with disabilities. The search for such a panacea in efficacy research is an impossible quest. For some students with disabilities, the general education class with support is most appropriate; for others, the more intense intervention of a special class is necessary, at least at some point in their educational career.

Data gathered from respondents as well as the literature clearly shows that the issue of the most ideal placement for learners with special educational needs is a very controversial one. Like a few respondents in this study, there are also researchers who feel that the mainstream classroom is the most appropriate placement option for all learners for example, Lipsky and Gartner (1989:3-13) and Stainback, Stainback and Forest (1989:30). On the other hand, there were respondents plus, researchers who believe that a continuum of other placement options should be available for such learners (Kauffman, Gerber and Semmel, 1988:6-11; Kauffman, Llyod, Baker & Riendel (1995:542-544).

Generally, results obtained from those interviewed about the above question reveal that gifted and talented learners were the most favoured group for inclusion in mainstream classrooms. They also show that learners with mild disabilities, those with physical disability and those with learning disabilities would be accepted with less reluctance than more severe cases. These findings imply that respondents did not understand the basic rationale of inclusive education namely that all children should be educated in mainstream classrooms regardless of differences.

Question 7: How do you view the idea of merging special education and mainstream education into one system of education?

Sources indicate that for inclusive education to be implemented effectively, several changes need to be made to the entire education system (Evans in Paul *et al.*, 1997:67). In this case, mainstream education should no longer be seen as separate from special education. Instead, the two systems should be treated as one. In this regard, respondents were asked about their perceptions regarding the merger of special education and mainstream education into one system. In reply, respondents differed. Out of 24 respondents, 25% (6) felt that it was possible for special education and mainstream education to be merged. However, they cautioned that, before doing this, government should ensure that all factors necessary for the effective implementation of inclusion were in place. Questioned further, they felt that the two systems of education should be treated as one and indicated factors they felt were needed for this to be possible. Two (8%) of respondents mentioned, that previously there was no special education and all children

learnt together. However, since the introduction of special education, disabled learners were now separated from their non-disabled peers. Factors necessary to this merger, were felt to be appropriate training of personnel, provision of support services and relevant resource materials.

When asked what kind of support services they felt would be needed, the following support services were mentioned:

- Speech therapy,
- Occupational therapy
- School psychology.

In contrast, 75% (18) of respondents were of the view that it was not possible to merge the two systems of education. They felt that the two were completely different and as such, they did not see the reasons why they should be treated as one. Out of this number, fifty six percent (56%) felt that special education should remain as it is. In short, they believed that special education should remain separate. They further mentioned that the knowledge, expertise, skills, and facilities required for special education were still lacking.

The remaining respondents were of the view that special education should not be merged with mainstream education, and stated that it would take time for inclusive education to be implemented in Botswana. When asked why, they replied, that for inclusive education to be implemented effectively, all schools would have to be restructured, all teachers appropriately trained and relevant resources plus support services be provided. Respondents felt that it would take a long time for government to provide these.

Results obtained from this question, therefore, reveal that respondents were not fully aware of the implications of inclusive education, as they take the view that special education should remain as a separate system of education. The implications would seem to be that participants felt that they personally were not yet ready to accommodate learners with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms.

Item 8: What do you think is needed to make implementation of inclusive education possible?

Respondents were asked to come up with suggestions on how inclusive education could be effectively implemented in Botswana's primary schools. The following suggestions were made namely that:

- All teachers be appropriately trained in special education;
- Appropriate and adequate resources be provided;
- All barriers to learning be minimized;
- Buildings be modified to accommodate all learners;
- Support from Education Officers be strengthened;
- Class size be reduced to at least one (1) teacher to twenty (20) learners;
- All stakeholders be involved in the implementation process;
- The curriculum be made relevant to learners with disabilities e.g. by having more practical subjects;
- Teachers be involved, since they are the implementers;
- Inclusive education be piloted before it is implemented in all the primary schools in Botswana.

These suggestions made by respondents indicate that, perhaps if they were properly trained and appropriate resources provided, they might accept inclusive education without any problems. The suggestions also show that respondents are aware of the implications of inclusive education, and the total restructuring of the education system which it demands.

4.4 SUMMARY

It is clear from all the above as the respondents had different perceptions about inclusive education and this might lead to negative perceptions towards it. Sources indicate that educators' views and opinions are a decisive factor towards the effective implementation of such education. One major fear was lack of skills and knowledge on how to provide adequately for diverse learners and this is likely to lead to negative perceptions towards inclusion. Appropriate and adequate training of teachers is critical if inclusive education is

to be implemented effectively. The fears due to lack of skills shown in this study revealed just how much appropriate training was needed by respondents and to what extent people needed to be knowledgeable about inclusive education. The consequent assumption was that appropriate training might be one way to change respondents' perceptions and mindsets about inclusive education.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a brief summary of the study. Furthermore, it presents major findings as well as recommendations on how inclusive education can be successfully implemented in primary schools in Botswana.

5.2 SUMMARY

The main aim of this study was to investigate and describe perceptions of special education teachers about inclusive education in Ramotswa village in the South East District of Botswana. The intermediate objectives needed to attain this aim were stated in Chapter One and achieved through the findings obtained from the study. The findings have shown that most respondents lacked the knowledge and skills needed to provide adequately for diverse learners and this might lead to negative perceptions towards inclusive education.

Chapter Two reviews the literature related to the nature and scope of inclusive education. From these sources, it is clear that inclusive education is challenging and especially so if it is a new concept, as in Botswana. However, literature also suggests that inclusive education, if properly implemented, can work and can be beneficial to all learners. Furthermore, it has been discovered that, for inclusive education to be implemented successfully, critical factors must be put in place before the implementation process. These factors include, among others, suitably qualified teachers, restructuring of the entire education system, provision of appropriate support services along with relevant instructional materials. Lastly, research on inclusive education in developing countries was also reviewed.

Chapter Three outlines the research design used in this study and the rationale for following such methodology. The instruments used to gather data were questionnaires as well as in-depth interviews. Qualitative and quantitative data collected through the

investigation were analyzed, summarized and discussed in Chapter Four. Findings from both the questionnaires and in-depth interviews have clearly revealed respondents' perceptions about inclusive education, thus answering the main research question or aim which sought to establish exactly what their perceptions were. Chapter Five presents the major findings, conclusions and recommendations emerging from the study.

5.3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Following are the major findings of the study:

5.3.1 Findings on Objective 1

The first objective sought to investigate and describe the views and opinions of special education teachers about inclusive education. They reveal that special education teachers do not believe that all children can learn in an inclusive environment. Nor did respondents acknowledge that learners with special educational needs should be educated alongside their non-disabled peers, and this may lead to negative attitudes towards inclusive education (see paragraph 4.2 page 77-97 & paragraph 4.3 page 98-112).

5.3.2 Findings on Objective 2

Findings in regard to Objective 2, which was aimed at establishing the extent of special education teachers' readiness to implement inclusive education, indicate that such teachers were not yet ready and prepared to implement inclusive education in primary schools. Despite the fact that Policy on Special Education (see the Revised National Policy on Education Recommendation 88 b) states that, children with special educational needs should be included with their peers in the mainstream schools, respondents were not yet ready to effect this. Sixty percent (60%) strongly agreed and a further twenty-five percent (25%) agreed that learners with special educational needs should remain where they are currently educated, that is in special schools and special classes/units. In fact, the participants were of the view that the status quo should remain. Clearly, since respondents were not ready to share the responsibility of educating learners with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms, they felt that the use of special schools and special classes would help them get rid of this responsibility. The obvious reason was that

respondents felt their knowledge and skills to be insufficient and that even placement would have negative effects on other students in mainstream classrooms. Such fears were a clear indication that they were not ready for the implementation process (see paragraph 4.2 page 77-97 & paragraph 4.3 page 98-112).

5.3.3 Findings on Objective 3

In relation to Objective 3, which was aimed at establishing from respondents' perspectives, which groups of learners should be included in mainstream classrooms, findings showed that the participants most favoured inclusion of learners who are gifted and talented, than towards those with mild disabilities as well as the physically disabled and those with health problems. Therefore, learners who fall within both these groups are likely to be welcome in inclusive settings. On the other hand, the less favoured group was learners with mental disabilities as well as behavioral problems.

5.3.4 Findings on Objective 4

Objective 4 sought to establish factors that might facilitate effective implementation of inclusive education. In which regard respondents believed that the critical factors to be:

- Suitably qualified teachers;
- Relevant and appropriate curricula;
- Changes in the physical infrastructure;
- Provision of relevant and appropriate instructional materials/equipment;
- Reduction of teacher-pupil ratio to one (1) teacher to twenty (20) pupils (see paragraph 4.2 page 77-97 & paragraph 4.3 page 98-112).

5.3.5 Findings on Objective 5

The last objective was aimed at ascertaining whether special education teachers were aware of the implications of inclusive education. The findings show that even though teachers did not acknowledge that all learners are capable of learning, and felt that special education should not be merged with mainstream education, they were aware that, for

inclusive education to be implemented successfully, several changes need to be made in the entire education system. These include:

- Changes in physical infrastructure;
- Changes in primary curriculum;
- Provision of appropriate support services;
- Supply of relevant instructional materials/equipment (see paragraph 4.2 page 77-97 & paragraph 4.3 page 98-112).

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

From the research, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Special education teachers do not believe that all learners can benefit from inclusive classrooms;
- Special education teachers are not ready and prepared to implement inclusive education in the primary schools;
- Special education teachers mostly favour gifted and talented learners than those with mild disabilities, as well as those with physical disability and those with health problems; and
- That a variety of factors affect implementation of inclusive education, these being suitably qualified teachers, modification of the curriculum and provision of appropriate instructional materials.

5.5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.5.1 Recommendations pertaining to the study:

The following are recommendations stemming from this study:

- Involvement of teachers at the planning stage regarding any policy related to education is vital, given the fact that teachers are the ones who have to implement the recommendations of the R.N.P.E. of 1994 on inclusive education. It is, therefore of paramount importance that they should been given an opportunity to

have input. Even more the success of inclusive education depends on their perceptions towards it and involvement in its implementation can only help to remove some of their fears.

- Improvement of pre and in-service curricula for teachers to incorporate the teaching of learners with diverse needs. Courses should be intensified such that teachers gain the needed knowledge and skills to enable them to teach learners with such needs. This may even result in more educators acknowledging inclusive education.
- Careful auditing of resources in both mainstream and special schools is necessary to assist in redeployment of such resources where they are most needed. This will help in providing the needed and adequate resources for effective implementation of inclusive education.

5.5.2 Recommendation for further studies

More research needs to be undertaken regarding the following:

- Resources needed for the implementation of inclusive education.
- Appropriate training of teachers in specific requirements of inclusive education.
- Effectiveness of curricula in Colleges of Primary Education in terms of their relevance to such education.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following constraints were encountered during the study:

- Inclusive education is still a new concept in Botswana and as such, it is possible that some respondents might have misinterpreted some questions, which, in turn may affect the trustworthiness of the study.
- Methods used such as the questionnaires and interviews might have posed a threat to the reliability and validity of the study, though triangulation goes some way towards guarding this.
- Lastly, this research study was not adequate enough to generate the perceptions of the entire population. Therefore, more research of this nature, covering a wider

geographical area and population is needed to help establish a general trend of the respondents' perceptions towards inclusive education.

5.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The success of inclusive education depends on several factors such as suitably trained teachers, provision of relevant plus appropriate resources and a suitable curriculum. Lack of these critical factors may result in special education teachers having negative attitudes towards inclusion. Their attitudes are a decisive factor in making schools and classrooms more inclusive. If special education teachers do not start to acknowledge that all children can learn, then inclusive education will remain a myth in Botswana.

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APPENDIX A

TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRE

TOPIC: PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION)

In this study, inclusive education refers to inclusion of learners with special educational needs in the mainstream classrooms with appropriate support services. This study therefore seeks to determine teachers' perceptions towards inclusive education.

SECTION A: TEACHERS' BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BY TICKING IN THE APPROPRIATE BOXES.

1 GENDER:

- 1.1 Male: ☐
- 1.2 Female ☐

2. AGE

- 2.1 Less than 30 years ☐
- 2.2 30-34 years ☐
- 2.3 35- 39 years ☐
- 2.4 40-44 years ☐
- 2.5 45 and above ☐

3 ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

- 3.1 Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) ☐
- 3.2 Junior Certificate ☐
- 3.3 Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE) ☐

3.4 Others (specify) _____

4 PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

- 4.1 Bachelor of Education --Primary Education (B Ed prim) []
- 4.2 Bachelor of Education -- Special Education (Bed Sp Educ.) []
- 4.3 Diploma in Primary Education (DPE) []
- 4.4 Diploma in Special Education (DSPE) []
- 4.5 Primary Teachers 'Certificate (PTC) []
- 4.6 Primary Higher Certificate (PH) []
- 4.7 Primary Lower Certificate (PL) []
- 4.8 Others (specify) _____

5 TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 5.1 Less than 5 years []
- 5.2 5-10 years []
- 5.3 11-15 years []
- 5.4 16-20 years []
- 5.5 21-25 years []
- 5.6 25 years and above []

SECTION B: PERCEPTIONS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible. Remember that no answer is correct or wrong. Also to be remembered is that confidentiality of teachers' responses will be maintained in that questionnaires will contain no identification of individual teachers or the schools. Thank you for taking part in this study.

Please rate the following questions on a four-point scale by ticking in the appropriate boxes to reflect your opinion and perception of inclusive education.

Key: SA = Strongly Agree
 A = Agree
 SD = Strongly Disagree
 D = Disagree

6 Perceptions of special education teachers towards inclusive education

	SA	A	SD	D
6.1. All children can learn irrespective of their differences.				
6.2. Learners with disabilities should be educated alongside those without disabilities in mainstream classrooms.				
6.3. All children can benefit from an inclusive system of education.				
6.4. Learners with special educational needs should be educated either in special classes/units or in separate school as is the current situation.				
6.5. Learners with special educational needs will retard progress of those without disabilities if they are included in mainstream classrooms.				
6.6. Educating learners with special educational needs will necessitate extra work on the part of the teachers.				
6.7 All teachers are capable of teaching learners with special educational needs.				
6.8. Only special education teachers are capable of teaching learners with special				

7 Whom amongst the following groups of learners do you feel should be included in mainstream classrooms?

	SA	A	SD	D
7.1. All learners irrespective of their language, learning styles, culture, or disability.				
7.2 Only learners with mild disabilities.				
7.3 Only learners with sensory disabilities i. e. visual and hearing impairments				
7.4. Only learners with mental disabilities				
7.5. Only learners with learning difficulties.				
7.6. Only with physical disabilities and health problems such as HIV				
7.7 Only learners with behaviour problems.				
7.8. Only learners who are gifted and talented.				

Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible. Remember that no answer is correct or wrong. Also to be remembered is that confidentiality of teachers' responses will be maintained. Feel free to add any comments or suggestions on how inclusive education can be implemented successfully in the primary schools.

8.1 Are you aware of the policy on inclusive education as per the recommendations of the Revised National Policy on Education 1994 (R.N.P.E., 1994)?

8.2 Do you think it is possible to educate learners with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms? Please comment.

8.3 Do you think educating learners with special educational needs with their non-disabled peers in the mainstream classrooms will adversely effect the progress of those without disabilities? Give reasons.

8.4 From your own point of view, which is the best possible placement for learners with special educational needs? Give reasons.

8.5 Are there any appropriate resources in the primary schools to facilitate the implementation of inclusive education?

8.6 If no, offer suggestions on how to improve the situation.

8.7 Do you think the mainstream curriculum is suitable for learners with special educational needs? Give reasons.

8.8 Have you ever received any training in special education? If yes, how did that training prepare you to teach learners with special educational needs?

8.9 If no, how do you provide for learners with special educational needs in your classroom if there are any?

8.10 How do you think all learners can benefit from learning together in the same classrooms? Give reasons.

8.11 What suggestions do you have for the successful implementation of inclusive education in primary schools?

8.12 What challenges do you think teachers experience when there is a learner with special educational needs in the mainstream classrooms?

8.13 Do you think it is possible to merge special education and mainstream education into one system of education? Please comment.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

The main aim of the interview is to solicit in-depth data from special education teachers regarding their perceptions towards inclusive education.

1. The policy on Special Education is that all children including those with special educational needs should be educated in the mainstream classrooms. What are your views and opinions regarding this?
2. How do you think all learners can benefit from an inclusive system of education?
3. Have you ever taught a learner with special educational needs? If yes, what was your experience and if no, what possible challenges do you anticipate?
4. How has your training prepared you to teach learners with special educational needs?
5. Are there any appropriate resources in the primary schools to facilitate the implementation of inclusive education?
6. In your opinion, which groups of learners with special educational needs should be included in mainstream classrooms? Give reasons for your answer.
7. How do you view the idea of merging special education and mainstream education into one education system of education?
8. What do you think is needed to make implementation of inclusion possible?

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS PARTICIPATING IN RESEARCH ON PERCEPTIONS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN RAMOTSWA VILLAGE IN THE SOUTH EAST DISTRICT OF BOTSWANA

I, the undersigned -----, do hereby indicate that I have read and understood the conditions for participating in the study conducted by Ms Victoria Ntswe. I hereby give my written consent by ticking the conditions outlined below, that I will contribute any needed information for the study. I also give my written consent to be interviewed on these conditions:

1. That the interview may be reordered;
2. That I may withdraw from the study at any time without having to give reasons for such withdrawal;
3. That I will be allocated a pseudonym in the research process and that my identity will be concealed;
4. That I will not suffer any form of detriment by taking part in this study; and
5. That I will be given the opportunity to comment on the findings from my interview.

Signature of participant

Date