**Inclusive Education Practices for Physically Disabled Learners in** **Northern Samar Elementary Schools, Philippines**

**ABSTRACT**

Inclusive education is an avenue of putting diverse learners in one classroom to learn alongside and nurture each other’s uniqueness for self-growth and development. This study determined the extent of support for physically disabled learners in selected elementary schools in the Central Area of the Division of Northern Samar**,** Philippines. Specifically, it examined the profiles of teachers and school heads in terms of educational attainment, specialisation, length of service, and training attended related to inclusive education, and teachers’ number of learners handled with physical disabilities. The study employed a descriptive-correlational design. The population of this study was taken from all elementary school teachers and school heads of the five (5) Central Schools and one (1) non-central school identified in the central area of Northern Samar who experienced handling learners with physical disabilities. Data were collected using validated modified questionnaires and analysed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. Findings revealed that support for physically disabled learners was found to be limited across all domains, particularly, availability and adequacy of resources, training and preparedness of teachers, and institutional and administrative support. It was found out that most schools lacked assistive devices, accessible infrastructure, and specialised learning materials. Additionally, a significant number of teachers with no formal training in inclusive education, and administrative support structures were perceived as inadequate. For instance, 84 or 57.50% of the teachers have no training at all. Moreover, there were 22 or 15.10% of the teachers have attended training for more than thirty-two (32) hours, 20 or 13.70% were able to attend 9 to 24 hours of training, 13 or 8.90% of teachers were able to attend 8 hours and below, and 7 or 4.8% of the were able to attend 25 to 32 hours of training related to inclusive education. These gaps highlight the need for targeted interventions to improve resource provision, capacity building, and policy implementation to ensure equitable and inclusive education for all learners. The study recommended that the Department of Education – Northern Samar Division should conduct inclusive education training and workshops to enhance teachers' and school heads’ knowledge and skills in addressing learners with physical disabilities.

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**Keywords**: *physical disabilities, extent of support, availability, adequacy of resources, training, preparedness, institutional, and administrative support*

**INTRODUCTION**

No child should be left behind. An act emphasising that all learners must have equal opportunities for learning. Thus, inclusive policies and support should be implemented to help all children reach their full potential. This also conforms to the state policy of the Philippines and the vision of the Department of Education to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education that is accessible to all. And this includes the learners with disabilities or learners with special needs, also known as inclusive education. An avenue for them to have a chance to compete in the challenges of the world and prove, regardless of their physical attributes, that they can contribute to society and make a difference. Teachers who believe in inclusive education do not view individual differences and diversity as problematic. They do not ask students to ‘fit’ the existing educational environments (Woodcock et al., 2022; Walton & Engelbrecht, 2024). Inclusive education is an avenue of putting diverse learners in one classroom to learn alongside and nurture each other’s uniqueness for self-growth and development. Inclusive Education promotes equity by ensuring that all learners, including those with disabilities, have equal access to educational opportunities, thus eliminating discrimination and creating an environment where all learners can thrive regardless of their physical conditions, DepEd Order no. 021, s. 2019). A major driver for the development of inclusive education policies has been the right of children with special educational needs to be educated in mainstream schools (Lindner et al., 2023). Yet, the likelihood of inclusive education actually occurring depends on teachers’ underlying belief systems (Dignath et al., 2022).

Republic Act No. 11650, also known as “An Act Instituting a Policy of Inclusion and Services for Learners with Disabilities”, denote a policy of inclusion and services for learners with disabilities in the Philippines. This aims to provide free and appropriate education, and basic support and services based on their needs. It also establishes how learners attain and develop their full potential toward self-sufficiency and participation in society.

Moreover, this act provides parents or guardians of learners with disabilities with information and opportunities to actively participate in the determination of educational placement options and programs to enable them to make informed choices and decisions; enable and empower all teachers, including those with disabilities, parents, guardians, and family members by training and equipping them with capabilities for the detection, referral or introduction of interventions with regard to disorders, disabilities, and abilities of the learners (RA No. 1160 s. 2022).

The Department of Education issued and implemented several policies to ensure equitable access to education and educational services to learners with disabilities in both public and private basic educational institutions. The National Disability Prevalence Survey estimated those with severe disability to be around l2% of the general population (Philippine Statistics Authority (DepEd No. 023, s. 2022).

DepEd Order No. 023 s, 2022, known as Child Find Policy for Learners with Disabilities Towards Inclusive Education, articulates the processes in ensuring that learners with disabilities are identified, located, and evaluated to facilitate their inclusion in the general basic education school system. Specifically, learners with disabilities were classified into two groups. First, learners with the diagnosis from licensed medical specialists. Second, learners without a medical diagnosis but with manifestations of disabilities based on the International Classification of Functioning (ICF) (DepEd No. 023, s. 2022).

However, based on the experience of the researcher, implementation was not as what is expected. Particularly in rural areas, where resource allocation is often inadequate. Access to assistive technologies and specialised learning materials is limited, hindering the educational engagement of physically disabled learners. Parental and community involvement is crucial but often lacking, as families may not have the knowledge or resources to support their children's education adequately.

As the adage says, “We cannot give what we do not have” The Department of Education took action to address this concern through the Teacher Induction Program, stipulated in DepEd Memorandum No. 043 s, 2017, for newly hired teachers. It is institutionalised to provide a systematic and comprehensive support for the newly hired teachers to seamlessly immerse them in the teaching profession in the public school system. This program is anchored in the NCBTS 2017 K to 12 basic education programs (DepEd No. 043 s, 2017).

Generally, it intends to improve their knowledge, skills, attitude and values. And increase their confidence in teaching to make them effective and efficient, and eventually commit themselves to nurturing every learner and become passionate and teaching. The teacher induction program covers six courses with common and key stages to be undertaken by the newly hired teachers. And in the 4th course, inclusive education was discussed. However, topics in this course were not discussed thoroughly regarding the different policies and guidelines. There are also teachers who have taken or given a Teacher Induction Program and have already deployed to the field of teaching.

As a result, teachers handling learners with disabilities also do not know how to handle learners with special needs, and are not aware of how to assess learners with appropriate tools. Making it difficult to implement effective teaching strategies and individualised support. The absence of clear policies for proper assessment and placement further contributes to this issue, as some learners who require non-graded programs are instead enrolled in graded programs.

In addition, the Division of Northern Samar has only one (1) Special Education Centre that could provide appropriate services to the learners within the district. This shows that learners with special needs cannot be able to enrol in the SPED Centre, especially in the far-flung barangay where learners and their parents are incapable or do not have an opportunity to enrol their children. Therefore, mainstreaming is the most possible way to educate their children.

Moreover, according to the data gathered by the researcher from the Research and Planning Office of the Division of Northern Samar, among 31, 216 learners enrolled from the selected schools in the division of Northern Samar, there are 1,683 learners identified with diagnoses and with manifestations. Therefore, 5.39% of the learners identified as needing special educational assistance, and this percentage could make a significant difference to society once relevant and authentic education could be given to them.

Thus, this is relevant to the experiences of the school administrators and teachers handling learners with disabilities, and the learners with disabilities as well. Identifying the extent of support provided a valuable contribution to the interventions and drafting necessary adjustments to enhance the special education program in the Department of Education.

**METHODOLOGY**

*Locale of the Study*

This study was conducted in the identified schools with the most reported learners with physical disability in the Central Area of Northern Samar, Philippines. Northern Samar is divided into three major geographical areas, namely: the Balicuatro area, the Central area, and the Pacific area. The province is divided into two legislative districts, the first district, covering the Balicuatro and most part of the Central Area, and the second district, covering some part of the Central Area, the Pacific Area and the Catubig Valley. Specifically, it is composed of six (6) municipalities - Catarman, Lope De Vega, Mondragon, Bobon, Rosario and San Jose.

Based on the data gathered, the following schools were identified as respondents since they have the highest number of reported learners enrolled with physical disabilities. Specifically, Catarman I Central School in the Municipality of Catarman, Lope de Vega Central School in the Municipality of Lope de Vega, Mondragon I Central School in the Municipality of Mondragon, Bobon Central School in the Municipality of Bobon, San Jose Central School in the Municipality of San Jose, Salhag Elementary School in the Municipality of Rosario

*Research Design*

This study utilised a descriptive-correlational design to assess the support for physically disabled learners in elementary schools. Descriptive research aimed to systematically describe a population, situation, or phenomenon by collecting quantifiable information (Cresswell, J.W., 2024). This study focused on gathering data on the socio-demographic profiles of teachers and school heads, and the extent of support for learners with physical disabilities.

Statistical tools such as mean and Pearson correlation analysis were used to analyse the data. Descriptive statistics summarised the extent of support. These statistical methods provided objective and data-driven insights, allowing the study to make evidence-based recommendations for enhancing an inclusive education program for physically disabled learners.

*Variables of the Study*

The independent variable of the study includes the profile of the respondents, such as educational attainment, specialisation, length of service, training attended related to special education, and number of learners handled with physical disabilities. While for school head respondents, educational attainment, length of service, and training attended are related to special education.

The dependent variables of the study are the support for teachers and school heads in handling learners with physical disabilities, such as availability and adequacy of resources, training and preparedness of teachers, and institutional and administrative support.

*Population and Sampling*

The population of this study was taken from all elementary school teachers and school heads of the five (5) Central Schools and one (1) non-central school identified in the central area of Northern Samar who experienced handling learners with physical disabilities. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants based on their expertise, experience, and roles related to handling physically disabled learners. This sampling strategy ensured that the study included individuals who could provide valuable insights and perspectives.

*The Respondents*

The respondents of the study were the teachers who have handled learners with physical disability in the assigned school, and school heads who have enrolled learners with disabilities in the identified schools in the elementary schools of Central Area in the Division of Northern Samar.

*Research Instrument*

The research instrument used in this study was a modified survey/questionnaire from the study of Dela Cruz (2016). Research instruments were modified for the teacher and the school head. The questionnaire was composed of three (2) parts, Part 1 - composed of the profile of the teacher and school head. Part II - composed of three (3) domains of support for learners with physical disabilities. The survey questionnaires were designed to collect quantitative data on the policy implementation and support for learners with physical disabilities.

*Validation of Research Instrument*

The research instruments used in this study consisted of a modified survey questionnaire, both designed to gather data to determine the level of policy implementation and support for physically disabled learners. To ensure the validity and reliability of these instruments, expert validation was conducted. The panel of validators were composed of three experts: Two Master Teachers in Elementary School with extensive experience in special education/inclusive education, and an experienced School Head in the Division of Northern Samar.

The validators assessed the instruments based on their relevance, clarity, and appropriateness for the target population. They provided feedback on the content, structure, and wording of the questionnaire to ensure they effectively capture the necessary data. Revisions were made based on their recommendations to improve the clarity and comprehensibility of the items.

*Scoring and Interpretation of Data*

To facilitate presentation and statistical analysis, the gathered data will be scored and interpreted using the following codes and categorisations. The level of policy implementation and support in addressing physically disabled learners. Fullest Extent (4.20 – 5.00), Great Extent (3.40 – 4.19), Moderate Extent (2.60 – 3.39), Less Extent (1.80 – 2.59), and Least Extent (1.00 – 1.79)

*Data Gathering Procedure*

The data gathering procedure of the study was conducted in several stages to ensure the systematic collection of information from teachers and school heads of learners with disabilities in the central areas of Northern Samar. Initially, the researcher sought permission from the Regional Director, the Schools Division Superintendent, and the District Head to conduct the study. The researcher also coordinated with the school heads to identify and invite potential respondents.

The data collection involved modifying the questionnaire for the purpose of the study for the elementary school teachers and school heads. The questionnaire was designed to gather quantitative data on the level of policy implementation and support for learners with disabilities. The questionnaires were distributed personally and electronically through Google Forms, depending on the respondents’ preferences. Moreover, the respondents were given sufficient time to complete them.

Throughout the data-gathering process, ethical considerations such as informed consent, voluntary participation, and confidentiality of respondents' information were strictly observed. The collected data were organised, reviewed, and prepared for analysis to address the research questions and objectives.

*Statistical Treatment of Data*

Descriptive statistics were used to summarise the socio-demographic profile of the respondents, including their educational attainment, specialisation, length of service, training attended related to special education, and the number of learners with disabilities they have handled. Frequency and percentage distribution will determine the proportion of respondents falling under each category. Additionally, the mean and standard deviation will be used to assess the extent of support for teachers and school heads. The mean will provide an overall measure of respondents' perceptions, while the standard deviation will indicate variability in their responses.

To further interpret the results, a Likert scale will be applied, categorising responses into the extent of agreement. This statistical method will establish whether factors such as educational attainment, length of service, and training attended significantly influence support. These statistical treatments ensured that the study provided reliable, data-driven insights into the effectiveness of support for physically disabled learners, helping identify areas for improvement in inclusive education practices.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Profile of Teachers**

*Educational Attainment*

In terms of educational attainment, most of the teachers have earned in master’s degree with 69 or 47.30%. 60 or 41.10% are master’s degree holders. 11 or 7.50% are college graduates, while 5 teachers or 3.40% have earned units in a doctoral degree, and 1 or 0.7% of the teachers have earned a doctoral degree. These findings show that most of the teachers are pursuing career progression or professional development. This finding confirms the study of Darling-Hammond's (2017) study that the effectiveness of inclusive education programs depends on teachers’ level of professional development

**Table 1. Educational Attainment of Teachers**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Educational Attainment | Frequency | Percent |
| With M.A Units | 69 | 47.30 |
| Master's Degree | 60 | 41.10 |
| College Graduate | 11 | 7.50 |
| With Doctoral Units | 5 | 3.40 |
| Doctoral Degree | 1 | 0.70 |
| Total | **146** | **100.00** |

*Teacher’s Specialisation*

Table 2 shows the profile of the teachers in terms of specialisation. The table presents that 131 or 89.70% of the teachers’ specialisation was general education, 15 or 10.30% of the teachers were in subject specialisation, and 0% of the teachers were specialised in special education. This explains that most of the teachers were general education specialists. Therefore, teachers must undergo courses to effectively implement the education for all or inclusive education. This also confirms the findings of Darling and Hammond (2017) that educational background, including degrees obtained and professional development programs attended, equips them with the necessary pedagogical skills and strategies to support inclusive education effectively.

**Table 2. Specialisation of Teachers**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Specialization** | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
| General Education | 131 | 89.70 |
| Subject Specialization | 15 | 10.30 |
| Special Education | 0 | 0 |
| **Total** | **146** | **100.00** |

*Length of Service*

Table 3 presents the profile of the teachers in terms of length of service. Among 146 teachers sampled, 39 or 26.70% of the teachers rendered service for 16 to 20 years in teaching, 34 or 23.30% of the teachers rendered 11 to 15 years in service, 31 or 21.20% of the teachers were already rendered 26 years and above in teaching. Moreover, 28 or 19.20% of teachers rendered 21 to 25 years of teaching, and 14 or 9.60% of the teachers rendered 5 to 10 years in teaching. Based on the length of service, most of the teachers have more experience in handling learners with different learning needs. Similarly, with the findings of Bush that length of service or years of teaching experience is another crucial factor, as it determines the extent of teachers’ exposure to handling diverse student needs.

**Table 3. Length of Service of Teachers**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Length of Service** | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
| 16 to 20 years | 39 | 26.70 |
| 11 to 15 years | 34 | 23.30 |
| 26 years and above | 31 | 21.20 |
| 21 to 25 years | 28 | 19.20 |
| 5 to 10 years | 14 | 9.60 |
| Less than 5 years | 0 | 0 |
| **Total** | **146** | **100.00** |

*Training Attended Related to Inclusive Education*

The table below shows the hours of training attended related to inclusive education. Based on the responses, 84 or 57.50% of the teachers have no training at all. Moreover, there were 22 or 15.10% of the teachers have attended training for more than

thirty-two (32) hours, 20 or 13.70% were able to attend 9 to 24 hours of training, 13 or 8.90% of teachers were able to attend 8 hours and below, and 7 or 4.8% of the were able to attend 25 to 32 hours of training related to inclusive education. This reveals that most of the teachers have no proper orientation or have not enough training in dealing with learners with physical disabilities. This was also emphasised in the study of UNESCO (2020) that teachers who have no training or orientation to inclusive education and other programs related to teaching learners with special needs limit the quality of education rendered to the learners.

**Table 4. Training attended Related to Special/Inclusive Education of Teachers**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Hours of Training Attended** | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
| No Training Attended | 84 | 57.50 |
| More than 32 hours | 22 | 15.10 |
| 9 to 24 hours | 20 | 13.70 |
| 8 hours and below | 13 | 8.90 |
| 25-32 hours | 7 | 4.8 |
| **Total** | **146** | **100.00** |

*Number of learners handled with physical disabilities*

Table 5 shows the multiple responses of the respondents based on the number of learners they had already handled in their respective schools, with a total of 624. The table shows two categories of the classification of physical disability that were mainstreamed in their school. Based on the tallied responses, the highest number of physical disabilities were the ones without medical diagnoses but manifestations, such as difficulty of hearing with a frequency count of 132, difficulty in communicating with a frequency count of 106, difficulty in mobility with a frequency count of 103, and difficulty in seeing with a frequency count 54.

Moreover, the responses on the type of physical disabilities with diagnoses from medical specialists were the following: speech or language disorder with 68 responses, hearing impairment with 59 responses, special health problem/chronic disease with 33 responses, orthopedic/physical handicap with 31 responses, visual impairment with 21 responses, multiple disabilities with 15 responses, and cerebral palsy with 2 responses.

**Table 5. Number of Learners Handled with Physical Disabilities**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Physical Disability** | **Frequency** |
| **With diagnosis from the medical experts** | |
| Speech or Language Disorder | 68 |
| Hearing Impairment | 59 |
| Special Health Problem/Chronic Disease | 33 |
| Orthopedic/Physical Handicap | 31 |
| Visual Impairment | 21 |
| Cerebral Palsy | 2 |
| **Without diagnosis but with manifestations** | |
| Difficulty in Hearing | 132 |
| Difficulty in Communicating | 106 |
| Difficulty in Mobility | 103 |
| Difficulty in Seeing | 54 |
| **Total** | **624** |

**Profile of the School Heads**

*Educational Attainment*

Table 6 shows the educational attainment of the school heads. It shows that most of the school heads took up post-graduate studies. Whereas 3 or 60% of the school heads were doctorate degree holders, 1 or 20% of the school heads had earned doctoral units, and 1 or 20% of the school heads were graduates of a master’s degree. This means that most of the school heads were academically qualified in their present position as stipulated in DepEd Order No. 39, s. 2007 or the qualification standards of school heads.

**Table 6. Educational Attainment of School Heads**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Educational Attainment** | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
| Doctoral Degree | 3 | 60 |
| With Doctoral Units | 1 | 20 |
| Master's Degree | 1 | 20 |
| **Total** | **146** | **100.00** |

*Specialization*

Table 7 shows the specialisation of the school head. Based on the data, 4 or 80% of the school heads took up general education or elementary education, and only 1 or 20% of the school heads had subject specialisation. This shows that most of the school heads were able to teach at the elementary level, and were familiar with how inclusive education was in the primary level.

**Table 7. Specialisation of the School Heads**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Specialization** | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
| General Education | 4 | 80 |
| Subject Specialization | 1 | 20 |
| Special Education | 0 | 0 |
| **Total** | **5** | **100.00** |

*Length of Service*

Table 8 below shows the length of service of the school head. In which 3 or 60% of the school heads have already rendered 26 years and above, while 2 or 40% of the school Heads have already rendered 21 to 25 years. This implies that the school heads have enough experience in the field of teaching.

**Table 8. Length of Service of the School Head**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Length of Service** | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
| 26 years and above | 3 | 60 |
| 21 to 25 years | 2 | 40 |
| **Total** | **5** | **100.00** |

*Training attended Related to Special/Inclusive Education*

Table 9 shows the number of hours of training attended related to special education or inclusive education. Based on the table, most of the school head had attended training on inclusive education, where 3 or 60% of the school head had more than 32 hours of training attended, 1 or 20% of the school heads were able to have less than 8 hours of training, and 1 or 20% of the school head was not able to attend training. This implies that most of the school heads have orientation and training on inclusive education, however, there are some who lack training.

**Table 9. Training attended Related to Special/Inclusive Education of Teachers**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Hours of Training Attended** | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
| More than 32 hours | 3 | 60 |
| No Training Attended | 1 | 20 |
| 8 hours and below | 1 | 20 |
| **Total** | **5** | **100.00** |

**Support for Physically Disabled Learners**

*Availability and Adequacy of Resources*

As shown in Table 10, both teachers and school heads rated the availability and adequacy of resources for physically disabled learners to a lesser extent, with an overall mean of 2.04. The lowest-rated indicators were the provision of assistive devices (1.66) and specialised learning materials (1.95), indicating serious gaps in essential support tools. Infrastructure and classroom modifications were also rated less extent, suggesting limited accessibility in school facilities with an overall weighted mean of 1.95 and 2.24, respectively.

Moreover, teachers and school heads noted insufficient funding with a weighted mean of 2.11 or less extent, which contributes to these resource limitations. While the learning environment was viewed as moderately implemented by the school head as somewhat accessible (2.32), overall support remains inadequate or lesser extent since the teachers perceived this as less extent with a weighted mean of 2.30. These confirm the study of UNESCO (2020), which highlights the urgent need for improved facilities, assistive tools, and funding to promote inclusive education

**Table 10. Availability and Adequacy of Resources**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Availability and Adequacy of Resources | Teacher | | School Head | | Total | |
| WM | Interpretation | WM | Interpretation | WM | Interpretation |
| Our school provides adequate assistive devices (e.g., wheelchairs, braille materials, speech-to-text software) for physically disabled learners. | 1.66 | Least extent | 1.60 | Least extent | 1.66 | Least extent |
| The specialized learning materials available in our school meet the needs of physically disabled learners. | 1.97 | Less extent | 1.40 | Least extent | 1.95 | Less extent |
| The school’s infrastructure (e.g., ramps, accessible restrooms, elevators) supports the mobility of physically disabled learners. | 1.95 | Less extent | 2.20 | Less extent | 1.95 | Less extent |
| The availability of classroom modifications (e.g., seating arrangements, adjustable desks) helps facilitate inclusive education. | 2.26 | Less extent | 1.80 | Less extent | 2.24 | Less extent |
| The school receives sufficient funding to procure resources for physically disabled learners. | 2.13 | Less extent | 1.60 | Least extent | 2.11 | Less extent |
| The learning environment in my school is physically accessible and inclusive for all learners. | 2.30 | Less extent | 2.80 | Moderate extent | 2.32 | Less extent |
| Overall mean | **2.05** | **Less extent** | **1.90** | **Less extent** | **2.04** | **Less extent** |

**Training and Preparedness of Teachers**

Table 11 shows that both teachers and school heads perceived the training and preparedness of teachers for inclusive education to a lesser extent of implementation, with an overall mean of 2.16. Both groups agreed that teachers received limited training (1.95 for teachers; 2.20 for school heads) and that access to specialised instructional materials was inadequate (2.07 for both). Similarly, both groups noted low confidence among teachers in using assistive technology.

However, a contrast was observed in the rating of ongoing training opportunities, where school heads rated it slightly higher (2.60, moderate extent) compared to teachers (2.18, less extent). This suggests that while school administrators believe continuous professional development is being provided, teachers feel it is insufficient. Overall, the findings confirm the study of Sharma et.al, 2013, that lack of training served as a barrier to the implementation of inclusive education

**Table 11. Training and Preparedness of Teachers**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Training and Preparedness of Teachers | Teacher | | School Head | | Total | |
| WM | Interpretation | WM | Interpretation | WM | Interpretation |
| The teachers have received adequate training on handling physically disabled learners | 1.95 | Less extent | 2.20 | Less extent | 1.96 | Less extent |
| The professional development programs provided by the school effectively prepare teachers for inclusive education. | 2.15 | Less extent | 2.20 | Less extent | 2.15 | Less extent |
| The teachers are confident in using assistive technology to support physically disabled learners in my classroom. | 2.29 | Less extent | 2.20 | Less extent | 2.28 | Less extent |
| The school provides ongoing training to enhance teachers’ knowledge of inclusive teaching strategies. | 2.18 | Less extent | 2.60 | Moderate extent | 2.19 | Less extent |
| The teachers have access to instructional materials specifically designed for teaching physically disabled learners. | 2.07 | Less extent | 2.00 | Less extent | 2.07 | Less extent |
| The support provided by school administrators helps teachers effectively implement inclusive education. | 2.29 | Less extent | 2.40 | Less extent | 2.30 | Less extent |
| Overall mean | **2.16** | **Less extent** | **2.27** | **Less extent** | **2.16** | **Less extent** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

*Instructional and Administrative Support*

Table 12 shows that teachers rated institutional and administrative support for inclusive education at a lesser extent level of support (2.38), while school heads rated it at a moderate level (2.80), and gave the overall rating to a lesser extent (2.40). Both groups agreed that regular evaluation of inclusive policies is lacking, with low ratings from both teachers (2.29) and school heads (2.00).

However, contrasts were evident in areas such as administrative prioritisation of inclusive policies, clear guidelines, and school support systems, where school heads consistently rated higher (2.80–3.20) compared to teachers (2.36–2.45). This suggests that while school leaders perceive their support efforts as adequate, teachers on the ground feel that guidance, assistance, and policy clarity are insufficient. This result confirms the findings of Sharma et.al (2013) that many teachers feel unprepared to address the needs of learners with disabilities due to insufficient professional development and support

**Table 12. Instructional and Administrative Support**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Instructional and Administrative Support | Teacher | | School Head | | Total | |
| WM | Interpretation | WM | Interpretation | WM | Interpretation |
| The school administration prioritizes the implementation of policies supporting physically disabled learners. | 2.36 | Less extent | 2.80 | Moderate extent | 2.38 | Less extent |
| There are clear guidelines and policies on how to support physically disabled learners in our school. | 2.45 | Less extent | 3.20 | Moderate extent | 2.47 | Less extent |
| School leaders provide sufficient guidance and assistance to teachers in implementing inclusive education. | 2.38 | Less extent | 2.80 | Moderate extent | 2.40 | Less extent |
| The school has established a support system (e.g., SPED coordinators, resource personnel) to assist teachers in handling physically disabled learners. | 2.36 | Less extent | 2.80 | Moderate extent | 2.37 | Less extent |
| I feel supported by my school in addressing the challenges of inclusive education. | 2.45 | Less extent | 3.20 | Moderate extent | 2.47 | Less extent |
| There are regular evaluations to ensure that inclusive education policies are effectively implemented. | 2.29 | Less extent | 2.00 | Less extent | 2.28 | Less extent |
| Overall mean | **2.38** | **Less extent** | **2.80** | **Moderate extent** | **2.40** | **Less extent** |

The findings on the extent of support in terms of the availability and adequacy of resources were found to be less extent from the perspective of both teachers and school heads. This underscores that the Department of Education, in coordination with local government units and stakeholders, should ensure the provision and maintenance of adequate teaching and learning resources that cater to the needs of learners with physical disabilities. This includes assistive devices, specialised instructional materials, accessible classrooms, and technology-enabled tools. Creating safe spaces for learners with physical disabilities, such as classroom modification and school infrastructures, can strongly support the implementation of the inclusive education program.

The result on extent of support for the training and for teachers was also less extensive in addressing the learners with physical disabilities. This implies that teachers must be equipped with up-to-date knowledge and practical skills related to inclusive education. This can be achieved through sustained in-service training programs, workshops, and seminars that focus on differentiated instruction, classroom management, individualised education plans (IEPs), and inclusive pedagogies. Such capacity-building activities should be tailored to the evolving needs of educators and the specific context of their schools.

Moreover, institutional and Administrative Support was also found in less extent. Findings imply that strong administrative backing is essential to create an environment conducive to inclusive education. School leaders should promote a culture of collaboration, openness, and shared responsibility. Administrative measures should include regular mentoring, performance monitoring, technical assistance, and the provision of incentives or recognition for exemplary practices in inclusive teaching.

**CONCLUSION**

This study emphasises the importance of support in the implementation of inclusive education in the Department of Education. Findings revealed that the three domains were found to be less extent, specifically, the Availability and Adequacy of Resources, Training and Preparedness of Teachers, and Institutional and Administrative Support. Most of the schools lacked assistive materials and accessible facilities, while teachers lacked sufficient training related to inclusive education for physically disabled learners. In addition, weak institutional and administrative support hinders the full implementation of the programs in inclusive education. These gaps highlighted the need to improve the equitable and effective support for all.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Department of Education – Northern Samar Division should conduct inclusive education training and workshops to enhance teachers' and school heads’ knowledge and skills in addressing learners with physical disabilities. School heads should procure assistive tools and learning materials based on the needs of the learners. Moreover, the Division of Northern Samar should create a support team to regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of inclusive education, particularly for learners with physical disabilities.

**Consent**

As per international standards or university standards, Participants’ written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

**Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence)**

Option 1:

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

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Details of the AI usage are given below:

1.

2.

3.

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