Inclusive Education Policy Implementation in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Lessons for Nigeria and Cameroon

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Abstract

Inclusive education is a social model that can be substantially linked to the 1960 United Nations Convention against Discrimination in Education, and the 1990 and 1994 UNESCO sponsored Jomtien Declaration on "Education for All"and Salamanca Statement on Special education respectively. It is a process of increasing the attendance, involvement, and achievements of all learners in schools, regardless their physical, social, political, economic and cultural status. In order words, inclusive education is the process whereby every child of school age is offered the opportunity of equitable quality education in mainstream educational settings. It is concerned with the restructuring of physical environments, infrastructures, cultures, policies, and practices to respond to the diversity of all learners within the educational systems. Inclusive education is anchored on the premise that; we live in a diverse society where every individual needs to acknowledge the values and differences of each other; and have equal rights in contributing to the progress of society regardless different levels of abilities. As an international policy ratified by most UN member nations, South Africa, though with an abysmal history of exclusion has made practical progress in its implementation more than other African countries. Consequently, this paper seeks to provide evidence on practical inclusive education implementation in post-apartheid South Africa, and the possible lessons other African nations like Nigeria and Cameroon can gather. The underlying assumption here is that successive governments in post-apartheid South Africa have to some extent made good progress in the implementation of inclusive education which could be emulated by Nigeria and Cameroon.
Keywords: Inclusive education, post-apartheid South Africa, Nigeria and Cameroon

1.0   Introduction

Education is essential for the construction of viable economies and societies with outstanding democratic credentials. According to Denga (2005), education refers to the processes by which individuals acquire physical and social capabilities required by the society in which they are born for daily functioning. In another perspective, Adeola (2009: 6) posits that education has both a quantitative and a qualitative side. While the quantitative side of education refers to the economic dividends that ultimately accrue from it to both individuals and their country as a result of increased earnings, the qualitative aspect has to do with "values, culture and needs." High quality cosmopolitan education is one of the most powerful instruments for the reduction of poverty and inequality.

As a critical tool for the attainment of the development agenda of any nation and the world at large, education inspires people and fortifies nations. It is indeed a powerful counterbalance, offering opportunities for individuals to graduate themselves out of poverty. The World Bank Report (2010. 2) puts it, this way; quality education strengthens nations' economic prospects by laying the foundation for sustained economic transformation. From the above views, education in an ideal sense can be seen as an ultimate value and hence, an agent of development.

Relating education with development, the famous critical socialist African historian Walter Rodney pointed out that "Development in human society … at an individual level implies increased skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being" (1974, p. 3), and that the education offered to Africans during the colonial period was not education for development, but education for underdevelopment (Rodney, 1974). By implication, the economic, political and cultural development of any human is dependent on the level and quality of educational development among its citizenry. The essence of education (formal or informal) therefore is to produce citizens who will be useful members of the society. It must create in them a disposition for personal autonomy, responsibility and relevant forms of life thoughts and actions. However, Uchem, Ngwa, & Asogwa (2014: 48) argue that "the merits of education … can only be realized if the educational system is such that integrates and addresses the particular needs and aspirations of all citizens within the mainstream educational system; irrespective of physical, socio-economic and political status or background, giving everybody a sense of belonging." This means that a successful and productive educational system is that which is devoid of inequalities, discrimination and exclusion. According UNESCO (2008), societies characterized by poverty, large inequalities, discrimination and exclusion, are on the wrong path to development; and if education systems are characterized by inequalities, discrimination and exclusion, they contribute to increasing existing social and economic disparities and also deviate from the path of equitable and sustainable development which nations are thriving to achieve. It is on these bases that global education stakeholders

working in collaboration with some agencies of the United Nations Organizations (UNO) were able to put together instruments aimed at addressing inequalities, discrimination and exclusion in education around the world – thus the concept of inclusive education.

2.1 Inclusive Education

Scholars have defined inclusive education varyingly, depending on the context in which they are looking at the concept. Kochoung (2010) says inclusive education is about transforming educational systems to accommodate the needs of children with special needs. According to him, it is not just about inserting children with disabilities into existing structures, but adapting the structures to reflect their different needs. In support of the above definition, Wiles and Bondi (2011) posit that inclusion involves keeping special needs students in regular education classrooms and making support services available to the students rather than bringing the students without support services. UNESCO has however been more inclusive in its definition of inclusive education. UNESCO (2009), perceives it as a process of transforming schools and other centers of learning to accommodate all learners including boys and girls, learners from ethnic and linguistic minorities, rural populations, those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS, those with disabilities and difficulties in learning and as well provide learning opportunities for all. UNESCO (2011: 3) further complements the above definition by seeing inclusion in education as "a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion from education and from within education." In this paper, inclusive education is seen as an anti-discriminatory educational innovation. It is aimed at increasing the attendance, involvement, and achievements of ALL pupils/students in mainstream educational establishments, regardless of their physical, social, political, economic and cultural status. In order words, inclusive education is the process whereby every child of school age is offered the opportunity to equitable quality education in mainstream educational settings. Inpost-apartheid South African context, the repeal of the Bantu Education Act of 1954, promotion of gender, disability and other minority education in adapted regular schools is a reflection of inclusive education practice. It is therefore concerned with the restructuring of physical environments, infrastructures, beliefs, cultures, policies, and practices in educational systems that respond to the diversity of all learners within the community or society.

The principle of inclusive education was officially adopted in1990 and 1994 through the UNESCO sponsored Jomtien Declaration on "Education for All" and Salamanca Statement on inclusive education respectively.The 1994 World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality in Salamanca, Spain particularly called on all governments to give highest priority to inclusive education (UNESCO, 1994). The idea was further supported by theUnited Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons withDisabilities through it declaration on participation and equality for all in the daily functioning of society (UNESCO: 2005). According to Uchem, Ngwa and Asogwa (2014), the UNESCO and other education related agencies of the UN have made significant contributions in the advancement of this innovation around the world in both policy and action. The 1990 Jomtien Declaration on Education For ALL (EFA), the UNESCO Salamanca statement (1994) on Special Needs Education, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) (2006), and the 2009 New UNESCO Policy Guidelines on Inclusive Education, are some of the major international legislations on inclusive education. UNESCO has also gone further to create special chairs for the promotion of inclusive education around the globe and the organization of conferences and forums to assess and monitor the progress of member states in the implementation of inclusive education legislations. One of those forums was the World Education Forum 2000, that held in Dakar where member states of UNESCO adopted the Dakar Framework for Action, and committed themselves to achieving the global objectives on 'Education For All,' through the implementation of the various legislations on inclusive education (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2011).

According to Ahuja (2000), no blue print exists for the practice of inclusive education because it is a dynamic, organic, cultural and context-specific process. Thus, since the inception of inclusive education, most developed countries have struggled with not only effective inclusionof students with special needs and disabilities, but alsochildren of ethnic, racial and language minorities, politically or geographically disfavoured groups, and groups of low socio-economic levels in the context of their societies (Motala, 2000). However, Stubbs (2008) argued that in Africa a lot had been achieved in policy adaptation in inclusion but very little done towards implementation due to the interference of negative attitudes, traditional beliefs, cultural practices and sometimes the absence of the political will from politicians. Available literature reveals that South Africa, though with an abysmal history of exclusion has to some extent made practical progress in the implementation of inclusive education than other African countries. In the subsequent paragraphs, we briefly examined the state of education in Apartheid-South Africa, inclusive education efforts in Post-Apartheid South Africa and the possible lessons for Nigeria and Cameroon

2.0   Education in Apartheid South Africa

Non-white South Africans may have pardoned their white counterparts for the segregatory and discriminatory

treatment meted out on them during the apartheid era. But one thing is clear; so long as there is history, the apartheid experience is one of those occurrences in the history of South Africa that will never be written off the memories of generations to come especially the nonwhite South Africans. By definition, apartheid was a policy of racial seclusion and segregation practiced between 1948 and the early 1990s by a white minority government in South Africa (Thompson, 2001). The word apartheid which can be literally translated as segregation, exclusion and isolation, represented the rigid racial division and dichotomy between the governing white minority population and the black majority population. According to Edelstein (2002), the National Party introduced apartheid as part of their campaign in the 1948 elections, and following the triumph of the party at the polls, apartheid became the governing political policy for the country up to the 1990s.

During the apartheid, citizens were classified into three major racial groups-white; Bantu, or black Africans; and Coloured, also referred to as people of mixed descent. Later, Asians were included as a fourth category (Thompson, 2001).Lawswere passed to regulate where citizens belonging to each group could live, the jobs they could hold, and the type and quality of education they could access. The apartheid laws also prohibited social contacts and interactions between races (especially between whites and blacks), authorized segregated public facilities, and objected to any political representation of black South Africans in government. The government considered any open opposition to the policy as a communist view and responded with strict security legislation that tuned the nation into a police state (Thompson, 2001, Edelstein, 2002).

Bantu Education Act, 1954

Understanding the place of education in the effective implementation of any government policy or program, the apartheid government in South Africa was able to exploit the education sector for the effective implementation of the apartheid policy. This was done by passing the Bantu Education Act in 1954 which could be described as the most discriminatory and exclusive education policy in world history.

The Bantu Education Act succeeded in establishing a legal separation of the races within an educational system characterized by inequality. The curriculum put in place for each racewas ahierarchical reflection of the apartheid ideology, with priority giving to white education while black students were prepared for a life of inferiority, subjugation and slavery (Kallaway, 2002).At the primary level, black pupilsreceived training in weaving, cleaning, needlework,clay work, andgardening. In white secondary schools, students had the choice ofgoing through "a strictly academic course or the general or practical courses, while nonwhite students were subjected to follow a strictly academic course" only (D'Amato, p. 69, 1966 cited in Kallaway, 2002). According to Edelstein, (2002) equal curriculum in an apartheid educational system was irrelevant. Addressing the Senate after the creation of the Bantu Education Act, Dr. Verwoerd, former Prime Minister and psychologist, said:

> If the native in South Africa today in any kind of school … is being taught to expect that he will live his adult life under a policy of equal rights, he is making a big mistake…There is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. Within his own community, however, all doors are open…it is of no avail for him to receive a training which has as its aim absorption in the European community, where he cannot be absorbed. Until now he has been subjected to a school system which drew him away from his own community and misled him by showing him the green pastures of European society…".

It is clearly seen from the above statement that the apartheid educational system valued the white citizens over the native. This discrimination was further demonstrated by providing white children with free and compulsory education. The black children on their part were not required to attend school, and in cases where they attended, they were to pay for it. The largest chunk of educational funds was spent on white schools, with R740 per white student, while only R91 was spent on each black student, coupled with overcrowding in black schools (Kallaway, 2002).

Plight of Persons with disabilities/special needs

Though in an already disadvantaged and excluded position, black children with disabilities and other special needs also suffered the same racial discrimination established under the Bantu Education Act. According to Muthukrishna & Shoeman (2000), the inequity among children with disabilities was complicated by the categorical system for special needs education established during this period.By this system persons with special needs were labeled based on their category of impairment and separated from their peers. The majority of black students received very little or no services in this categorical system. Rowland (2004) asserts that; the plight of persons with disabilities in South Africa became a larger political issue after the 1976 Soweto student protests thatescalated into a violent confrontation with government security outfits with thousands injured, many of whom became permanently disabled. Rowland, who is a white disabled man and key figure in the disability rights movement, writes in his book, *Nothing About Us Without Us (2004)* that; "the rising militancy all around from the fight against apartheid, spilled over into the disability rights movement and gave it its liberation aspect" (p. 162). It became difficult therefore to isolate the disability rights movement from the fight against apartheid or

exclusive governance in the South African society.

From the above review, it is expressly clear that education in apartheid South Africa explicitly contradicted all UN resolutions adopted at the 1960 Conference against Discrimination in Education and other conventions. A former World Bank president, Robert McNamara agreed to this view in his 1982 visit to South Africa when he said: "I have seen very few countries in the world that have such inadequate educational conditions. I was shocked at what I saw in some of the rural areas and homelands. Education is of fundamental importance. There is no social, political, or economic problem you can solve without adequate education." This statement was corroborated by the Congress of South African Students in 1984 when it argued that: "The education we receive is meant to keep the South African people apart from one another, to breed suspicion, hatred and violence, and to keep us backward. Education is formulated so as to reproduce this society of racism and exploitation." Based on the above exclusive and discriminatory atmosphere in the education and other sectors of society, and mindful of the importance of quality inclusive education in a post-apartheid society, it was therefore necessary for successive governments in post-apartheid South Africa to put in place adequate education reforms for an inclusive South African Society.

2.1. Inclusive Education effortsin Post-Apartheid South Africa

The dismantling of the apartheid system in the early 1990s marked a new dispensation in the South African educational system. The farther of Post-Apartheid South Africa; Nelson Mandela probably recognized the importance of inclusive education and governance in the new South Africa when he described education as the highest instrument for transformation of society. Consequently, the first official step toward an inclusive society was in December 1996 When Mandela promulgated into law a new South African constitution. The constitution established a federal system with a strong central government based on majority rule, and it contained guarantees of the rights of minorities and of freedom of expression(Edelstein, 2002). Chapter twoof the constitution on the bill of rights constitutes a comprehensive rejection of all apartheid policies. Section 29(1) of the constitution states: "Everyone has the right to basic education including adult basic education; and to further education, which the state through reasonable measures must make progressively available and accessible"

This constitutional principle therefore embraced all about constructing an inclusive model of education. The constitution articulates clearly the notions of non-discrimination in section 9(3, 4, & 5) *(RSA, 1996)*. Uchem, Ngwa, &Asogwa (2014: 48) argue that; "The merits of education … can only be realized if the educational system is such that integrates and addresses the particular needs and aspirations of all citizens within the mainstream educational system; irrespective of physical, socio-economic and political status or background, giving everybody a sense of belonging." It was probably out of conviction with the above view and the desire to work out the constitution that the Department of Education in collaboration with all education stakeholders began an inclusive reform process in the education sector.

2.1.1 Policy Formulation

The first effort towards achieving this was through the formulation of different policies to guide the process.The following could be regarded as a summarized version of legislations and institutionsleading to the implementation of inclusive education (Landsberg, Kruger and Swart, 2011): The White Paper on Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa (1995);the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996;the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (INDS) (1997);the National Commission on Special Education Needs and Training and The National Committee on Education Support Services (1997); the Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: building an inclusive education and training system (2001); the Draft National Disability Policy Framework and guidelines for the implementation of National Disability Framework (2008) and the UN Convention on rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) 2006 ratified by the government in 2007.

The White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: building an inclusive education and training system (2001) was a clear policy document for the implementation of inclusive education in the nation. The document was a product of the two committees;National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training, and the National Committee on Education Support Services put in place by government to research on the inclusive educational needs of the South African society (DoE, 2001). The committees had in their report stated among other things that; the curriculum and the South African education system in general had failed to respond to the many different needs of learners. This caused large numbers of learners to drop out of school, or be pushed-out of school,or to fail at school. Through this White paper 6, the Department of Education committed itself to

> Promote education for all and foster the development of inclusive and supportive centers of
> learning that would enable all learners to participate actively in the education process so that
> they could develop and extend their potential and participate as equal members of society"
> (DoE, 2002: 8).

2.1.2 Inclusive Education Pilot Project

The next line of action by the Department of Education towards the implementation of the White Paper 6 was the

setting up of the Inclusive education Pilot Project named:"Resource and Training Program forEducator Development: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System." The project was carried out in collaboration withthe Provincial Departments of Education of: Eastern Cape, Kwa Zulu/Natal and North West Provinces' and was funded by the government of Denmark through the Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA)(Engelbrecht, 2006).

Training, Capacity building and the development of materials
The first step of the pilot project was capacity building for teachers, parentsand other related education officials. It should be noted that quality human resource is the most important resource for the success of any government policy. Consequently, capacity building was necessary because many teachers thought that children with special needs or learning difficulties had to be taught by teachers with special qualifications. Others did not understand that the learning problems of many children were caused by the way teachers taught them, or the school system, or even problems at home or in their communities, while some teachers felt that inclusive education was an extra burden since they did not understand that it was an important part of outcomes based education.

To attain proper capacity building, DoE (2002) and Engelbrecht (2006) reveal that training courses and learning materials were developed by teams of professionals from universities, communities and NGOs who consulted with teachers, disabled people's organizations (DPOs), other community organizations, education officials and other significant individuals who could provide knowledge and advice on the barriers to learning and how best to address them. The materials were developed through interactive and consultative processes as the training and capacity building program progressed. The motive was to ensure that the teachers, parents, education officials and other role players could also give feedback on whether the materials really focused on the actual needs in classrooms, schools and school communities. The role of Disable Peoples Organizations (DPOs) in the project cannot be over emphasized, as "…the involvement of the DPOs and people with disabilities in leadership positions in the project, helped to change attitudes towards people with disabilities. Seeing people with disabilities and parents involved in training and such activities has a major impact on people. They tend to confront their own negative attitudes and fears with very positive outcomes." (DoE, 2002: 66). The process was a huge success as the Department of Education reported that:

> The attitudes of parents, teachers and members of School Governing Bodies changed through the capacity building that occurred. They are now developing inclusive school policies, are aware that they need to make their schools more accessible, and are involved in poverty alleviation projects…Educators became aware of the barriers to learning that result in the exclusion of learners, and were equipped to overcome the discrimination and exclusion experienced by some learners in the past, especially learners with disabilities. (DoE, 2002: 15 & 44)

Adapting School environments and infrastructures for accessibility to all
After training and building capacity for the inclusive project, the next move of the pilot study was to make schools and other educational institutions accessible to all categories of learners. Apart from government support, School Governing Bodies (SGBs), some teachers in collaboration with school principals and members of different communities raised money to upgrade their school infrastructure and facilities so that learners with special needs and other excluded minorities can have free access into the classrooms and in the school environments. Also in some schools, parents became involved in theconstruction of ramps to ease the movement of learners with disabilities in the school environment and classrooms (Engelbrecht, Howell and Bassat, 2002). The educational institutions also established inclusive admission procedures and poverty alleviation projects to help train learners, parents and community members on poverty alleviation techniques. The success of the inclusive education implementation at this level was thanks to the collaboration of educational institutions through the Institutional-level Support Teams (ISTs) which succeeded in developing a strong school-community partnership for the successful implementation of the program (Makoelle, 2012).

Inclusive Curriculum Reforms
Perhaps, the second most important reform in the South African education sector toward inclusive education after the training and building of capacity was the introduction of the outcome based curriculum. The importance of the curriculum in any educational system cannot be overemphasize, as it is the subject matter of what will be delivered to the people towards the transformation of society. Consequently,as part of the far reaching political, social and economic reformsdirectedtowards an egalitarian, strong and healthy society, the new South Africareplaced the former education policy with a constructivist, Outcomes Based Education (OBE) approach (Skuy et al. 2001:2). Themotive behind the new curriculum wasthe need to rise above the apartheid curriculum which perpetuated ethnic and cultural segregations. According to Gultig, Hoardley and Jansen (2002), Outcomes Based was projected to promote common citizenship and nationhood. The outcomes based curriculum therefore

allowed for therealization of the values and principles held by the new Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) founded on anegalitarian society and common citizenship, holding the values of human dignity, rights and freedom. OBE was aimed at providingnon-discriminatory basic and adult education for all,with a shift from a racially divided system which contributed to social inequality, to an open system with more permeable boundaries. It focused on a single National Qualifications Framework, with multiple learning pathways and characterized by the growth of new trans-disciplinary subjects and programs (Gultig, Hoardley and Jansen, 2002).

It is important to note that the outcomes based curriculum was inaugurated in 1997 andwas later followed by a revised version in 2005 known asthe National Curriculum Statement. The curriculum, as initially introduced was not easily received and implemented by educators. According to Gultig et al (2002:156) the outcome based curriculum was"elaborate, complex and bureaucratic". Even though the revised version was easy toimplement,it however remained the subject of debate amongst educators who had difficulty understanding a competence based curriculum as they had taught for many years using a curriculum that was systemic and contained regulatory features, with discrete subjects and disciplines. The new curriculum was intended to be a vehicle for inclusive education in post-apartheid South Africa.

3.0   Lessons for Nigeria and Cameroon

Nigeria and Cameroon are two African countries with a common border, people and a common history. These countries have all ratified the various United Nations Resolutions relating to inclusive education and education for all, and are expected to have been making efforts towards the implementation of these policies. The effective implementation of the policyby the Department of Education, South Africa serves as a veritable framework for these two countries that seem to have achieved very little in the implementation of the program, to apply the concept of policy borrowing. However, policy borrowing here is not a call for the replication of the South African model by the governments of both countries, but the adaptation of the policy to suit their local realities considering their African contexts. Consequently, there are aspects of the implementation process in the South African model that the Nigerian and Cameroon education stakeholders need to apply in both countries in consonant with the needs and aspirations of the two societies

The implementationof inclusive education in Nigeria has largely been achieved on paper than in practice. This is to say that a lot of energy has been dissipated on inclusive education literature by Nigerian education scholars than what has actually been practiced in schools. Also, the Nigerian government is believed to have made very good progress on policy formulation but the challenge remains the practical implementation of these policies.The Nigerian National Policy on Education (NPE) (2004) in section 10 clearly outlines inclusive rules guiding the education of special needs persons in Nigeria. Garba (2003: 191) also asserted that: "While countries within the advanced economies have gone beyond categorical provisions to full inclusion, Nigeria and most countries of Africa, are still grappling with the problem of making provisions for children with special needs especially those with handicaps, even on mainstreaming basis".To further support this view, Fakolade(2009) argued that Nigeria is known to have some of the best laws on inclusive education in Africa, but their implementation has remained the main problem due to different hindrances.

The situation in Cameroon is not very much different from what prevails in the Nigerian education sector.Law No. 83/013 of 21/07/1983 on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities advocated for the provision of quality access to education for children with special needs at all levels. In 2010, parliament passed law no. 2010/002 Of April 2010 relating to the education and welfare of persons with disabilities and other special needs. Despite the existence of these legislations, very little has been done in an attempt to implement them. However, it is only at institutional basis that one of the Anglo-Saxon universities (University of Buea) seems to be making some efforts to implement inclusive practices in the university (Ngwa, 2012).In September 2008, the University of Buea signed an agreement with the General Director of UNESCO on the establishment of a UNESCO Chair in Inclusive Education, to be appropriately located in the Faculty of Education of that university. The university was charged among other functions, with the provisions of an enabling environment and educational opportunities that will increase the participation of special needs persons in the politico-economic and social development of society after graduation (Tschombe, 2010). The office of the UNESCO chair has equally received material support from the UNESCO good will ambassador in Cameroon, who doubles as First Lady of the republic. This is however an isolated case in the country and so cannot be generalized to the whole nation.

Hargrove Erwin of the National Institute for Public Policy Studies, Vanderbilt University, USA, in 1980 postulated that; the implementation of any policy in society demands that the implementers bring to the physical what have been written in the policy or Act (Ngwa, 2012). The implication of the above is that Nigeria and Cameroon therefore cannot be said to have made good progress in the implementation of inclusive education, thus the need to learn from the South African experience.

The first and most important lesson for both Nigeria and Cameroon from the South African experience is the need for political leaders to exercise the political will and take proactive steps towards the implementation of the policies available. The inclusive story of post-apartheid South Africa is being told today because successive

political authorities had the political will and courage, in accordance with the bill of rights in the new constitution (Act 108 of 1996) to dismantle the exclusive system they met on ground. This is because, if both the Nigerian and Cameroon governments have responded to the needs of policy adaptions, then it can only the absent of the political will among implementers that can detract implementation.

The training and building of capacity among potential inclusive educators is another lesson for both Nigeria and Cameroon from the South African example. Fakolade (2009) and Ngwa (2012) both agree that; negative attitudes by the population towards minorities especially persons with disabilities, negative traditional believes and cultural practices are increasing hindrances to the implementation of inclusive education practices in the two countries. Training and building capacity of educators and other community leaders will therefore help in the sensitization of the ignorant population. By so doing, the population will embrace the policies and thus mount pressure on government to be proactive in the implementation of the policies.

The promotion of partnership between academic institutions and communities in the implementation of inclusive education practices in the education sector is another initiative for consideration by both the Cameroon and Nigerian governments. This is important because, community leaders and members of different communities are in the best position to spread inclusive education practices since they better understand their various communities.

Above all, the effective movement from theory to practice in the implementation of inclusive education in Cameroon and Nigeria will only be achieved when both governments are able to bring its citizens to understanding of; respecting differences and promoting diversities. This is what South African citizens were made to understand after the end of apartheid. Even though Nigeria and Cameroon are not known to be countries divided on the bases of race, a lot of suspicious living has in recent times been noted among the predominantly Christian South and Muslim north due to security challenges engineered by religious extremists. Religion there becomes a treat to inclusive leaving in this case. Writing on inclusive education and sustainable peace in Africa, Uchem, Ngwa and Asogwa (2014: 51) argued that the decision by some state governments in Nigeria to hand over the basic and secondary education sectors to missionaries is not only "…detrimental to the educational future of innocent children from poor and unrelated religious backgrounds, but contradictory to inclusive education practices, and dangerous to the peaceful co-habitation of children and citizens with diverse religious dogmas and philosophies."They further opined that religious fundamentalism and extremism is one of the factors that has threatened the security and peace of Nigerian since independence. The writers therefore advocate for secular schooling in the nation to promote social interaction among children from different religious backgrounds as a move towards inclusive education and innovation for sustainable peace building.

4.0 Conclusion

The paper has successfully examined inclusive education practices in post-apartheid South Africa and the lessons for another two African countries – Nigeria and Cameroon. It should be noted however that the South African example in this case was not by any means considered a perfect picture of inclusive education implementation in Africa, but a genuine and progressive example that could be borrowed by other countries trying to achieve same. The South African experience has its limitations and challenges which the Department of Education and other South African education agencies have all agreed to and the need for redress. As seen in the paper, inclusive education is fundamental to the building of an inclusive socio-economic and political society. Consequently, as the world transits from the millennium to sustainable development goals post-2015, it is necessary that African nations in particular intensify practical efforts towards the building and practice of inclusive education systems that will help fast tract the attainment of the global development agenda.

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