

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE EDUCATION OF THEIR
CHILDREN WHO ARE BLIND IN ASUOGYA D/A JUNIOR HIGH
SCHOOL IN THE JAMAN SOUTH DISTRICT IN THE BRONG
AHAFO REGION OF GHANA**



ATTA GYAN

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JAMAN SOUTH DISTRICT IN THE BRONG AHAFO REGION OF GHANA**



**A DISSERTATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION,
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OF GRADUATE STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA, IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD
OF A DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION**

DECEMBER, 2017

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Atta Gyan, declare that this Dissertation with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works, which have been identified and acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:

DATE:



SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of Dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: DR. YAO YEKPLE

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

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My profound thanks go to the true God, creator of the universe and everything therein, for giving me life, strength, and wisdom to carry out this thesis and seeing me through the programme successfully.

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To my family, I say God bless you for your support and prayers.



DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to the Almighty God for seeing me through successfully.

I also dedicate it to my dear and lovely parents, Madam Agnes Korkor and my father Stephen Gyan, my wife Serwaa Rose Mary, my sons and the rest of my family and friends for their prayers and maximum support which have resulted in the successful completion of this thesis.



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ABSTRACT

This descriptive study explored parental involvement in the education of their children who are blind at Asuogya D/A Junior High School in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana. Thirty-five participants made up of fifteen parents and twenty teachers responded to the interview items and the questionnaire. The study employed convenient and purposive sampling techniques to sample the parents and teachers for the study. Data was analyzed using SPSS to obtain simple frequencies and percentages for the questionnaire data and thematic analysis for the interview data. Results of the study showed that some parents involve themselves in the education of their wards in the school but not at an appreciate level. Again, it was revealed that, the head teacher and teachers in the school were not cooperative to parents who wish to involve themselves in the education of their wards. It was recommended that the District Director of Education should periodically organize in-service training to head teachers and in teachers in the district on how to cooperate with parents and promoted welcoming environment to enhance parental participation.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Parents look forward to having a baby who is a “normal”, strong and healthy. The arrival of a child with disability in the family however brings about crisis which most families finding difficult to cope with. These, families may therefore be in need of support from various professionals who can help them to cope with the child’s needs. They need services of professionals who are committed to supporting and helping children with disabilities and working closely with parents for the progress of both the child and their parents. According to Mba (1995), children with disabilities are children who have different sorts of impairments, ranging from blindness, deafness, intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities to behaviour disorders.

The moment a child with a disability is born into a family, parents automatically need to assume the role of an educator; trainer and instructor so that the child can develop socialize skills, psychological skills, and linguistic skills, among others (Sokale, 1996).

Parenting even the “normal” child can be a challenge, and with children with disabilities, it becomes more difficult for parents to feel adequate in their parenting skills. Parenting a child with disabilities, most especially for the first time, can give parents some psychological problems, but they should be able to do whatever is possible to bring out the best out of their child with a disability.

The family and the parents in particular, need to enhance the development of the child in terms of time, contact and responsibility. Parents are the primary care providers and are responsible for securing adequate care for their children (Oyewumi, 2001).

According to Hallahan and Kauffman (2000), parents often have insights regarding the characteristics and needs of their children that can be helpful in devising treatment and educational programmes.

Parental contributions to the academic performance of their children with disabilities are becoming a major issue since they have as many responsibilities in ensuring quality education for their children. Parental contribution in schooling can lead to real academic benefits for their children. Also teachers may pay more attention to pupils or children whose parents are involved in the school. Parents' involvements in education of their children with disabilities may be varied and may be due to the fact that they want to develop the cognitive domain of their children so as to be prominent people in future or for their children to be morally upright and spiritually strong.

For a long time, there have been arguments about factors that influence students' achievement. Some researchers attributed students' achievement to the school; others indicated that the school makes little impact on academic outcome. Other researchers noted that the effective teacher is the only one who can play the main role in terms of student progress. All the factors (viz., teacher, school, context, classroom context and the community around the school) contribute to or impact on students' achievement. The school factors, which influence students, include type of professional leadership, learning environment, high expectation, effective reinforcement, monitoring student progress, and parent-school relationships.

The effective teaching or teacher characteristics are “lesson clarity, instructional variety, teacher task orientation and engagement in the learning process and student success rate” (Borich, 2000). The effective teacher possesses such characteristics as (1) efficient use of time; (2) good relationships with students; (3) provides positive

feedback; (4) has a high student success rate; and (5) in general, provides support for students with and without disabilities.

After two decades of global advocacy following the International Year of Disabled Persons in 1981, especially during the UN Decade of Disabled People (UNESCO, 1993), the majority of an estimated 150 million children with disabilities throughout the world remain deprived of learning opportunities. Despite advances in education, less than five percent of children with disabilities in developing countries are enrolled in schools. Most children with disabilities are silent and invisible members of many communities. In addition, most of these children are often at risk of abuse, exploitation and neglect. Article 23 of the Convention on the Rights of Children, declares the right of children with disabilities to enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which promote self-reliance, and facilitate the child's active participation in the community. It also states the right to special care, education, health care, training, rehabilitation, employment preparation and recreation opportunities; all these shall be designed in a manner conducive to the child achieving the fullest possible social integration and individual development, including his or her cultural and spiritual development. It is in the light of this that children with disabilities in schools in Ghana need peaceful mind to concentrate and study to achieve their future goals.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

For teaching and learning to be more effective, there is a need for parental contribution in the education of their children including those with disabilities. However it seems some parents do not get involved in the education of their children who are blind. In addition, many parents seem not to realize the influence of their

participation in their children's education. Furthermore, it appears some parents face some challenges in their involvement in their children education.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to find out the extent to which parents were involved in the education of their children with visual impairments and blindness in Asuogya D/A Junior High School in the Jaman District of the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were:

- To find out the extent to which parents were involved in the education of their children who are blind at Asuogya D/A Junior High School in Jaman District of the Brong- Ahafo Region of Ghana.
- To find out how parental involvement in the education of their children who are blind influence their academic performances in the school.
- To find out what challenges parents encounter in their involvement in the education of their children who are blind.
- To find out the ways for improving parental involvement in the education of their children who are blind

1.5 Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following question

1. To what extent are parents involved in the education of their children who are blind in Asuogya D/A Junior High School in the Jamann District in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana?
2. In what ways do parental involvements in the education of their children who are blind influence their academic performances in the school?
3. What challenges do parents encounter in their involvement in the education of their children who are blind in the school?
4. What are the ways for improving parental involvement in the education of their children who are blind?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The results of this study would help in finding out the extent to which parents involve themselves in education of their children who are blind in the school. This would enable parents of children who are blind to realize the impact they can make on the education of their children's education. The results of the study would also enable parents to identify the challenges they face in educating their children, and share information on how to overcome those challenges. Moreover, the results might lead to increased public interest in the education of children who are blind. Finally, it would add to further research or serve as a reference material for subsequent studies.

1.7 Delimitation

The research was limited to Asuogya D/A Junior High School in the Jaman South District in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana. The researcher was a teacher in the school at the time the study was conducted, and had suspected the lack of

involvement among parents of children with visual impairments and blindness who were enrolled in the school.

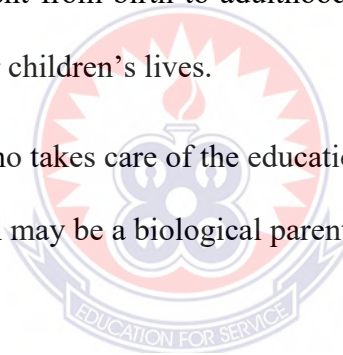
1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

To make reading of this study easy, the researcher has defined the following terms as a guide:

Children who are blind: is a term used for complete or nearly complete vision loss which causes the person difficulties with normal daily activities, such as driving, reading, socializing and walking.

Parental involvement: the participation of parents in every facet of children's education and development from birth to adulthood, recognizing that parents are the primary influence in their children's lives.

Parent: An individual who takes care of the educational needs of a child and cares for the child. Then individual may be a biological parent, a relative, or a foster parent.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents literature reviewed for the study. The following areas were covered:

1. Parental involvement in the education of children who are blind
2. Influence of parental involvement in the education of children who are blind
3. Challenges parents face in the education of their children who are blind
4. Improving parental involvement in the education of their children who are blind

2.1 Parental Involvement in the Education of Children who are Blind

Parents are the blood relations of a particular child. The way children who are blind react and adjust to the school environment depends on the ways they were treated by their parents. If a child who is blind is showered with love, interest, acceptance, freedom, and understanding, that child will be better adjusted to his environment than another child with blindness who experienced hatred, guilt, discomfort, disharmony, shame, condemnation, and parental recrimination.

The moment a child with blindness is born into the family, parents automatically assume the role of educators, and since education is the systematic training and instruction to develop a human being intellectually, socially, psychologically, linguistically, economically, politically and religiously, they should be ready to shoulder these responsibilities without any resentment (Ocloo, 2001)

According to Ocloo (2003), parenting so-called “normal” children can be a challenge and when it is necessary to deal with children with special needs, it may become more difficult for parents to feel adequate in their parenting skills. In parenting a child who is blind, most especially for the first time, parents are not expected to be a perfect

being who can solve the problem of their children in a day, but should be able to do whatever is expected of them. American Association of School Administrators (2004) concluded that perfection is not within the grasp of ordinary human beings but it is quite possible to be good enough parents – that is parents who raise the child well.

There are different categories of disability conditions. Those conditions include visual impairments, hearing impairments, learning disability, behaviour disorders, developmental disability, intellectual disability, and speech and language impairments. For all categories of disability conditions, parents' involvement from the earliest years plays a decisive part in the children's future development. Parents should provide them with nursery education, good home training and serve as advocates in respect of the rights of their children. For instance, parental involvement with a child with hearing impairments should be taken as seriously as parental involvement with a child with intellectual disability or a child with cerebral palsy.

2.1.1 Home training

The home has become the site for beginning education for the children with blindness. In order for the child to be able to benefit extensively from the school and vocational training centres, parents should be able to compliment the activities in the home with the activities in the school. Obi (2004), for instance, stated that the kitchen seems to be the best location in the house for the education of the young hearing visual child. The many activities associated with meals and snacks provide numerous opportunities for parents-child communication.

Celesle (2007) noted that children who are not spoken to, by live, and responsive adults who are not answered, will stop asking questions. They will become incurious,

and children who are not told stories and who are not read to will have few reasons for wanting to learn to read.

This is simply the study of the mind in relation to the life an organized community and whether a child who is blind, becomes part of the educational and vocational training community or not, depends largely upon the roles of the parents. Obi (2004) maintained that the extent to which the child with limited vision becomes a successful participating member of the real world is in direct proportion to the degree to which he is accepted by his family, his school, his community, and also the degree to which the child is capable of accepting himself as a worthy person.

A child with visual impairment must be allowed to explore his environments without being policed most of the time. He must be given ample opportunity to participate in games, farming, singing, visitation and reading. All children have their areas of strengths and weaknesses, and it is the responsibility of parents to build on their child's strengths.

According to Dove (2001) the presence of newspapers, magazines, books, a dictionary and a computer helps to create a positive home setting. Even when these resources are in short supply, reading to a child and asking the child to read to the parent are crucial activities for the development of literacy. A great deal of research confirms a strong relationship between parents reading to their children and the development of reading proficiency. According to Tracy (2003), there is an important connection between children's reading to their parents and reading achievement, especially if the parents guide and correct the young readers. Unfortunately, many households in Ghana, especially low income homes, have few books in total and even fewer that are appropriate and interesting to children. Children from these homes

arrive at school with surprisingly little experience with books. At the same time, many parents lack the skills to guide their children's reading or school work.

The opportunities for parents to stay intensively involved in school have greater influence on the academic work of their children. This is because teachers may pay more attention to students or pupils whose parents are involved in the school programmes. Epstein (2000) indicates that it is advantageous for parents to be involved in the running of their schools as there is a chance that the school will develop a strong sense of identity since what is taking place in the school will be a reflection of the community at large. Parents' skills and interests can be used in conjunction with what the educators are doing in order to enrich the school environment in planning and implementing the school curriculum.

Aboagye (2002) was of the view that once parents are involved in educational matters, they will be able to support and reinforce the learners' learning in the home environment. That is parents tend to have a great understanding and thus appreciate the complexities of schools if they have firsthand experience of the school. This inevitably fosters the development of common purposes between all stakeholders and parents in particular, and will realize that they have legal and long-term responsibility for their children. As such, they should take active part in making decisions that affect their children's live. Shared decision-making also involves accountability, so the number of legal actions taken by parents against schools will be greatly reduced.

According to Sofoluwe (2007), the Parents Teacher Association (PTA) is a voluntary and welfare association that supports the child and the school. The PTA acts as a veritable link between the home and the school for the upbringing of the child. The PTA has a crucial role to play in the process of improving the standard of education.

According to Sofoluwe, these roles include fund raising activities, and involvement in school decision making and information dissemination. In general, the PTA, among other things, (a) provides an effective link between the school and the home, (b) shows intimate interest in and concern for the affairs of the school and ensures the achievement of high moral standards and academic excellence, (c) gives moral emotional and financial support to the school, (d) encourages cooperation and understanding among teachers, parents and pupils for the progress of the children, and (e) does such other things as may be effectively influence the tone and efficiency of the school.

In engaging parents in meaningful programmes in schools, Yap (2000) established that, the most successful parents' participation efforts are those which offer parents a variety of roles in the context of a well-organized and long-lasting programme. Parents will need to be able to choose a range of activities which accommodate different schedules, preferences and capabilities. As part of the planning process, teachers and administrators will need to assess their own readiness for involving parents and determine how they wish to engage and utilize them. The need to call parents and family support for school has long been recognized. For example, Epstein (2000) affirmed that school-home partnership activities help families to obtain information on child development. They also establish conditions at home to support their children as learners at each grade level. Epstein observed that parental encouragement, activities and interest at home and participation in schools and classrooms affect children's achievement, attitudes and aspirations.

In Ghana, apart from the PTA, members of the School Management Committee (SMC), which by law must include parents, control general policy of schools and ensure effective management by headteachers. The SMC serves as the mouth piece through which the citizens provide the necessary input for the school. It sends letters to parents frequently informing them about concerns of the school and what is expected of them. The SMC educates all who have anything to do with the school on matters of policies that affect the school (Bortey-Doku & Aryetey, 2003).

According to Aboagye (2002), the introduction of decentralization in the educational system of Ghana has brought school management to the door step of district assemblies and committees. Such groups include Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA), School Management Committee (SMC), and District Education Oversight Committee (DEOCs). The involvement of community members is considered so crucial that a special position named “Community Participation Coordinator” has been created at the district education level to serve as a liaison between the education office and all stakeholders in the every community where a public school is located.

Teachers’ attitudes play an important role in the success of children with blindness. Teachers have a dramatic impact on how children who are disabled feel about themselves and how children without disabilities deal with individuals with disabilities (Johnson, Jr., 2005). Children who are blind tend to be seen as less desirable, so teachers can also influence the acceptance of persons with blindness..

Positive teacher intervention efforts and structured, long-term contact with other students with special needs may serve as viable means to breaking down barriers (Fenrich & Peterson, 1984). Johnson Jr. (2005) found that perhaps one of the most important findings concerning teacher impact is that, if a child is perceived in a

negative manner by a teacher, it is possible that the child may accept the negative belief for his or her own.

According to Handson (2004), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policies, which are supposed to bring an end to the long history of oppression against individuals with disabilities, revealed that many people have negative perceptions about people with disabilities. For instance, Handson found that ADA's efforts to alleviate discrimination in education have not hindered teachers' negative perception of children with special education needs, as mirrored in various psychological researches on special education. Handson further stated that during the pre-school and school years, the fact that a teacher and/or other school personnel tend to play the role of an alternative parent for the child with blindness, who would instill societal values and help with the child's identity formation, triggers immediate concern especially when these authoritative figures have negative perceptions of the child.

Finally, Tur-Kaspa and Colleagues (2000), who conducted another multidimensional study with 77 prospective special education teachers, found that these undergraduates' attitudes towards individuals with disabilities rest upon a positive to negative continuum in which people with deafness are more favoured than people with physical disabilities, while people with physical disabilities are more favoured than people with developmental delays; and the least favoured are people with social and emotional disabilities. Thus, educators' attitudes towards students with blindness are most likely mixture of optimisms and pessimisms. Attitudes may be conducive to an educator's lack of a prior involvement with school-aged children with blindness.

2.2 Influence of Parental Involvement in the Education of Children who are Blind

Epstein (2000) pointed out that teachers and parents have often rated each other more positively when teachers use frequent parent involvement practices. Teachers rate parents in helping with children's learning activities at home, while parents rate teachers' high in the overall teaching ability and interpersonal skills. Keith (2006) in his research found out that parents' involvement in education has social behaviour. That is, active parent involvement is more beneficial than passive involvement, but passive forms of involvement are better than no involvement at all.

School personnel benefit from improved rapport that generally accompanies increased parent involvement. This rapport, so often expressed in parents, increase a willingness to support schools with their labour and resources during fundraising activities or special projects. And certainly, the many ways in which parents' involvement benefit pupils achievement, attitudes and behaviour have a positive impact on school staff. Comer (2003) established from a study that schools ought to be aware that parent's involvement support pupils learning, behaviour and attitudes regardless of factors such as parent income, educational background and whether or not parents are employed. That is, the involvement of parents who are well educated have large amount of time to be involved has not been shown to be more beneficial than the involvement of less advantaged parents. All parents' involvement works and works well.

Epstein (2001) observed that there appears to be relationship between the age of the child and the forms of parental involvement. Greater efforts to involve parents are seen at the pre-school and primary levels. Efforts here focus on assisting in homework

and reading to children at home. Teachers of young children are the most frequent users of parents' involvement techniques. Sattles (2002) also noted that parents' involvement is effective in fostering achievement and effective gain at all primary levels and schools are encouraged to engage and maintain this involvement throughout the junior high school and senior high schools.

Research has overwhelmingly demonstrated that parents' involvement in children's learning is positively related to achievement. Further research shows that the more intensively parents are involved in their children's learning, the more beneficial are the achievement effects (Moles, 2001). Along similar lines, researchers have found out that the more active forms of parent involvement produce greater achievement benefits than the passive ones. That is, if parents receive phone calls, read and sign written communications from the school, and perhaps attend and listen during parent-teacher association meeting, greater benefit accrue than the case with no parents involvement is at all (Comer, 2003). However, greater achievement benefits are noted when parents' involvement is active, particularly when parents work with their children at home. Certainly, but also when they help out in classroom or on field trips, and so on.

Keith (2006) also noted that the earlier in a child's educational process parents' involvement begins the more powerful the effect will be. Educators frequently point out the critical role of the home and family environment in determining children success, and it appears that the sooner this influence is harnessed, the sooner the greater likelihood of higher pupil achievement. Early childhood educational programmes with strong parent involvement components have ample and demonstrated the effectiveness of this approach (Yap, 2000). Moles (2001) also

concluded that schools with the most successful parents' involvement in programmes are those which offer a variety of ways parents can participate. School authorities derive diverse benefits when parents and members of the community are actively involved in school programmes. Mankoe (1996) reported of parents' involvement in communities, where schools in the district had accomplish what they might otherwise not have been able to accomplish for the schools. One significant achievement was the implementation of a new educational reform in 1987. The implementation of the programme required a large pool of resources; including, qualified instructors with new scientific, technological and vocational skills, new textbooks, stationery, workshop and equipment. Through P.T.A. many communities are now motivated to provide building materials and communal labour to implement the new school programme. Leaders of the various communities lead their citizens to mobilize more resources for their schools. Many communities initially constructed workshops equipped with benches and tools with which pupils learned practical skills such as carpentry, masonry, leatherwork, wood carving and various types of art and crafts. Wealthy citizens are also encouraged to donate materials such as classroom furniture, sports equipment and trophies to schools. These voluntary gestures can motivate the teachers to work harder than before.

Parent involvement enables community members and teachers to build positive attitudes among themselves and these contribute to the welfare and the academic achievement of the pupils in the community Epstein (2000) pointed out that parent involvement can also assist school –community to build positive ethos – the commendable and distinguishing set of values, nature, beliefs and attitudes that characterize school development. Distinguishing values include academic excellence, high pupil discipline, effective classroom instructions, retention school and low

dropout rate. The reason is that parents are required to complement the efforts of the school in matters of learning character training and so forth. Thus, Sofoluwe (2007) pointed out that responsiveness to parents is an essential component of school and community improvement efforts, and positive community ethos, with utility for teachers and administrators.

Parents involvement help to deal amicably with some of the conflicts that have sometimes required the law courts to help resolve. True involvement means the type of education in which partners strive to understand the issue at stake. Such understanding is an important starting point in dealing with home-school conflicts. In the absence of understanding among partners, suspicion arises in which one partner feel mistreated. Continuous feeling of mistreatment arising from non-collaboration often requires external intervention which parents may wish to avoid. Therefore, one major value of effective involvement is to avoid external intervention as far as practicable (Swap, 2000). In the city of Coventry in the UK, Widlake and Maclcod (2005) observed that parents made contributions towards the psychological and educational development of their children with support from their schools. Through collaboration extra resources were allocated to some disadvantaged schools. Widlake and Macleod described positive results in reading, writing and language skills, with adventurous and an unusual degree of parents participation. Many cases show that with persistent education and motivation, community members get involve to provide increased input and output for their schools.

In whatever school a child with special needs is placed, the parents must continue to play their collaborative role. In 2001, Ocloo wrote that throughout Ghana, there was a great acceptance of the view that parents must work closely with the school if children with deafness were to attain remarkable levels of their undertakings.

The mission of the school will not be complete as long as it does not become a school for parents. As a result, parents should strive hard to:-

1. Become an active member of Parents/Teacher Association and Parents Advisory Councils.
2. Help with a project in or out of the classroom.
3. Visit the school to talk about his profession.
4. Invite the class to visit your work place.
5. Attend the school board meeting regularly.
6. Make room for the school's weekly consultation.

Furthermore, parents should counsel their children with special needs to know the importance of education, the need for the blind to learn Braille and typing, the need for children with deafness, intellectual disabilities and learning disabilities to learn different methods of communication (Ocloo, 2001).

Eventually, when a child with special needs is finally taken to school, parents should not leave all the tasks to the school alone. They should be part of the system; they are to monitor the progresses that have been achieved so far by their child, so as to instill self-confidence and self-esteem in the children placed in public schools.

2.3 Challenges Parents Faced in the Education of their Children who are Blind

According to Mandell and Fiscuss (2000), sometimes depending upon the severity of the disability, goals previously set for the child need to be readjusted or abandoned. When this happens, parents usually realize that their responsibilities have increased in terms of how to support the child, because most of those children have limited support needs or intermittent support needs. Parents usually seek explanations for their having a child with blindness. They usually get reasons such as mental discord, unusual sexual practices, and violation of taboo or disrespect for totems, witchcraft, and juju from enemies using amulets to charm the unborn child.

According to Ocloo (2001), in Ghana, because of low socio-economic status of some parents, coupled with derogatory stigmatization that goes with blindness, most parents shirk their responsibilities in the education of children with visual impairments. Sometimes, parents get frustrated because of poverty or impoverishment resulting from the child predicament. Also the distance between schools and home towns of most children is so great that a parent with poor financial status may find it difficult to visit the children regularly, honour relevant meetings and contribute his or her quota as a responsible parent.

Research and available literature indicate that no parent and family; particularly in Africa, will like to have a child with blindness. Parents who have children with blindness usually go through various forms of stress. There are stories in Ghana and elsewhere in Africa where families had eliminated or hidden their children's disabilities from the public for fear of public scorn and intimidation. (Oppong, 2003)

There are various challenges encountered by parents of children with blindness which shirk their responsibilities in the education of their child. The most common

challenges include stigmatization and the low socio-economic status of some parents. Ocloo (2001) observed that the state of increasing severity of the impairment also places some parents in a dilemma as to whether to seek cure for their wards or continue to invest in their education since the future is uncertain.

Education is a basic right of every human being, including children with special education needs. They have right to qualitative education, and right to equal educational opportunities as their counterparts without special needs (FGN, 2004). Education is an equalizing factor as it equips persons with special education needs with skills that will empower them to participate, to the best of their abilities, in society as every other person. However, if there are differences in the access to and the quality of education persons with special needs are provided with in the regular classroom, it may pose some challenges to the actualization of the millennium development goals.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the world's time bound and qualified targets aimed at promoting gender equality, education and environmental sustainability. One of the priority areas in the MDGs which will help in the fulfillment of the other goals is MGDs Target 2 which is to ensure that by 2015, all children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and that girls and boys will have equal access to all levels of education. This implies that all children will be provided with all the necessary materials and support which will enable them to have equal access education and also complete primary education irrespective of their diversities.

Some decades ago, only very few children with special needs were provided with education services in public schools. These few were usually served in segregated classrooms and had very little or no contact with their peers without special needs. However, with the UNESCO Salamanca Statement (1994) which called on all governments to give the highest priority to inclusive education and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Special Needs (2006), which called on all state parties to ensure an inclusive education system at all levels, persons with special needs were then provided with opportunities to be educated in the regular classrooms. The Salamanca Statement recognized that every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities, and learning needs and that those with special education needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them with a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting those needs.

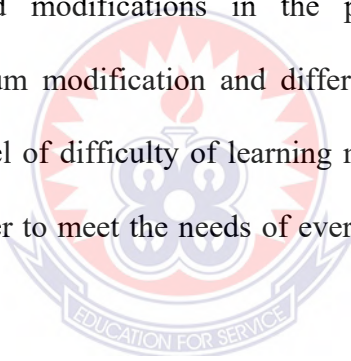
Apart from the above universal laws which Ghana is signatory to, there are also specific legislations guiding inclusive education in Ghana. The National Policy on Education (2004) maintains that persons with special needs have the right to equal educational opportunities in the inclusive schools. The problem, however, as observed by Onu (2008), is that despite the above legislations, the rights of child with special needs are constantly violated by some teachers. They are often segregated and arbitrarily discriminated against and consistently not fully included in general education classes.

Inclusion is the practice of ensuring that all children with special needs participate with other children in all aspects of school (Onu, 2008). According to Avoke and Hayford (2000), inclusion is the process of integrating all students into all the activities of a general education classroom in the community. It is based on the

principles that all children attend age appropriate regular classes in their local schools, receive curriculum relevant to their needs, and benefit from cooperation and collaboration among home, school and community (Onu, 2008). Inclusion therefore, involves some practices which will serve as a foundation for greater participation of children with diversities in the general education classroom.

Inclusive practices are attitudes, approaches and strategies adopted in the regular schools to ensure that all children benefit from general education curriculum despite their diversities. Pennsylvania Department of Education (2011) refers to inclusive practices as those practices which make all students regardless of their cognitive and/or academic level to have opportunity to be included in the general education classroom. It includes the necessary supplementary aids, support services, instructional methods and strategies given to children with special educational needs to increase their participation and progress in the general education curriculum. Onu (2004) outlined some inclusive education practices which include providing an enabling and empowering school learning environment that holds positive expectations and opportunities for all learners; collaboration and partnerships among school administrators, students, teachers, parents, and community partners; placing importance on social integration and celebration of difference; involving learners and parents planning of curriculum that will meet the needs of diverse learners, and the accommodation of individual strengths and needs. Others include support programs and services (e.g. counselors, health and social service workers, educational assistants) that meet the needs of learners with special needs and the use of a variety of instructional and assessment practices in order to accommodate various learning preferences.

Inclusive practices which will make for participation of children with diversities in the general education classrooms call for collaboration among special educators, general education teachers and other professionals. This is unlike what happens in time past when a teacher teaches the subject matter and manages discipline in the class in isolation (Holdgheide & Reschly, 2008). Research shows that collaborative teaming is highly recommended in inclusive classrooms as it offers everyone an opportunity to bring in his/her expertise in their various areas of specialization (Boudah, Schmacher & Deschler, 2005). The Saskatchewan Special Education Unit (2001) also reiterated that it is unreasonable to expect one teacher to be solely responsible for meeting the needs of diverse learners in an inclusive situation. Inclusive education practices also involve adaptations and modifications in the physical environment, adaptive equipment, and curriculum modification and differentiated instructions which may require adjusting the level of difficulty of learning materials and provision of varied learning activities in order to meet the needs of every learner (Holdgheide & Reschly, 2008).

The logo of the University of Education, Winneba, is a circular emblem. It features a central shield with a book and a lamp, surrounded by a sunburst pattern. Below the shield is a banner with the motto "EDUCATION FOR SERVICE". The entire emblem is set against a light blue background with a subtle grid pattern.

Inclusion has received widespread support especially among educational stakeholders through various international conventions. It however, comes with its own challenges as it is not widely understood or applied by many teachers to date (Florian, 2009). Part of what seems to make the practice of full inclusion controversial and difficult could be that not so many teachers appear to be thoroughly aware of the legislations guiding inclusive education as well as the important inclusive education practices that provide equality of opportunities for children with diverse needs, abilities, interest and skills in the regular classroom. Pivik, Mccomas, and LaFlammes (2002) opined that some of the barriers to inclusive education are physical barriers, attitudinal barriers,

lack of knowledge of inclusive practices by teachers and lack of political will by government officials.

These inclusive practices, though important, need to be effectively implemented by teachers. Teachers play a significant role in inclusive classroom as they are the key implementers of the policies in schools. They play a decisive role and therefore, need to understand what works in an inclusive classroom (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2003). The kind of training they receive, their beliefs, attitudes to special needs learners and their ability to collaborate with the parents of the child, the school authority and the community will determine the success of inclusive education. Teachers therefore, need a repertoire of skills, expertise, knowledge, pedagogical approaches, adequate teaching methods and materials to be able to address the diverse needs of learners in the inclusive classroom (European Agency for the Development in Special Needs Education). Unfortunately, as Onu (2008) noted, many teachers do not have the professional skills to work effectively with children with special educational needs.

Parental contributions to the academic performance of their children's education are a shared responsibility, but when there is conflict of interest, there is bound to be confusion. This is seen mainly within parents-teachers associations (PTAs). The conflict comes when responsibilities are not very clear to all parties. More so, society does not view their children (children with exceptionalities) as worthy of investing in. In fact, it disdains those with certain handicaps. Their parents in turn, feel devalued. Inevitably, he will feel the conflict between his nature desire to have the best for his children and the various obstacles to getting it for this child (Oppong, 2003). Avoke and Obi (2005) observed that parents may have minimum information on what to do.

Many schools may not provide parents with information on what are expected of them, what they should do or materials they should use to support their children learning at home. The authors further explained that the primary or basic survival needs of modern society might not permit parents to involve in their children's education. The need to provide, shelter and clothing for them may sometimes take undue precedence over parent's involvement in their children's education. Vandergrift and Greene (1992) cited in Avoke and Obi (2005) stated that the negative experiences of some parents' own school days might keep them out of their children's education. A parent who was not successful at school is likely to feel uncomfortable to interact with their children's school.

Obi (2004) stated that there are parents who do not place much emphasis on their children's education and seem not to bother about their falling behind in both academic and general development. They have very low expectation of their children generally. Sometimes, they appeared to have given up on their children and make no effort again to help them overcome their disabilities. She further explained that parents need to be told the scientific and real causes of their child's problem. This will help remove their guilt. She said parents need to be helped to understand that there are several children in the world with worse problems than that of their learning-disabled children.

Fichtner (1979), cited in Obi (2004), remarked that children with learning disabilities need love, protection and affection, not pity and a secure place in their families. Avoke (2004) explained that counselling is beneficial for many parents going through trauma and for those who have become chronic shoppers. Herbert and Sandow (1994), cited in Avoke (2004), remarked that by the time some parents seek help from

professionals, they may already have become demoralized and defeated. The authors further stressed that in order to support children with disabilities; some parents require a lot of support and counselling to make informed decisions. He explained that a problem shared is a problem solved. Avoke and Obi (2004) also shared the idea that parents can seek advice and information from many different sources particularly other parents of children with similar disabilities.

According to Mandel and Fiscus (2000), establishing positive parent/professional partnerships depends greatly upon effective communication. In the view of Avoke (2002) some parents and teachers have assumptions and held attitudes towards one another that have been encountered. Productive parents have complained that professionals are negative and unavailable and teachers too have complained that parents are uncooperative and hostile. All these are due to the lack of effective communication which brings communication gap between parents and teachers. If there is a proper channel of communication between them, they will understand each other better. Parents and teachers can work effectively in a team spirit to assist to develop acceptable social behaviour and self skills.

Good communication serves as an interchange between parents and the school that allows school personnel to keep parent informed but also provides opportunity for parents to express views and concerns to discuss progress and receive answers to their questions. According to Ted and Carol (2004), no problem will arise because of misinformation or lack of proper information that brings negative feelings. Telephone calls can address minor problems or clarification or save time and major problems and be handled during home visits or school conference. Effective communication, which spells out roles, views and ideas or opinions, will be discussed at the right time for

decision-making. It will create room for openness in their interaction so that parents will not form cliques or criticize professional effective communication will therefore serve as a tool for promoting cordial relations and full participation of parents.

2.4 Improving Parental Involvement in the Education of their Children who are Blind

Parents are considered key players in the process of student learning. (Epstein, 2001) noted that education begins before formal schooling, and parents are recognized as a child's first educator, productive collaborations between family and school will demand that parents and teachers recognized the critical importance of each other's participation in the life of a child. This mutuality of knowledge, understanding, and empathy comes not only with a recognition of the child as the central purpose of the collaboration, but also with a recognition of the need to maintain roles and relationships with children that are comprehensive, dynamic, and differentiated. Avoke (2005) stated that reframing behaviours that have negatively labeled in the past can also promote or improve parental involvement.

Schools, families and communities that work together and share the responsibility for educating children are more likely to provide better programs and opportunities for students (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies 2007). When parents, teachers, students and other view one another as partners in education, a caring community forms around students and begins its work (Epstein et al., 2009). Epstein et al, concluded that through frequent, meaningful interactions between families, schools, and communities, students are more likely to realize the importance of school, of working hard and helping others and of staying in school to continue their education.

In an effort to improve parental involvement, schools need to provide a welcoming climate where the school staff is respectful and responsive to parents (Wherry, 2009). Wherry concluded that it is critical that administrators and teachers encourage respectful two-way communication between the school and home.). Communication refers to parent-initiated and/or school-initiated contact regarding school programs and student progress. Communication is defined by Epstein (2001) as the ability to design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and student progress. Useful and clear two-way communication encourages cooperation between the home and school and reveals to student success (Epstein et al., 2009). Epstein identified multiple ways of communication, including conferences, PTA meetings, weekly or monthly folders of student work, handbooks, parent pick up of report cards, notes, emails, newsletters, phone calls and websites to produce effective communication between the home and the school. Anytime communication is involved there will likely be challenges.

Communication must be clear and useful and schools need to be considerate of factors such as language barriers and literacy of families that could affect the understanding of the information being shared (Epstein, 2001). An increasing number of schools are using technological resources as a means of communication; however, it is important to remember that all families may not have access to these technological resources (Epstein et al., 2009). The answer is to stop treating parents like; Client' and start treating them like 'partners' in helping children learn Wherry (2009). Feeling welcome and respected by educators is an important link with parents and their willingness to become involved (Henderson, et al., 2007).

Parents can benefit from effective communication with the school by having increased knowledge of policies, procedures and programs within the school, allowing the parents to provide additional support in the educational experience (Epstein, 2001). As parents communicate with the school they typically become more comfortable and satisfied with the school and the teachers (Epstein et al., 2009). As a result of effective and positive communication with staff, teachers, and administrators, parents are able to encourage a successful educational experience for their children and may become more actively involved (Epstein, 2001).

Parents are more likely to become actively involved in their child's education if they are well invited (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Invitations are powerful motivators and relay a message to parents that they are valued and important in their child's education (Hoover-Dempsey, et al., 2005). Parents want to feel trusted and comfortable with their child's teachers, the school setting, and the outcome of their effort.

According to Epstein (2001) school systems have to employ parent involvement coordinators to lead and coordinate parental involvement activities and programs within the system in an effort to overcome obstacles between the home and school. Role of parent involvement coordinators are a way to get more to get more parents involved in a variety of, aspects of the school. Parent involvement coordinators often conduct workshops for parents to inform them of the school curriculum and remind them that they are their child's most important teacher (Epstein, 2001).

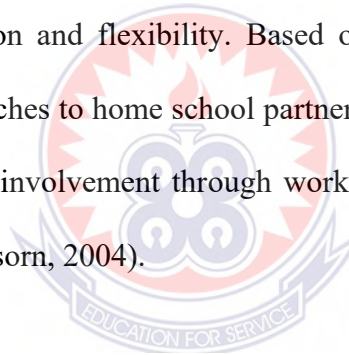
Epstein has identified decision making as a way of improving parental involvement in education, in education, decision making and development parent leaders and representatives within the school (Epstein et al., 2009). By allowing parents to

represent the school in leadership roles, parent leaders can assist families and the community in understanding and contributing ideas to support school programs (Epstein, 2001). Also, Epstein et al., found that parents and educators have a shared interest in the educational experience of students, and collaboration between parents and educators regarding school issue can enhance the experiences of the children.

As school involves parents in decision making activities, it is important to include parents from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and other groups from within the school population (Epstein et al., 2009). Parent leaders would be active participants and represent other families from the school, and it is imperative that parent leaders obtain ideas from families to share with the school and distribute information to the families they represent regarding school decisions, programs and activities (Epstein, 2001) schools need to offer appropriate training for the parent leaders to assist in developing their leadership skills and properly represent other families. Another way to improve parental involvement is for the school to recruit volunteers (Epstein, 2009; Sanders & Sheldon, 2009). By volunteering, parents and the community can observe children in a school environment and that way learn how they can better assist them to achieve in school. Also, by volunteering, they express their value of education. There are a number of benefits that are gained by volunteerism, such as increasing family participation, increasing families' awareness of school rules and processes, and creating opportunities for impromptu informal interactions between homes and schools. Among many of the different volunteer activities parents can participate in are language translations, monitoring attendance of students and phoning parents of absent students, conducting parent patrols, supporting extracurricular clubs, and enriching students' subjects classes (Epstein, 2009). In

addition, schools can organize volunteers to become homeroom parents, neighbourhood representative and contacts for other parents at school.

Nistler and Maiers (2000) came up with the findings that schools are able to remove the barriers to parent participation in order to improve involvement by providing childcare and transportation to parents who find difficulties to participate in school activities, schools should also create opportunities and provide training to parents in order to increase their awareness of their children's potentials. The most appropriate strategies for parental involvement of a particular community depend on the local needs interests, resources and successful approaches used to improve parental involvement. These strategies, according to Nistler and Maiers, should place emphasizes on innovation and flexibility. Based on this assumption, schools must develop different approaches to home school partnerships and be flexible in providing many forms of parental involvement through workshops, conferences, seminars and meetings (Epstein & Jansorn, 2004).



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology for the study. It includes design, population, sample size, sampling technique, instrumentation, procedure for data collection, and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The research design adopted was a descriptive survey with the focused of exploring parental involvement in the education of their children who are blind Avoke (2005) explained that the design is a strategy for doing research, which involve an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real content using multiple sources evidence and involves an in-depth study of instances of a phenomenon. Explaining further, Avoke reiterates that a phenomenon is seen as the process of events, person or things of interest to the researcher whilst a case is a particular instance of the phenomenon. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), descriptive survey design is appropriate because it involves collecting data in order to answer questions concerning the current status of subjects of the study. It is an invaluable tool for collecting response from a sample to draw a profile of the group as a whole and perhaps perform some course- and- effect analysis to understand the sources of these feeling. This is because the design is good in collecting data from sample in order to describe their attitude, opinion, behaviors or characteristic which can be used to measure the level of parental involvement in the education of their children who are blind. Despite the numerous advantages, the design may have some shortcomings. This is because, some people may not want to reveal the truth and this will affect the result of the study.

3.2 Population

The target population for the study was 50 participants from Asuogya in the Jaman South District of the Brong Ahafo District. Participants were made up of all parents with children who are blind attending school in Asuogya D/A Junior High School as well as teachers in the school.

3.3 Sample Size

In all 35 participants made up of 15 parents (10 males and 5 females) and 20 teachers (15 males and 5 females) were selected for the study.

3.4 Sample Distribution of Participants

Table 3.1 Sample Distribution of Participants

Participants	Male	Female
Teachers	15	5
Parents	10	5
Total	25	10

3.4 Sampling Technique

Convenient sampling technique was used to select the school whose teachers were involved in the study.

Parents were selected using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a sampling method in which elements are chosen based on purpose of the study. Data generated from using such a method may give internal validity of findings but not be generalized to other places and people. The lists of parents that had children who are blind attending the school was obtained from school record. The lists of parents that had children who are blind attending school at the Asuogya D/A Junior High School

in the Jaman South District qualified to take part in the study. Therefore the sample of parents was chosen from those that had children who are blind in the school.

3.5 Instrumentation

The instruments used by the researcher were questionnaire and interview;

Questionnaire: this was in the form of likert-type scale type built on five points rating scales ranging from strongly agree (SA) =5, agree (A), neutral (N) =3, strongly disagree (SD) =2 and to disagree (D) =1 Interview: A semi-structure interview guide was used to collect data from parents. This was used because it allowed for open-ended exploration of opinions from parents who are one of the major stakeholders in education. According to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009), interviews can provide information that is inaccessible through observation and can help explore and probe participants' responses for an in-depth data on phenomena.

3.6 Validity

To ensure that both questionnaire and interview items have the adequate validity and reliability, the following procedures were adopted. In the first place and for the validity, the content related evidence was first used where the items were carefully designed and build on the key variable forming the themes raised in the research questions. Secondly, the items were given out for peer judgment involving some students pursuing their masters' programme in the Department of Special Education. Corrections that were on the items were further taken for expert judgment. The final corrections pointed out were done before the administration of the items.

3.7 Reliability

To ensure the reliability of the research of the research instruments, the researcher wrote the question items under the guidance and direction of some lectures in the department. For more confirmation, test-retest technique was also employed to test the reliability of the instruments.

3.8 Procedure for Data Collection

Before the collection of data, familiarization visit was made to the teachers at Asuogya D/A Junior High School who were involved, an introductory letter from the Department of special Education, University of Education, Winneba, was given to the head teachers in the various schools to serve as a legal permission for the data to be collected. Despite the introductory letter, the purpose of the study was explained to them. They were assured for the necessary confidentiality. The date and time for the completion of the questionnaires were agreed on. The completed questionnaires were collected on the agreed date through the head teacher. Simple frequency counts and percentages were used to analysis the data from questionnaires.

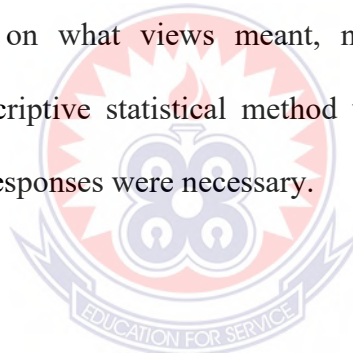
For conducting the interviews parents were first visited their homes with the help of their children identified from the schools. The parents interviewed were farmers who could conveniently be met after returning from their farming activities. Each interview session lasted between 30 to 50 minutes within the time frame for one week.

3.9 Data Analysis

Data analysis identified the major categories and prominent themes that emerged from the data associated with parental involvement in the education of their children who are blind descriptive narrative provided the essential basis for researcher to develop a

grounded explanation of phenomena studied. To analyze the questionnaire data, the percentage of the total sample who responded to each item and the percentage of respondents' who chose each of the alternatives for each item were recorded and all the statistical analysis was performed with SPSS to obtain the percentage and the frequencies and the use of descriptive statistical method.

The interview data were read carefully in order to tease out the emerging responses relevant to the themes built in the research questions raised. Reading through the interview data, each discrete idea was named and ideas that seemed to represent similar phenomena were grouped together as a process of discovering categories and sub-categories. Through examine of responses, patterns were noted and themes were derived from deciding on what views meant, noting regularities, and possible configurations. The descriptive statistical method was used for data analysis with verbatim expression of responses were necessary.



CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND FINDING

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the data analysis and discussions of findings. To analyze the data collected. The completed questionnaires were given serial numbers and tallies were done in order to identify the respondents' responses to each of the questionnaire items from each school. Responses to items were coded and fed into the computer using the Statistical Packages for the Social Science (SPSS) software version 196.0. For the purpose of data analysis, the responses at the two extremities such as strongly agree and agree and strongly disagree were combine and neutral accordingly. The interview data were also carefully read through and the key ideas expressed by respondents by respondents were categories according to how they reflected on the research questions. The descriptive statistical method was adopted in the final data analysis.

4.1 Presentation of Result from the Questionnaire

The presentations of the results from the questionnaire are in two sections 'A' and 'B' section 'A' present the demographic data of respondents according age, gender. Section 'B' presents the results of the knowledge of respondents.

Table 4.1: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency (%)
20-29	10(50%)
30-39	8(40%)
40-49	1 (5%)
50-59	1 (5%)
Total	20 (100%)

As indicated in Table 4.1, 10 (50%) respondents were between the ages of 20-29, 8(40%) were also between the ages of 30-39, 1 (5%) respondent were between ages of 40-49 and finally 1 (5%) respondent between the ages of 50-59 respectively.

Table 4.2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency (%)
Male	15 (75%)
Female	5(25%)
Total	20 (100%)

Tables 4.2, indicated that out of twenty (20) respondents 15 (75%) were males and the 5(25%) respondents were females.

Research Question One

To what extent do parents involve themselves in the education of their children who are blind?

Table 4.3: Responses to Research Question One

SN	Statement	SA F%	A F%	N F%	SD F%	D F%	MEAN F%
1.	Parents provide their wards needs in school.	2(10)*	12(60)	4(20)	0(0)	2(20)	2.40
2.	Parents have discussions with teachers on their ward's needs.	4(20)	4(20)	3(15)	4(20)	5(25)	2.90
3.	Parents attend school functions	0(0)	13(65)	5 (25)	1(5)	1 (5)	2.35
4.	Parents actively involve themselves in decision processes at the school level.	4(20)	6(30)	3(15)	2(10)	5(25)	2.80
5.	Parents assist their children in school assignments	1(5)	4(20)	1(5)	6(30)	8 (40)	3.70
6.	Parents volunteer at school to show their involvement.	0 (0)	5(25)	2(10)	2(10)	11(55)	3.90

Percentage in parenthesis*

From the Table 4.3 regarding questionnaire item number 1 which sought to find out whether parents provide their wards needs in school, the data indicated that a total of 14 (70%) of teachers agreed to the statement while 2 (20%) of the teachers disagreed and 4(40%) of the teachers remained neutral to the statement, with the mean score of (M=2.40) representing 5th position in the Likert ranking order.

With regard to item number 2 seeks to explore whether parents have discussions with teachers on their wards needs, a total of 8(40%) of the respondents agreed with the statement, while 9(45%) of the respondents disagreed that parents have discussions

with teachers on their wards needs and 3(15%) of the teachers stayed neutral to the statement, with the mean score of (M=2.90) representing 3rd position in the Likert ranking order.

With regards to item 3 the focused on whether parents attend school functions, a total of 13 (65%) respondents agreed with the statement, while 2 (10%) of the respondents disagreed and 5(25%) of the teachers remained neutral to the statement, with the mean score of (M=2.35) representing 6th position in the Likert ranking order.

As regards item 4 that focused on finding out whether parents actively involved themselves in decision process at the school level, 10 (50%) of the respondents agreed with the statement while 7 (35%) of the teachers disagreed and 3 (15%) of the teachers stayed neutral to the statement that parents actively involved themselves in decision processes at the school level, with a mean score of (M=2.80) representing 4th position in the likert ranking order.

Responses to item 5 that was developed to explore whether parents assist their children in school assignments, 5 (25%) of the respondents agreed with the statement while 14(70%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that parents do not assist their children in school assignments and 6 (30%) of the teachers remained neutral to the statement, with a mean score of (M=3.70) representing 2nd position in the likert ranking order.

As regards to item 6 that was developed to explore whether parents volunteer at school to show their involvement, 5 (25%) of the respondents agreed while 13(65%) of school to show their involvement and only 2 (10%) of the respondents remained neutral to the statement, with the mean score of (M=3.90) representing 1st position in the ranking order.

4.2 Discussion and Findings of on Research Question One

The study showed that there were various ways through which parents got involved in their children's education. Despite to the fact there is free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) introduced by the Government Ghana.

From item 1-6 of the questionnaires in the research question 1 show that most of the parents got involve in the education of their blind children in many levels. This findings corroborated with Nandango, et.al (2005) that parents involved in decision making processes at school level, collaborating with the community by identifying and integrating resources and services from the community to strengthen school programmes, family practices, and student learning and development. Research has regularly shown that with increasing parental participation in their children's education student success rate increases. According to the Department of Education (2004), in the United States, studies have shown that students with involved parents are more likely to earn higher grades, pass their class and be promoted, they are more likely to attend school regularly and graduate and go on to postsecondary education, irrespective of their disabled status.

According to Desforges and Abouchaar (2003), intellectual stimulation leading to parent-child discussion is another way of parental involvement. Regardless of social class, home discussion is a significant factor in intellectual stimulation, the more the pupils achieved in school. Interview data on the level of parental involvement in their blind children's education revealed that, most parents were involved in their children's education.

Research Question Two

In what ways do parental involvement in the education of their children who are blind influence their academic performance in school?

4.3 Percentages in Parenthesis

Table 4.4: Responses to Research Question Two

S/N Statement	S A F%	A F%	N F%	S D F%	S F%	MEAN
7. Parental involvement in education increases their children's performance in their school.	11(55)	6(30)	1(5)	0(0)	2(10)	1.60
8. Children's school learning is made possible through the involvement of parents.	7(35)	10(50)	2(10)	0(0)	1(5)	1.90
9. Students' need provision by parents improve on their stability in school.	6(30)	12(60)	1(5)	0(0)	1(5)	1.80
10. Children improve on their attendance when their parents actively involved in their education	12 (60)	8(40)	0(0)	0(0)	0 (0)	1.35
11. Children self-concept of their education ability is more closely related how their parents perceive their ability rather than the actual grade obtained	2(10)	16(80)	0(0)	1(5)	1(5)	2.10

Regarding questionnaire item number 7 in the table 5 above focused on finding out whether parental involvement in education increases their blind children's performance in their school, a total number of 17 (85%) of the respondents strongly agreed while 2 (10%) of the respondents disagreed, only 1 (5%) remained neutral to the statement with the mean score of (M=1.60) representing the 4th position in the Likert ranking order.

As regards to item 8 that was to find out whether blind children's school learning is made possible through the involvement of parents 17(85%) of the respondents agreed, while 1(5%) disagreed and 2 (1%) stayed neutral to the statement with the mean score of (M=1.90) representing the 2nd position in the Likert ranking order. With regard to item 9 that was to find out whether students' need provision by parents improve on their stability in school, a total number of 18 (90%) respondents agreed while only 1(5%) of the respondent disagreed and 1 (5%) respondent remained neutral to the statement with the mean score of (M=1.80) representing the 3rd position in the Likert ranking order.

With regard to item 1 that was to find out whether student's need provision by parents improve on their stability in school, 20 (100%) of the respondents unanimously strongly agreed to the statement, while none of the respondents agreed as well as non-stayed neutral to the statement, with the mean score of (M=1.35) representing the 5th position in the Likert ranking order.

Regarding item 11 that was to find out whether Children self-concept of their education ability is more closely related how their parents perceive their ability rather than the actual grade obtained, a total of 18 (90%) of the respondents strongly agreed while 2(10%) disagreed none of the respondents remained neutral, with the mean score of (M=2.10) representing 1st position in the Likert ranking order.

Discussions and Findings of on Research Question Two

Items 7-10 of the questionnaire in the research question 2 shows that parental involvement in education increases their children's performance in their school. This assertions corroborates with Linden (2010) that no matter what, economic achievement scores do go up when there is parent involvement, when there's good relationships between the home and the school, because those relationships serve to motivate students to achieve at the level their ability enables them and continued family involvement is key in creating sustainable change in behaviours. The most successful early intervention program because the family plays such a critical role in reinforcing the school lessons which also rely on the community to reinforcing the school's lessons which also rely on the community to reinforce the lessons and value they teach.

However, parental involvement in education will not only increase children's performance, but also children improve on their attendance when their parents actively are involved in their education. This is in line with Sanders and Sheldon (2009) who noted that parental involvement is important for schools to improve students' attendance. As it goes without saying, being in school gives students, more opportunities to learn. Even though schools have not systematically and consciously worked in a partnership with families in order to reduce student absenteeism, cooperation and partnerships with families are known to be important factors in order to increase student attendance (Sheldon, 2009). Research finding have identified certain aspects of parental behavior as important indicators of lower levels of truancy among students (Sanders & Sheldon, 2009; Sheldon, 2009). These include monitoring student's whereabouts, discussions with their children about school, volunteering at school and being members of a parent-teacher association. it has also been shown to

be helpful to improve attendance, that the school informs parents of their absent children (Sanders & Shelter, 2009). This gives parents a chance to monitor and supervise their children's attendance more adequately.

Research Question Three

What challenges do parents encounter in their involvement in the education of their children who are blind in the school?

Table 4.5: Responses to Research Question three

S/N Statement	S F %	A F %	N F %	SD F %	S F %	MEAN
12. The school does not involve parent before decision are taken.	0(0)	6(30)	0(0)	9(45)	5(25)	2.55
13. There is no good communication between teachers and parents.	4(20)	10(50)	1(5)	0(0)	5(25)	3.45
14. Most parents still have traditional believe, henceforth shifted the children responsibilities to the teachers	9(45)	10(50)	0(0)	0(0)	1(5)	4.35
15. Parental level in education influences their involvement in school activities.	7(35)	10(50)	1(5)	0(0)	2(10)	4.50
16. Financial constraints and time factor have been the rationale for lack of parental involvement in education of their children.	5(25)	10(50)	1(5)	0(0)	4(20)	3.50
17. Teachers' attitudes also scare parental involvement in school activities	1(5)	7(35)	0(0)	3(15)	9(45)	2.40
18. Lack of trust between teachers and parents contributed to non-involvement in their blind children education.	3(15)	3(15)	7(35)	2(10)	5(25)	2.95

Regarding questionnaire item number 12 in the table 4.6 above focused on finding out whether the school does not involve parents before decisions are taken, a total number 6 (30%) of the respondents that agreed to that effect while 14 (70%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that the school does not involve parents before decisions are taken and nobody remained neutral to the statement with the mean score of (M=2.55) representing 6th position in the Likert ranking order.

As regards to item 13 that was to find out whether there is no good communication between teachers and parents, a total of 14 (70%) of the respondents agreed while 5 (25%) of the respondents disagreed and only 1 (5%) respondent remained neutral to the statement with the mean score of (M= 3.45) representing 4th position in the likert ranking order

As regards to item 14 which sought to find out whether most parents still have traditional believe, henceforth shifted the children responsibility to the teachers, a total of 19(95%) of the respondents agreed while only 1 (5%) of the respondents disagreed and none of the respondents stayed neutral with this statement with the mean score of (M=4.35) representing 1st position in the Likert ranking order.

With regard to item 15 that was to find out whether parental level in education influence their involvement in school activities, 17 (85%)of the respondents agreed while 2(10%) of the respondents disagreed and only 1 (5%) remained neutral to the statement with the mean score (M=4.00) representing 2nd position in the ranking order.

Regarding item 16 sought to find out whether financial constraints and time factor have been the rationale for lack of parental involvement in education of their children, a total of 15 (75%) of the respondents agreed while 4 (20%) of the respondents

disagreed and only 1 (5%) remained neutral with the mean score of (M=3.50) representing 3rd position in the Likert ranking order.

Responding to items 17 that was to find out whether teachers' attitudes also scare parental involvement in school activities, 8(40%) of the respondents agreed while 12 (60%) of the respondents agreed and none of them stayed neutral to the statement with the mean score of (M= 2.40) representing 7th position in the Likert ranking order.

Regarding item 18 that out whether lack of trust between teachers and parents contribute to non-involvement in their children education, a total of 9 (15%) respondents agreed and 7 (35%) respondents disagreed and 7 (35%) remained neutral to this statement with the mean score of (M=2.95) representing the 5th position in the Likert ranking order.

Discussion and Findings on Research Question Three

Item 12,18 of the questionnaires in the research question 3 shows that the schools involve parents before decision are taken and hence parental level in education influence their involvement in school activities. This assertions corroborates with Barnard (2004), Hill and Craft (2003), and Hill and Taylor (2004) that parental involvement is seen as effective strategy to ensure children's success in education. Parental involvement includes greater participation in the life of a school, while others focus on increased contributions to an individual child's learning process. Still others focus on increased contributions to an individual child's learning process. Still others incorporate the family into the learning process through adult education, parenting and other school activities.

Some school engage families in the governance and planning processes and in building broad ownership of student achievement goals. Henderson and Mapp (2002) concurs with this, and claims that the level of parental involvement in high school influences the students' expectations to finish college. In addition, Obeidat and Al-Hassan (2009) maintain that not only do children with involved parents gain academically, but they are also more likely to show improved behavior and to have better social skills.

Parents assist their children to have a positive attitude towards staff and the work of the school and by helping them to develop organizational strategies to support learning, parents can positively impact on their child's learning.

Research Question Four

What are the ways for improving parental involvement in the education of their children who are blind?

Table 4.6: Responses to Research Question Four

S/N Statement	S F	A %	N F %	SD F %	D F%	MEAN	
19. There is the need for a strong collaborating between teachers and parents.	17	(85)	2	(10)	0	(0)	1.25
20. The School needs to provide welcoming environment for parents.	9	(45)	10	(50)	0	(0)	1.60
21. Parental opinion need to be sought in school activities.	6	(30)	12	(60)	0	(0)	2.05
22. The school needs to listen to parental views.	11	(45)	0	(55)	0	(0)	1.65
23. Parents willing to be volunteers in the school activities should be encouraged.	9	(45)	10	(50)	0	(0)	1.75
24. Parent-teacher association executives should dictate to parents.	0	(0)	3	(15)	1	(5)	3.90
25. All parents should be allowed express their views in meetings.	14	(70)	4	(20)	1	(5)	1.55

Regarding questionnaire item number 19 in the Table 4.6 above focused on finding out whether there is the need for a strong collaboration between teachers and parents, a total of 19 (95%) of the respondents strongly agreed while only 1(5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and none of the respondents stayed neutral to the statement with the mean score of (M=1.25) representing the 7th position in the Likert ranking order.

As regards to item 20 which sought to find out whether the school needs to provide welcoming environment for parents, a total of 19 (95%) of the respondents agreed while 1(5%) of the respondents strongly disagrees and none remained neutral with the mean score of (M=1.60) representing 5th position in the Likert ranking order.

Regarding item 21 that was to find out whether parental opinions need to be sought in school activities, a total of 18 (90%) of the respondents agreed while only 2 (10%) of the respondents disagreed and none stayed neutral with mean score of (M=2.05) representing 2nd position in the Likert ranking order.

With regard to item 22 which sought to find out whether the school needs to listen to parental views, a total of 20(100%) of the respondents unanimously agreed with the statement while none of the respondents neither agreed nor remained neutral to the statement.

As regards to item number 23 that was to find out whether parents willing to be volunteers in the school activities should be encouraged, a total of 19 (95%) respondents agreed while only 1(5%) of the respondents remained neutral to the statement with the mean score of (M=1.75) representing 3rd position in the Likert ranking order.

Responses to item 24 which sought to find out whether parent-teacher association executives should dictate to parents, 3(15%) of the respondents agreed while 16(80%) strongly agreed and only 1 (5%) of the respondents remained neutral with the mean score of (M=3.90) representing 1st position in the Likert ranking order.

Regarding item 25 that focused on finding out whether all parents should be allowed to express their views in meetings, a total of 18 (90%) of the respondents strongly agreed while only 1 (5%) of them disagreed and only 1 (5%) of the respondents remained neutral to the statement that all parents should be allowed to express their views in meetings with the mean score of (M=1.55) representing 6th position in the Likert ranking order.

Discussions and Finding on Research Question Four

Items 19, 25 of the questionnaires in the research question 4 show that there is the need for strong collaboration between teachers and parents express their views in meetings. This assertions corroborate with (Epstein, 2001) noted that education begins before formal schooling, and parents are recognized as a child's first educator, productive collaborations between family and school will demand that parents and teachers recognize the critical importance of each other's participation in the life of a child. This mutuality of knowledge, understanding, and empathy comes not only with the recognition of the child as the central purpose of the collaboration, but also with a recognition of the need to maintain roles and relationships with children that are comprehensive, dynamic, and differentiated. Avoke (2005) stated that reframing.

When parents, teachers, students, and other view one another as partners in education, a caring community forms around students, and others view one another as partners in education, a caring community forms around students and begins its work. (Epstein et al., 2009, p. 56)

Epstein et al. (2009) concluded that through frequent, meaningful interactions between families, schools, and communities, students are more likely to realize the importance of school, of working hard and helping others, and of staying in school to continue their education.

Majority of the respondents agreed to the statement that the schools provided welcoming environment for the parents. These findings corroborate that (Wherry, 2009) in an effort to improve parental involvement; schools need to provide a welcoming climate where the school staff is respectful and responsive to parents. It is critical that administrators and teachers encourage respectful two-way communication between the school and home.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDING, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study, conclusion and recommendations

5.1 Summary

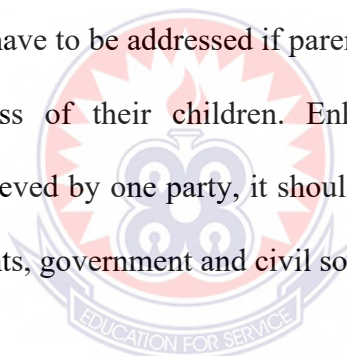
The study on parental involvement in the education of their wards at Asuogya D/A Junior High School, was treated under five (5) chapters. The design was a descriptive survey, with total sample of 35 and was comprised of 15 parents and 20 teachers. The comprised 35 parents having their children in the selected schools and teachers were questioned. Purposive sampling in collaboration with other techniques was used in the methodology. Data obtained from questionnaires were based on four research questions and were analysed with Statistical Product for Service Solutions (SPSS) techniques of frequencies, percentages and mean scores depicting varied responses were further discussion of the results affirmed that, adequate collaboration between teachers and the parents would improve parental involvement in their wards education.

From the findings, it was found that through most parents were involved in their wards' education, the schools still need to involve the parents in their decision making, established a better communication links between the teachers and the parents. Also, the schools need to provide welcoming environment which could facilitate parents not to be afraid when visiting their wards or trying to involve themselves in their children education.

5.2 Conclusions

The Ministry of Education realizes the Significance of parent involvement in the education of their children and states that access to quality education can be improved by enhanced community participation in basic education. In spite of policy commitments, the country, Ghana still has a long way to go before parents are able to provide their children with the necessary support to excel in school. Parental involvement is viewed in terms of parents' contribution towards the development of their children and is often trained when it comes to important decisions in the school.

Most parents in rural areas would like to get involved in the education of their children but they face major challenges are illiteracy, low education levels of parents and poverty. These will have to be addressed if parents are to meaningfully participate in the education process of their children. Enhanced parental involvement in education cannot be achieved by one party, it should involve concert efforts amongst all stakeholders i.e. parents, government and civil society organizations.



5.3 Recommendations

Based on the following from the study the following recommendations are made. Adult Literacy Programmes (ALP) should be established and the establishment should be preceded by the finalization of the National Policy on Adult Literacy which will help guide the establishment and operation of adult literacy programmes. Issues of parental involvement should be included in the teacher training curriculum either as pre or in-service training. This would assist in equipping teachers and school administrators with skills and positive attitudes needed in enhancing parental involvement in education. Efforts should be made to strengthening parents teachers and PTA members on participatory school governance, roles and responsibilities of

parents in the management of schools and ways of promoting stronger school home linkages. This will contribute towards enhanced involvement of parents in decision making processes which will in turn improve level of parental involvement in their children's education.

Parents should be supported on ways that can assist them in making a home environment that supports children's learning such as allowing children time off from chores in order to do their network, monitoring children's school work such as asking children how their day was at school and ensuring that they have the necessary school requisites. This can be achieved through sensitization meetings targeting parents and schools. Various stakeholders would need to partner with government in ensuring that such activities are undertaken.

5.4 Suggestion for Research

The below suggestion is made for further study;
Since literacy levels of parents are important factors in influencing their involvement in children's education, a study to analyze and investigate the relationship between literacy and parental involvement should be conducted. This will help to formulate strategies to maximize parental involvement on parents who are illiterate. This can also assist school to have deeper understanding of the many challenges that illiterate parents face regarding their involvement in children's education.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

Topic: **Parental involvement in the education of their children who are blind at Asdogya D/A Junior High School in the Jaman, South District in Brong Ahafo Region.**

This study is purely meant for academic purposes. You will be contributing to its success if you answer the items as frankly and honestly as possible. Your responses will be kept confidential.

Part A

Instruction

Please tick (✓) in the appropriate column of your choice as accurately and dispassionately as possible.

1. Gender: Male [] Female []

2. Age Range

[] 15 - 25 yrs

[] 26 -35 yrs

[] 36-45 yrs

[] 45+

Position in the school

Member of PTA executive Member of PTA 2) Level of education?

None MLSC Primary JSS SSS Tertiary

Do you attend PTA meetings?

Yes No

How often do you attend PTA meetings in a term?

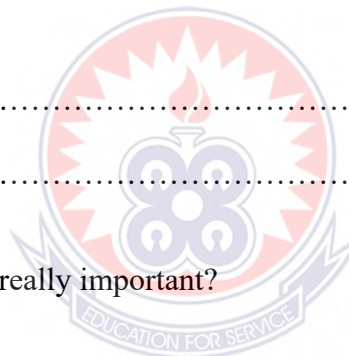
Once Twice Thrice None

Does the school often call you to discuss your children's academic progress?

Yes No

If **Yes** to item 5, explain your level of involvement towards academic progress of your child's education.

.....
.....



Is your child's education really important?

Yes No

Can your active involvement significantly help the child's education?

Yes No

If **Yes** to item 8, explain some of the benefits of your involvement in education of your child.

.....
.....
.....

Do you find it easy to go to your children's school anytime you feel like?

Yes [] No []

If Yes to item 10, explain what facilitate you.

.....
.....

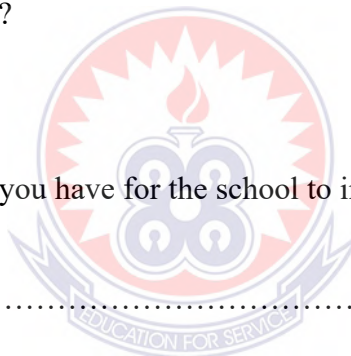
And if **No** to item **10**, explain the barriers to your active involvement as far as your child's education is concern.

.....
.....

Do you think that the school can do something to improve parental involvement in their children's education?

Yes [] No []

What suggestions would you have for the school to improve parental involvement their children's education.....



.....
.....

This comes to the end of the interview and may the Good Lord richly bless you for your unambiguous times spend with me and co-operation

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

Topic: Parental involvement in the education of their children who are blind at Asdogya D/A Junior High School in the Jaman, South District in Brong Ahafo Region.

Dear Respondent,

This study is purely meant for academic purposes. You will be contributing to its success if you answer the items as frankly and honestly as possible. Your responses will be kept confidential.

Kindly read through each of the items carefully and indicate the opinion that that is the nearest expression of your view on each of the issue raised.

Part A

Instruction

Please write or tick (V) in the appropriate column of your choice as accurately and dispassionately as possible.

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age:
3. Position in the school
4. Teacher's level of education?

None MLSC Primary JSS SSS Tertiary

Part B

Instruction: please for each of the following items in section B; select the appropriate response by ticking in the box what corresponds to the options available. Under **strongly agree (SA)**, **agree (A)**, **Neutral (N)**, **strongly disagree (SD)** and **disagree (D)**.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1.

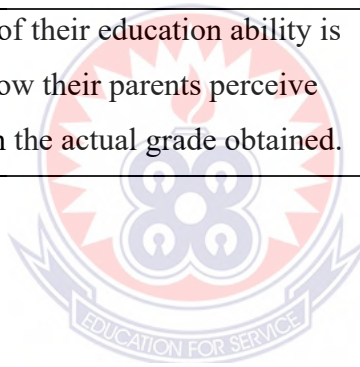
To what extent do parents involve themselves in the education of their children who are blind?

S/N	Statement	SA	A	N	SD	D
1	Parents provide their wards needs.					
2.	Parents have discussions with teachers on their wards needs.					
3.	Parents attend school functions.					
4.	Parents actively involve themselves in decision processes at the school level.					
5.	Parents assist their children in school assignments					
6.	Parents volunteer at school to show their involvement.					

RESEARCH QUESTION 2.

In what ways do parental involvement in the education of the children who are blind influence their academic performance?

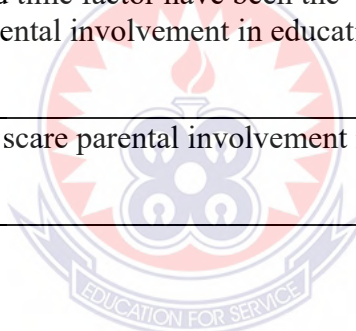
S/N	Statement	SA	A	N	SD	D
7.	Parental involvement in education increases their children's performance in their school.					
8.	Children's school learning is made possible through the involvement of parents.					
9.	Students' need provision by parents improve on their stability in school.					
10.	Children improve on their attendance when their parents actively involved in their education.					
11.	Children self-concept of their education ability is more closely related how their parents perceive their ability rather than the actual grade obtained.					



RESEARCH QUESTION 3.

What challenges do parent encounter in their involvement of their children who are blind in the school?

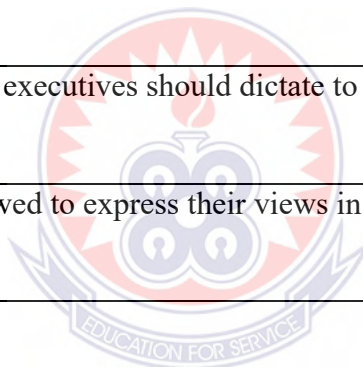
S/N	Statement	SA	A	N	SD	D
12.	The school does not involve parents before decisions are taken.					
13.	There is no good communication between teachers and parents.					
14.	Most parents still have traditional believe, henceforth shifted the children responsibilities to the teachers.					
15.	Parental level in education influences their involvement in school activities.					
16.	Financial constrains and time factor have been the rationale for lack of parental involvement in education of their children.					
17.	Teachers' attitudes also scare parental involvement in school activities.					



RESEARCH QUESTION 4.

To what extent do parents involve themselves in the education of their children who are blind?

S/N	Statement	SA	A	N	SD	D
19.	There is the need for a strong collaboration between teachers and parents.					
20.	The school needs to provide welcoming environment for parents.					
21.	Parental opinions need to be sought in school activities.					
22.	The school needs to listen to parental views.					•
23.	Parents willing to be volunteers in the school activities should be encouraged.					
24.	Parent-teacher association executives should dictate to parents.					
25.	All parents should be allowed to express their views in meetings.					



This comes to the end of the questionnaire and may the Good Lord richly bless you for your unambiguous work done and co-operation.