

# Pupils with Disability in Lower Basic Schools and Perceived Causes for Precautionary Measures in Southern Nigeria

<sup>1</sup>Eke, V.U.Ph.D, <sup>2</sup>Olayi, J.E. Ph.D, <sup>3</sup>EWA, J.A. PhD,  
Department of Special Education  
Faculty of Education  
University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria

**Abstract:-** This study investigated perceived causes of disability among pupils in lower basic schools in southern Nigeria. It was also done to open the eyes of stake holders on the above subject matter for precaution to check the incidence and prevalence. The study used descriptive survey. 2000 teachers served as sample for the study. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to arrive at the sample of 2000 regular teacher through purposive sampling techniques. The researchers developed instrument named Teachers' Perceived Causes of Disability Questionnaire (TPCODQ). It was face and content validated by three experts. The Reliability coefficient was deduced by using Cronbach Alpha that revealed internal consistency of .82. The data obtained from the administration of the instrument were organized and analyzed using frequencies, percentages and ranking. The research findings among others show that perceived prenatal causes include inherited trait. Peri-natal causes are premature birth, forced/prolonged while post-natal causes are accident, child killer diseases. It was therefore concluded that prenatal, perinatal and postnatal factors cause disability among pupils in lower Basic schools in Southern Nigeria. It is therefore recommended that the stakeholder such as couple should be exposed to genetic counseling by guidance counselor to forestall any likely cause.

**Keywords:-** Pupils With Disability, Perceived Causes. Stake Holders, Precautionary Measures, Lower Basic Education.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Education in Nigeria is an instrument "per excellence" for effecting national development. Formal education is indispensable. With the introduction of 9-3-4 system of education in Nigeria, the recipient of education would spend six years in Primary school, three years in junior secondary school, three years in senior secondary school and four years in tertiary institution. Basic education comprises two stages made up of primary education and lower secondary education. This study is concerned with Lower Basic which is limited to primary education. The Basic school is the first place to expose a child for formal education. It is therefore, a place where children are found for purpose of education.

Federal Republic of Nigeria (FME, 2004) referred to Basic education as education for children aged six to eleven plus. It is asserted that rest of education system is built upon it.

This lower basic level is the key to success or failure of the system. Every child in school does not benefit from the public regular basic education settings. This is because some children have problem due to circumstance of birth or other developments. These children are identified as children with special need. FRN (2004) classified this children into three: the disabled, the disadvantages and the gifted and talented. FRN (2004.47) defined the disabled as "people with impairment (physical, sensory) and because of this impairment/disability cannot cope with regular school/class organization and method without formal special education training". According to FRN, this category include: visually impaired, hearing impaired, physically and health impaired, intellectual disabled, emotionally disturbed, speech impaired, learning disabled and multiple handicap.

Specifically, Eke and Olayi (2018) disclosed different types of disability to include visual impairment, Hearing impairment, Speech and Language impairment, Learning disabled, Physical and health impairment, Behaviour disorder, Multiple Handicapped, Albino, Autism, Intellectually disabled and Disadvantaged children. The authors asserted that no regular class exist that can assert non-existence of one or more of these aforementioned types of disabilities. It is on that premise that they asserted that many of them abound in lower Basic schools in Southern states in Nigeria. No doubt, there are some special schools where this special population are educated especially the severe or profound cases. Nonetheless, there are settings where they are mainstreamed or integrated or venturing into least restrictive system. Not with standing mild and moderate disabled ones are still found in most regular settings. It is worthy to note that what is in vogue now in inclusion. This concept advocates including the excluded which means including the disabled among the non-disabled while ensuring that provision is made for the disabled that both parties benefit(Eke,2000). The practice of the aforesaid is more in principle than in practice.

All the lower Basic schools in area under study are best regarded as regular schools. In these type of setting, the

disabled are faced by regular teachers most of whom may not have been exposed to Elements of Special Education in the institution they were trained. Unfortunately, most teachers in such settings do not understand the nature and the needs of the exceptional children. No wonder Ozoji in Eke (2000) lamented that the concept of integration (mainstreaming) is doomed to failure if regular teachers and administrators are not brought to a level of understanding of the nature and needs of exceptional children to be served. It has been reiterated that attitude of the regular teachers and some other stakeholders towards the pupils with disability is negative (Olayi, 2015). Some of these teachers are yet in stereotypical assertion that these disabled ones in the schools are cursed persons or that they are individuals that are bewitched. One Teacher in a lower basic school John Odo (personal communication, 6<sup>th</sup> January, 2018) asked one disabled child to leave his class on the ground that the disabled looked different and the teacher asserted that the disability in the child is infectious. This is one example out of many cases where this special group is discriminated against. Some if not most stakeholders do not have idea of what can likely cause disability and find it difficult to believe ability in disability. They are very much ignorant of the popular aphorism: when disability has not met one it has not left one. The above instance provoked the researchers' curiosity to a study on a way out of this hence in the present century and generation people are not yet aware of common causes of disability in children. This situation has subjected this special population to suffering. There is presumption that special education has come as a saving grace.

No doubt, efforts are made by the government, Nongovernmental organization, professional groups to better the lots of this special population. In 2015, the federal government yielded to hue and cry of experts and professionals in Special Education to come out with policy of special needs education articulated by the experts themselves. There are other remarkable efforts made to better the lots of this special population but the dividend has not taken care of their challenges especially this one at stake that bothers on not knowing genuinely the causes of disability even among the stakeholders. The promises made to help these disabled ones has not yet come to fruition.

The pupils in their first instance in formal education should be hitch free especially in view of the purpose of basic education. It then follows that even if the new concept on low basic education is to work the challenge arising from skepticism of causes of disability could pose as a cog. It is glaring to note that there are factors that can cause disability. Eke and Olayi (2018) disclosed that causes of disability arising from three factors- prenatal, perinatal and postnatal.

According to the above authors, prenatal factors are those factors that cause disability before birth. This among others include malnutrition of expectant mothers. The second one is perinatal factors which are those factors that can cause

disability during birth, for example small pelvic of the expectant mother. The third one is Postnatal factors which are those factors that cause disability after birth. NTI (2000) recognized pre-natal influences that cause handicap to include genetic traits from one or both parents, ill health of expectant mothers, malnutrition, drugs, social and environmental condition. Anyiam, Eke and Ojiako (2003) corroborated with the findings in this study as each affirmed that ill health of expectant mother, infection from parent inherited traits among others influenced cause of disability of children.

The causes of disability ought to be known to avoid superstition attached to some disabilities. Above all, there is need to take precaution to avoid avoidable disabilities. Eze, L.U. (personal communication, 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019) revealed that there are good number of disabled pupils in lower basic schools in southern part of Nigeria here that are disabled due to avoidable causes. These avoidable causes that seem to be causing disability have their way due to the ignorance of precautionary measures that are not recognized. Rather than face that headlong, society take daylight in superstition. This superstition can generate actions that can worsen the situation for this special population. A study of this type promises knowledge that reduces stigmatization, discrimination against the disabled. The stereotypical belief of most people is that the disabled ones caused their fate or that it is handiwork of witches and wizards or other unfounded cultural beliefs. The above ignited the curiosity of the above study by the researchers – investigating the perceived causes of disability among the pupils with disabilities in lower basic school, schools in southern states of Nigeria.

## II. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

There are disabled pupils in lower basic schools in the states of southern Nigeria. It is natural to state that these pupils that are found in these places became disabled due to one cause or the other. The causes are traceable from prenatal, perinatal and postnatal factors. It has been reported that a teacher sent out a disabled person on the ground that the disability could affect the other ones. The stakeholders of this special population require clear picture yet they themselves seem to paint wrong picture of this special population.

It is disheartening to note that in this part of the country most people are skeptical of causes of disability. They seem to have taken side with superstition and stereotypes that are inimical to this special population.

It is worrisome to note that no study has specifically addressed this all important area to the best knowledge of the researchers. There are, no doubt other ventures to better the lots of this special population but non available to the researchers had addressed what some stakeholders perceive as causes of disabilities in pupils that have enrolled for lower basic schools in southern states of Nigeria that cover south, south east and south west. There are teachers that had been

exposed to elements of special education at the time of their training from who the sought perceived causes could be found.

The study is considered germane in cognizance of the need for pupils per se, the stake holders that include the teachers, parents among others. This study is considered paramount for the sake of the disabled, government and society. This shall go a long way to supplement and complement the effort so far made to position the status of this special pupils. The increase of the disabled shall be reduced as the stake holders shall be exposed to cause of disabilities and the ways from the precautionary measures in the area under study and beyond. It is therefore for this reason that it became imperative to investigate perceived causes of disability among pupils in lower basic school in the area under study.

**A. Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the perceived causes of disability among pupils in lower basic schools in Southern states of Nigeria.

Specifically, the study sought to-

1. Determine the pre-natal causes of disability among pupils in lower basic schools in Southern states of Nigeria.
2. Find out the peri-natal causes of disability among pupils in lower basic schools in Southern states of Nigeria.
3. Investigate the post-natal causes of disability among pupils in lower basic schools in Southern states of Nigeria.

**B. Research Questions**

These research questions guided the study:

1. What are the perceived pre-natal causes of disability among pupils in lower basic schools in Southern states of Nigeria?
2. What are the perceived peri-natal causes of disability among pupils in lower basic schools in Southern states of Nigeria.?
3. What are the perceived post-natal causes of disability among pupils in lower basic schools in Southern states of Nigeria.?

**III. METHODOLOGY**

The design used for the study was survey. It was a descriptive survey (questionnaire survey). The area of study

was southern Nigeria that include south, south east and south west parts of Nigeria. There are many lower basic schools in the aforementioned area under study. There was employment of multi stage procedure, stratified random sampling, simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were adopted to generate the sample. States in south south, south east and south west were noted. Among the states, simple random sampling was used to draw two states from south south, four each from south west and south east. In each state 100 lower basic schools were drawn through simple random sampling . In each school therefore . purposive sampling technique was used to draw 20 teachers exposed to special need education in various Institution they were trained as teachers.2000 Regular teachers served as the sample.

A set of questionnaire was used as instrument. This was developed by the researchers named Teachers Perceived Causes of Disability Questionnaire (TPCODQ). It was built by the researchers after consultation of relevant literature and experiences. It was made up of two sections. Section ‘A’ is on the personal information of the respondents. Section ‘B’ contains items to be responded to by either ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ . it contains fifteen items, each research question has five items. It was face and content validated by three experts in special education and research measurement and evaluation . The Reliability coefficient was deduced by using Cronbach Alpha that revealed internal consistency of .82.

Protocol was observed to reach the subjects to respond to the items in the copies of the questionnaire. The exercise took some weeks to be rounded of due to the number of the respondents. That approach ensured that every one completed his or hers. This guaranteed hundred per cent collation.

The raw data were analyzed by the use of frequency and percentage. Data were converted to frequencies and percentage. Any of the item (factors) with frequency of less than 60% was not considered as causative factor worthwhile to be major finding. The percentage was deduced by number of “yes responses” over total respondents (2000).

**IV. RESULTS**

1. What are the perceived pre-natal causes of disability among pupils in lower basic schools in Southern states of Nigeria?

S/N	Item Statements	Y	%	Rank
1	Inherited traits	1240	62	3 <sup>rd</sup>
2	Infections from parent	1280	64	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3	Expectant of mothers’ ill health	1600	80	1 <sup>st</sup>
4	Age of mother (too old/young)	1200	60	4 <sup>th</sup>
5	Malnutrition	1000	50	5 <sup>th</sup>

Table 1:- Perceived prenatal causes of disability (n=2000)

**Key**

Y= “YES” responses against “NO” responses

% =Percentage of “YES” Responses

R=Rank position of “YES” responses

In table one, the investigator sought to find the causes of disability as perceived by the respondents. Inherited traits from parents was third representing 1240 or 62%. Infections from parents was second representing 1600 or 80%. Age of

mothers was the fourth representing 1200 or 60%. Malnutrition was the fifth representing 1000 or 50%.

➤ *Analysis of Research Question two*

2. What are the perceived peri-natal causes of disability among **pupils in lower basic schools in Southern states of Nigeria.**?

S/N	Item	Y	%	Rank
6	Premature birth	1760	88	2nd
7	Prolonged labor	1800	90	1st
8	Forced delivery	1600	80	3rd
9	Self-medication	800	40	4th
10	Mother's waist size	1080	54	5th

Table 2:- Perceived peri-natal causes of disability (n=2000)

**Key:**

Y= “YES” responses against “NO” responses

% = Percentage of “YES” responses

R=Rank position of “YES” responses

In table two, the researchers wanted to elicit the perinatal causes as perceived by the respondents. Premature birth was second representing 1800 or 90%. Prolonged labor was the first representing 1800 or 90%. Self-medication was

the fourth representing 800 or 40%. Mothers waist size was the fifth representing 1080 or 54%. Self-medication was the fourth representing 800 or 40%.

➤ *Analysis of Research Question three*

3. What are the perceived post-natal causes of disability among pupils in lower basic schools in Southern states of Nigeria.?

S/N	Item Statement	Y	%	Rank
11	Accidents	1600	80	5th
12	Child Killer Disease	1620	81	4th
13	Parent upbringing child styles	1680	84	2nd
14	Exposure to TV. Video	1660	83	3rd
15	Peer group influence	1920	96	1st

Table 3:- Perceived post-natal cause of disability

**Key:**

Y= “YES” responses against “NO” responses

% = Percentage of “YES” responses

R=Rank position of “YES” responses

In table three, the researcher wanted to establish the post-natal causes of disability as perceived by the respondents. Accidents was the fifth representing 1600 or 80%. Parental upbringing of child styles was the second representing 1680 or 84%. Exposure to TV, video etc. was the third representing 1660 or 83%. Peer group influence was the first representing 1920 or 96%.

**V. DISCUSSION**

The study indicated that prenatal causes of disability among children include inherited traits from parents, infections from parents and ill health of the expectant mothers. There was less comparative emphasis on age of mother and malnutrition. This could be attributed to level exposure of the respondents hence reviewed literature included them also as cause of disability. Eke (2003), Eke and Olayi(2018), NTI (2000), Anyiam, et al. (2003) corroborated with the findings in this study as each affirmed that ill health of expectant mother, infection from parent inherited traits among others influenced cause of disability of children.

The result of the study which involves the peri-natal causes of disability among children are premature birth, prolonged labor, and forced delivery agreed with the work of Eke (2000) where he affirmed that above factors cause disability in children.

The post-natal cause of disability were found to be accident, child killer disease, parental child upbringing styles, exposure to mass media and peer group influence. This are in tune with revelations in NTI (2000) where it buttressed that post-natal influence that caused handicap include above factors but not limited to them. This is true because in its list also are marriage between incompatible poisonous materials and chemicals taken in error.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the finding of the study, the following conclusion were reached. The pre-natal causes of disability are mainly in inherited trait from parents, infection from parents and ill health of the expectant mothers and ages of mothers too old/young.

The pre-natal cause disability are mainly due to premature birth, prolonged labor, forced delivery. The post-natal causes of disability is accident, child killer diseases, parent upbringing of children style, exposure of children to mass media and peer group influence.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusion reached the following recommendation were put up as precautionary measures.

1. The would-be-husbands and wives should be exposed to the concept of disability which might befall children by the state's Special Education unit through local government areas (L.E.A). There should therefore be many for a where experts in Special Education, Guidance and Counseling, Educational Psychology and health Education address parents and would-be-parents on various types of disability and the cause and prevention.
2. Couples should be aware of inheritable trait or infection which can be stopped through cure or avoidance of marriage through marriage counseling from expert to be instituted in every community, L.G.A. of the state.
3. Expectant mothers should be directed to experts for ante-natal care by their husbands or relations and even the government. Villages and communities should be made aware of this checkmate trait of premature birth, prolonged labor, forced labor and mother waist size.
4. There are different types of disability which include behavior problems: the above means that peer influence and exposing children to watching TV, video and pornography should be radically controlled by parents and the clergy men in different churches.
5. Parents especially mothers should take care of children to avoid accident and child killer diseases .

6. Parent, teachers and the clergy should work on behavior of children so as to make them morally sound. Use of behavior modification techniques should be used at home and schools . Parents and teachers should be exposed to various and varied therapists to locally modify undesirable behavior in for to be organized by local education authority from time to time

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