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Inclusive Education as an Approach to Reduce Inequitable Access to Education: Exploring the practices of Jegnoch Metasebiya Primary School in Harar Town, Ethiopia

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Abstract

High-quality inclusive education program is indispensable to ensure access to education for children with disabilities. This study examined accessibility of instructional provision for children with disabilities. Qualitative, case study method was carried out, using purposive sampling followed by observation, interview and focus-group discussion to collect data. It begins with introducing how Inclusive education (IE) enhances learning accessible. Jegnoch Metasebiya Primary School is one of the schools awarded in the country for its best performance. The study revealed that the number students with disabilities enrolled in the school were not significant. It also found that the schooling and instructional activities were not accessible for the children. The study concluded that the school was implementing an integrated approach. Recommendations were made for the regional education office and the school to allocate adequate budget, promote inclusive education and to strengthen collaboration with all stakeholders.

Key Words: Inclusive education, primary school, children with disabilities, equitable access to education

Introduction

Worldwide, the attitudes of society towards disabilities have been shifting from medical points of view toward educational and social intervention (Tefera, Admas & Mulatie, 2016; World Health Organization [WHO], 2011). Inclusive education has gained attention both in developing and developed countries as an essential approach to ensure equitable access and quality education for all learners (Tefera et al., 2016; UNESCO, 2009). A number of legal and policy documents stated that equalization of access to quality education for all children at regular primary level with special attention for children, youth and adults with special educational needs and vulnerable children (UNESCO, 1994; Tefera et al., 2016). Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1948), the World Declaration on Education for All (United Nations Educational, 2009) the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons (1975) to provide all services, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) with special needs for social, educational integration, and such other recent documents for instance the Standard Rules

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on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993), the World Education Forum (2000), and the Salamanca Framework for Action (1994) which explicitly endorsed inclusion as the crucial mode of educational access for children with disabilities.

The Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994) recognizes the urgency and the necessity of education for each and every child by recognizing that education as a fundamental right for every children (UNESCO, 1994). The document also asserts the belief that regular education system should be designed by taking into account the wide diversity of learners, considering inclusive education as the most effective means of overcoming discriminatory attitudes. Also, it declares that inclusive education ensures quality education for all children and cost-effectiveness of the entire education system (UNESCO, 1994).

Inclusive Education can be defined as welcoming all students with and without disabilities to become part of a school community (Cologon, 2013). As it has been ascertained (Booth & Ainscow, 2011; Kearney, 2011; Cologon, 2013) in general, the term Inclusion means ending all exclusion for all children with disabilities, and realizing full-time placement in regular education with appropriate educational support within a classroom. The underpinning principles of inclusive education are instigated in three complementing principles, namely: (1) *universality,* rooted its base in individual learner's best interests and responds to his or her strengths and needs; (2) *flexibility*; and (3) *responsiveness* to change of community education (Collins, 2012; European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2010; Richards & Armstrong, 2016).

Inclusive education as a process of strengthening the capacity of the education system should reach out to all learners (Mkonongwa, 2014: European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2011). Recognizing that every child can learn, a quality inclusive education can be ensured to each student by (1) *making the instruction more student-centered,* (2) *adaption and modification of curriculum and assessment,* (3) *preparation of well trained and committed teachers,* (4) *provision of varieties of services and resource allocation and* (5) *systemic action for all programs within strong commitment of decision making bodies* (UNESCO, 2009; European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2013; Kearney, 2011; Richards & Armstrong, 2010).

The three main components in inclusion are *access, participation* and *support* (DEC/NAEYC, 2009; European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2013). Access is providing a wide range of activities and environments for every preschool child by removing physical barriers and offering multiple ways to promote learning and development. Participation means using a variety of instructional approaches to promote engagement in play and learning activities, and a sense of belonging for every child. Finally, Support is ensuring an infrastructure of system level

supports to assure high quality inclusion, such as professional development, integrating specialized services with general early care and education, and opportunities for communication and collaboration among families and professionals.

Inclusive education advocates the right for educational provision for children with disabilities and other disadvantages, to have equal opportunity in natural educational setting for typically developing children (UNESCO, 2009).

Quality inclusive education practice requires teachers' knowledge, skills, instructional materials and effective classroom management skills (Lewis & Bagree, 2013). Clear policy and inclusive education philosophy are also vital to promote and achieve a quality inclusive education program (Lewis & Bagree, 2013). All in all, collaboration among Special and Regular teachers, students, parents and other support services providers are the ingredients for positive outcome.

Inclusive learning and teaching refer to the ways in which instruction, curricula and assessment are designed and delivered to involve students in the learning process that is meaningful, relevant and accessible, regardless of their backgrounds. It embraces a view of the individual and individual difference as the source of diversity that can enrich the lives and learning of others (Kearney, 2011). Schools have a leading role in achieving a quality inclusive education program. There are diverse needs that make all individuals unique and exceptional with their potential and needs. As schooling binds community together, it has its root in the past and is meant to equip people for the future.

The researcher of the current study was impelled to conduct this research on the bases of his teaching experience, dating from Primary schools to Higher learning institutions, in this same discipline. The researcher sternly hold on their grounds that inclusive education recognizes how all children are diverse, welcomed to meet their unique needs (Guralnick, Connor, & Johnson, 2011; Lee, Yeung, Tracey, & Barker, 2015).

The premise of this article is inclusive education as an effective schooling practices ensures equitable access to education for children with disabilities by individualizing instruction, making the lesson meaningful, effective and interesting after they are included in the regular classrooms.

The Jegnoch Metasebiya Primary School was rewarded by the ministry of education at the country level for its overall excellent performance and best experiences in teaching and learning in the 2016/2017 academic year. One of the criteria for its best performance is that the schools' inclusive education practices, namely provision of education for children with disabilities. The total number of students enrolled in the school at the time of the current research was 2721. Out of this number, 10 children with disabilities formed only .04% of the total population in the school. Among these number, three of them had visual impairments, two of them had hearing impairments, three children had intellectual disabilities, one was hard-of-hearing, and another had hard-of-hearing and speech problem. Three of the 10 children with disabilities were

girls. There were only two special needs educators who attended the training in degree and diploma summer program. One of them had a fifty days braille and sign language short term training.

Given that the school is implementing inclusive education, it is important to see the experience of how the children are learning and teachers are teaching and interacting. Therefore, this study aims to investigate whether the school and instructional activities are accessible for all children with disabilities in the school.

The study setting

Ethiopia has an estimated population of more than 90 million with diverse ethnic, religious, culture and language living together. In Ethiopia, more than 97 percent of children with disabilities and disadvantages are '*excluded'* from schools (Tefera, Admas, & Mulatie, 2016; Lewis & Bagree, 2013). According to the Ministry of Education, less than 3% of children with disabilities have access to primary education, and access to schooling decreases rapidly as children go to the next grade level (Temesgen, 2014). There is no certain statistical data about the enrollment rate of children with disabilities in Ethiopia as there is no common definition and people's interpretations of disability differ (Lewis & Bagree, 2013). Data concerning the educational situation of children with disabilities is misleading (Tefera et al., 2016). The 2007 census estimated that the prevalence of disability in Ethiopia was slightly higher than 800,000 showing that the prevalence was 1.09% (CSA, 2008), which is much lesser than the 1994 census by about 100,000 in the thirteen-year interval. On the contrary, a more focused baseline survey of persons with disabilities, reveals that such individuals in Ethiopia constitute a prevalence rate of 2.95 % (Tirussew Teferra, 1995). Even if the country has sanctioned and signed all the international legislations, conventions and declarations and has a number of national policy, programs, strategies and actions, the degree of exclusion of children with disability is exacerbated due to poverty, low family educational background, socio-culture, lack of trained staff and limited resource (African Child Policy Forum (ACPF), 2012; Lewis & Bagree, 2013; Tefera et al., 2016). Likewise, (Tefera et al., 2016;Franck, 2015) ascertained that the practice of inclusive education has been influenced by the practitioners and the community conception about *disability* and *inclusive education.*

Despite the considerable progress in training special needs educators, the country has a gap in the ability to provide appropriate instruction, support and accommodations for children with disabilities due to lack of systemic support, lack of training for teachers and school leaders, poor teaching methods, inflexible curriculum, inappropriate learning equipment, insufficient needs identification and assessment, and lack of resource (Tefera et al., 2016; Franck, 2015).

Effective practice of inclusive education needs competent teachers to manage resources, classrooms, adapt to new instructional modalities and to be familiar with

teaching materials (Lewis & Bagree, 2013). In a broader sense, high quality inclusive education requires knowledge about a student's disability and the sense for adequate needs for the students' disabilities (Franck 2015). In view of Franck's statement, teachers need to know how children can learn, what children need to learn, where and how to get supplementary educational resources. In this case, most of the primary school teachers and principals in Ethiopia lack awareness and competence in how to deal with instruction of children with disabilities (Tefera et al., 2016; Boisseau & Guy, 2012).

The practice of this entity has become a challenge (Tefera et al., 2016;Underwood & Frankel, 2012). In that light, this article aims to answer the following questions: How is the school accessible for children with disabilities? What support services are provided for children with disabilities in the school? How is inclusive education ensuring equal access for all children?

The objective of this study is therefore, to examine accessibility of education for children with disabilities in the school, support services provided for children with disabilities and the role of inclusive approach to enhance equal access for children with disabilities.

Methodology and Procedures of Data Collection

Qualitative research method and case study research design and interpretive phenomenological approaches were employed (Cresswell, 2007 ; Coyle, 2016) to describe accessibility and level of participation of children with disabilities and the phenomena of inclusive practice in the school.

The interview guidelines were prepared by the researcher with the framework of inclusive education components, such as access, participation and support systems. Individual interviews were conducted with a total of nine individuals separately in the school with two special needs teachers, five regular teachers and two parents of children with disabilities for duration of one hour each. Each individual was provided an opportunity to express feelings about inclusive education, accessibility of the educational services for children with disabilities in regular classrooms, the extent to which children with disabilities participate in the classroom and out-door activities designed for the development of social skills.

The interviewees were also asked about the support service systems, such as communication with parents, specialized support, equipment and supplies. The interview was confidentially conducted by audio recorder with the consent of the participants. The utility of the interpretative position is concerned with the understanding of the communal world through an investigation of the insights of that world by its participants (Bryman, 2006). In that light, the researcher described the practice from the perspectives of the teachers, school principals and parents.

According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) group interviews could be perceived as enabling multi-sensory channels to be used. Therefore, focus-group dis-

cussions were held with 10 participants from the school (three school principals, one special needs teacher, one special needs education expert and five regular teachers) guided by the researcher so that they could reflect on their views about, accessibility, participation and support system. The regular teachers were selected by using purposive sampling who were not participated in the interview and the principals, special needs education expert from the education office and special needs education teacher were also selected using purposive sampling.

The participants were able to explain their understandings of the world in which they lived (phenomenon), expressed how they regarded the inclusive education context from their own view points. The school physical environment including the classrooms followed by instructional activities, involving teachers–students' communication patterns, teachers ability to managing students' behaviors were monitored through the use of a checklist developed by the researcher. The classroom observation was carried out for four sessions in each classroom when different subject teachers teach for a duration of 40 minutes with in two months in four classrooms, including outdoor play activities.

The study also utilized documents such as, students-enrollment records, progress reports, communication media between the school community and the parents. These documents were accessed through the school and thoroughly analyzed by the researcher.

The participants were pre-informed about the interview questions so that they could focus on the notion of inclusive education. The audiotapes were transcribed by the researcher and the data were identified and analyzed by themes, using interpretive phenomenological analysis.

Limitations of this study

The main focus of this study is to show how inclusive education enhance access for children with disabilities. Therefore, the limitations of this study are that first, the research is carried in only one school which cannot be generalized for the region. Second, the curriculum issue is not addressed in this study. Third, in this study the prevalence of children with disabilities could not presented due to lack certain statistics in the region. Thus, further studies can be conducted to address these research gaps.

Findings

In this part, data collected via interview, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), observation of classroom instructional activities and related document are discussed as followed in three major thematic areas: (A) accessibility of the school and schooling for the children with disabilities, (B) knowledge and perception/expectations of the teachers, the school principals and parents about inclusive education, (C) support services provided for the children with disabilities. The responses gathered from the majority

of the interviewees were selected and documented, based on how well, distinct and illustrative the responses represented the level of experiences targeted for the students.

Accessibility of education and classroom instruction for children with disabilities

In Ethiopia, one of the major challenges of children with disabilities is lack of access to schools (Tefera et al., 2016). The admission of students with disabilities was handled by the school authorities through door-to-door campaigns within the neighborhoods of Harar- Township. There is a taskforce which consist of different stakeholders lead by the Woreda education offices as a chair person, representatives from Woreda administration and school principals as a members and secretary respectively. In addition, some teachers, religious leaders and traditional leaders are members of this taskforce team. Using community structures and cultural values to make education accessible for all children may be one of effective strategies in the country like Ethiopia with different religion, culture, and ethnic groups.

Regarding the physical settings of the school, it is evident from long duration observation conducted by the researcher that there are progressive actions in the school. In continuation with the researchers' observation and focus group discussions, it can be concluded that the environment was viably conducive and accommodative, having wheelchair ramps in most building annexes and bathrooms purposely designed for the children. Despite the availability of these facilities, the classrooms lack adequate light, the school lacks the skill of communality, equitability, flexibility for instructional activities, as recommended by Barton and Smith (2015).

As can be seen from the observations carried out in the classrooms, instructional activities are not accessible for children with disabilities. As the teachers did not design the lessons according to the children's choices and needs, the activities were not participatory and they did not relate to their prior experiences. For example, in the case of a child with hard-of-hearing and speech problem, the teachers delivered the same teaching approach without modifying the instructional materials and the seating arrangements. As the researcher realized from the observation sessions in the classroom, the child was sitting on the middle seat of the class and he could not hear what the teacher said. When the teacher asked him questions, his response was not related to what the teacher asked him. The child was very passive, he never raised his hands to answer the teacher's questions during observation taken place. There were not any interactions with his classmates, any talk but during the break time he interacted with some of his classmates in the playground.

One of the qualities in inclusive classrooms, is the use of multi-sensory communication and variety of teaching methods (Janney & Snell, 2013). The exclusion of children with disabilities is not only limited to the school, but also within classrooms based on the teachers expectation (Cologon, 2013; Franck, 2015). The interview re-

sults and classroom observations revealed that most of the teachers did not provide multiple options to the children in order to develop functional skills. Instead, they used traditional teaching approaches and communication methods (Tefera et al., 2016). It seemed to the researcher that the teachers were apparently less motivated to modify and adapt to the instructional modalities necessary, as it has been suggested (Janney & Snell, 2013; Wapling, 2016). All in all, it can be concluded that the school is less accessible both in enrollment and provision of equitable access for the children with disabilities in the classrooms.

Support services provided for the children with challenges

Support services are a crucial provision for children with disabilities which makes learning simple, interesting and meaningful (Janney & Snell, 2013). Regarding the support for the children with disabilities, the school principals and parents reported that the school supports by providing the children with different materials needed for their education. For example, exercise books, pens, pencils and other supplies, including tutorial support, after school and sometimes on Saturdays. The tutorial program includes academics and sign language for the visually-impaired students and students who were hard–of–hearing, respectively.

Even though the school has a resource center, it is not sufficiently equipped with the necessary technologies (for example computer supported learning materials), or trained personnel to manage the facilities. The school has no school nurses, therapists and counselors. In addition, there are not any support services and training provided for families of children with disabilities. As there is no IEP as well as a transition plans in the school, parents do not have any information about the academic and psychosocial progress of their children.

Furthermore, the school has no liaison with the hospitals and health centers, so health assessment was not performed on the children in efforts to prevention or minimize complications. The school has no documents related with their health status diagnosed in the hospitals; for example, provisions for the hard-of-hearing and speech therapy for children with speech disorders.

Inclusive approach as a means to make education accessible for children with disabilities

a) Regular teachers and the school principals knowledge and positive perception as a key elements to make education accessible for children with disabilities

Regarding the teachers' understanding about Inclusive Education (IE) the result from the interview and FGD revealed that regular teachers have no adequate knowledge and understanding because of lack of adequate training. The school directors and

the regular teachers reported that they have attended only a one-day awareness creation workshop and have no specific training related to teaching children with disabilities and IE, except the two teachers who are responsible for the support of children with disabilities. It is very significant finding when considering that Odom (2016) argued that teacher education should be the hallmark of the successful implementation of IE, particularly teacher's professional development. A majority of the respondents who participated in the interview and FGD reported the lack of training on more specific methods of teaching in IE classrooms. Even if the government colleges and teacher education programs at universities teach an introductory course for all pre-service teachers since 2007, most of the teachers in this school had not even taken such a course.

When regular teachers and principals were asked which skills and knowledge needed to be provided in the future, they suggested that pedagogical skills, methods of interaction with the students, how to manage students with disabilities and their behavior. In addition, they reported that the lack of ability of assessment and identification of children with disabilities.

The school has only two special needs education teachers who had taken a 15-day Braille and Sign language skills course. Moreover, regular teachers did not collaborate with the special needs education teachers, and they assumed that the only responsible teachers for children with disabilities were special needs teachers. The literature suggests that inclusive classroom teachers should collaborate with their counterparts by exchanging, updating and providing information on time and place (Odom, 2016; Mambo, 2011). Frankel and Underwood (2012) also ascertained that high-quality inclusive education programs need regular teachers with qualities such as collaborative and positive perception, commitment, appropriate teaching skills, the ability to manage classroom, to adapt and modify instruction.

Regarding the concept of inclusive education, it was interesting to note a range of knowledge about what IE is: almost all of the regular teachers who participated in the interview and FGD had at least heard about IE; whereas the two teachers who had received training in Braille and sign language, and the school principals have better understanding than their counterparts. However, regular teachers defined IE as merely placing children with disabilities together with regular children in a regular classroom (Franck, 2015; Dagnew, 2013). One of the Regular education teachers defined IE as follows:

> *"Inclusive education is teaching children with disabilities and without disabilities together such as mental retardation, blind and deaf and special needs education is the education of disabilities."*

They associate IE merely with the placement of children with disabilities (Dagnew, 2013; Franck, 2015). In their opinion, they labelled the children as dependent, needy and incapacitated (Franck, 2015; Kearney, 2011). All in all, there is a lack of

clarity and consistency about what constitutes IE among regular teachers at the school.

Concerning the perception/attitude of teachers about children with disabilities, most of them reported that they had good feeling towards the children. However, they perceived that having children with disabilities in their classrooms counted as burden.

Majority of the school teachers and the principals believe that children with disabilities should learn alongside their peers in regular classes (Kearney, 2011). However, some teachers proposed that children with disabilities should be taught in special classes or special schools depending on their severity of the disabilities. This suggests that teachers and principals close their doors due to lack of awareness about the right of the children to learn, play and participate in the community activities (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2017).

Regarding the challenges that face the practices of IE, the teachers reported that they lacked teaching materials, training, expertise and experience in teaching children with disabilities, which is similar to the findings of Odom (2016) and Behlol (2011). The study also revealed out that large class-size was an impeding factor for the teaching–learning process in inclusive classrooms. One of the major barriers for regular teachers in teaching children with disabilities was frustration and lack of confidence due to lack of experience (Odom, 2016; Behlol, 2011). This is one of the signs of the lack of skills and training needed to support the children. Furthermore, the school principals and the special needs education teachers reported that lack of appropriate funding, lack of commitment of political leaders and collaboration of parents (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education 2011). Overall, the report indicated that the school teachers, principals and the community needed relevant training to implement quality inclusive education program (Odom, 2016).

Regarding the expectations about the outcome of inclusive education for the children with disabilities, the results obtained from interview shown that there is a variation among the participants. This variation may be due to difference in awareness level and experience in teaching children with disabilities (Franck, 2015). Majority of teachers said that they do not have any experience in teaching children with disability to say any more about their achievement. However, some of the teachers expect that this child cannot benefit from inclusive education program. One of the teachers stated that:

> *Children with disabilities cannot complete even the primary school (grade 8).*
>
> *So, I will not expect the child to be a teacher or some government worker.*

However, the expectation of the school principals and the two special needs educators was different from the teachers. They believed that children with disabilities can learn, can do, and live independent life as the normal children. One of the school principals stated as follows regarding here expectation.

As far as the children learn properly and supported by the teachers and the community, they can learn, succeeded and live their life.

Proceeding with the interview session, one of the special needs educators made the following statement contrary to the regular teachers:

Since all regular students have their individual goals, therefore, children with disabilities should also be expected to have their own individual goals to be achieved. Attending the school may help him to play and interact with other student and to support his/her mother.

b) Collaboration with parents is essential to make inclusive education successful

As far as the parents concerned, they regarded as a place where children go for socialization only (Shani & Koss, 2015). A mother of a child with disability indicated as follows:

My hope is to see my child playing and running with other peers in the school and neighbor. I was very busy in caring him when my child was at home with me. My prior expectation is to see him laughing and sharing with other children...

By virtue of the responses given by the parents, teachers and principals regarding their expectations about the outcome of inclusive education, the idea of socialization was seen as the primary purpose, rather than academics.

Also, a mother of a second grade child with hard-of-hearing and speech impairment stated that,

My expectation for my child is for him to become an engineer in the future.

To sum up, the expectations of the mothers, principals and special educators is far better than regular teachers. This indicate that the school principals and special needs educators have awareness about the benefit of IE and concept of disability.

Discussion

This study attempts to show how quality IE programs ensure access to education for children with disabilities. Quality IE programs enhance access and quality education for all children. It advances the education of children with disabilities by changing the attitude of teachers, parents, their peers and all other stakeholders. It also makes the school environment friendly, instructions individualized and the lessons interesting and meaningful. Inclusive education assures accessible education for children with

disabilities by providing neighborhood schools, minimizing barriers of learning.

There are no similarities in the understanding of what IE means among teachers and the school principals. However, regular teachers in Jegnoch Metasebiya Primary school recognize that they have no knowledge and skills to make teaching individualized and interesting. The teachers also realized that they had no experience and expertise which improves teacher's competences and classroom authorities to handle the children in an inclusive classroom. Flexibility in teacher role is one of the key components in the success of inclusive education practices. In addition teachers need to meet unique needs of children with disabilities and also able to adapt changing roles and responsibilities. The school teachers acknowledge that they did not collaborate with special education teachers, however the school had only two special education teachers and no other support service providers such as therapists and other paraprofessionals. The regular teachers and special needs educators reported that the school in collaboration with the Woreda and regional education offices should organize and provide continuous staff development trainings and workshops on IE and awareness creation programs for the community to promote and improve the program.

The lack of responsible personnel who have knowledge in the specific field to monitor and evaluate the implementation of IE program different levels should be noted. For example, there is no position which invites special needs educators at Woreda or regional level or the position may be held by another subject teacher. Therefore, IE the program lacks systemic organization and coordination at school and Woreda level.

The study also indicates that there is difference between parents and teachers on the level of expectation about the benefits of IE for children with disabilities. It indicates that more work has to be done to understand the perception and expectation of parents of children without disabilities and their peers.

However, the study carried out in the school indicated that the awareness level of regular teachers about inclusive education is very low. Teachers in the school use the terms inclusive education, integration, special needs education and special education interchangeably. They understand inclusive education as merely placing children with disabilities in a regular classrooms. The school teachers conceptualize the notion of inclusive education with the belief that they hold about the cause of disability. Thus, the attitude of teachers, school principals, peers, and parents is not changed about the education of children with disabilities resulted with the negative expectations of parents, teachers, and their peers about the benefit and academic achievement they can gain from education.

As can be inferred from the total population of children with disabilities in the country who are of school age; the accessibility of education for the children is also very low. Support services which increases their independence in adaptive social skills, improve academic performance and enhance maximum potential are not well organized and coordinated systemically.

The teaching methods used by teachers in the inclusive classroom were not participatory, the lessons were not designed on the best interest of the children (individualized), learners preferences and choices.

Conclusion

The Jegnoch Metasebiya Primary school, in Harari Reginal state, Ethiopia, has been making its effort to implement inclusive education. The experience of the school and the taskforce to make education access for children with disabilities, particularly the effort made to increase enrollment, is in a good progress and it can be an indicator of collaborative effort to make inclusive education practices effective.

Even though the school principals and special needs educators have better knowledge than their counterparts, the school has a gap in awareness creation prior to the implementation inclusive education program.

One can also conclude that there is also encouragement from the decision makers in allocating budget, in enforcing the schools to implement inclusive education accepting that inclusion in education is one of effective approaches to access quality education for children with disabilities.

However, the practice of IE in the school affected by lack of training for the regular teachers and lack of systemic and systematic support. There is no responsible body at Woreda education office to monitor and evaluate the practice and to bridge the gap evident during the implementation specifically for the program.

Access to schooling for children with disability is very low in the school when we compare children with disabilities enrolled with the total number of children without disabilities. The involvement level of the children with disabilities in the classrooms instructional activities is also very low, as they are merely placed in regular classrooms.

Regular teachers have no adequate knowledge of the concept and practices of inclusive pedagogy, the concept of IE and the needs of children with disabilities. The teachers are are not familiar with teaching children with disabilities, and they regard having a child with disability in the classroom as a burden.

Teachers' and parents' expectation of the benefit and outcomes from the inclusive education program vary as some of the parents expect academic and social outcomes, whereas the counterparts assume that they are dependent, saddled and barriers for others learning and teaching. Most of the teachers' attitude and expectation towards the inclusion of children with disabilities is not good as they believe that the children cannot learn and are dependent.

The school has no Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) and instruction used in the classroom to make the lesson meaningful so that the children can develop functional skills to solve daily challenges faced in their lives.

There is no collaboration among special needs educators, regular teachers, parents and other support services providers. The school does not organize and coordinate

the program in synergic a manner that makes inclusion successful. The school has no nurses, therapist, counselors and well trained special needs educator specific to different disability areas.

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