

Assessment on the Level of School Enrollment, Participation and Challenges of Students with Disabilities in Dire Dawa Administration, Ethiopia

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Abstract

This study was carried out to investigate school enrollment, participation and challenges of students with disabilities in Dire Dawa Administration, Ethiopia. To this end both quantitative and qualitative research method was employed. The data was obtained through interview with key informants, open and close ended questionnaire on the level of school enrollment, participation and challenges of students with disabilities from 98 students and 28 school principals and teachers who are currently working with students with disabilities from both urban and rural schools of the administration. The result of the study depicts that; the school enrollment and participation of students with disabilities in Dire Dawa Administration has been improving recently but still it is somehow medium. Physical in accessibility of schools, lack of public awareness, individualization, trained teachers, teaching aids, presence of negative societal attitude and stereotype against students with disabilities, and poor self esteem of students with disabilities are the major challenges that have been identified by this study for school enrollment and participation of students' with disabilities in the Administration. Based on these findings important recommendations have been suggested and future priority areas have been identified so as to improve school enrollment and participation of students with disabilities.

1. Introduction

Disability is not something which is too far from difference in sex, age, intellectual ability, skills, religious and attitude. But it limits a person's mobility or his or her ability to hear, see, taste or smell, but it does not limit his or her strengths and abilities DFID (2000).

According to World Vision Organization (2007) report it is estimated that the majority of children with disabilities in Africa do not go to school at all. Similarly, it is estimated that the figure of disabled students in Ethiopia could be as high as 8 million. The case is more pronounced for disabled women than men since their poverty is linked in part to the fact that they have very limited opportunities for education and skills development. According to Tesemma, S. T. (2011) vulnerability and lack of access to education are highly complex and context-related for women. They are routinely denied access to the same opportunities for early, primary and secondary education, or life-skills and vocational training, or both, that are available to other children.

Conversely as it is indicated in different literatures children with disabilities have lower educational attainment than other children which leads to lower economic status and it was found that they are more likely to leave school earlier with fewer qualifications. Since it is believed that the important exit ways out of poverty is identified as formal education, especially where it improves the quality of labor, but due to discrimination and stigmatization, the chances to access education and employment are very restricted for students with disabilities.

So education is a tool that can reduce discrimination against children with disabilities and tackle poverty. Education, particularly inclusive education, has a pivotal role reducing discrimination through enabling children with and without disabilities to grow up together. Education gives children with disabilities skills to allow them to become positive role models and join the employment market, thereby helping to prevent poverty. Since education is a basic human right and a significant factor in the development of children, communities, and countries we need to open classroom doors to all children, especially girls, so as to help them break the intergenerational chains of poverty. However, based on the 1995 survey in Ethiopia the percentage of children in special need education program was nearly insignificant. Despite some encouraging efforts in recent years, there is little noticeable adjustment in the school system that would help to accommodate the need of disabled students.

2. Methodology

A cross sectional study design was used where all government primary schools that deliver formal education for students with disabilities and found both in urban and rural kebeles' of the Administration were incorporated and the study was conducted starting from February 15-2014.

All students with various forms of disabilities who are attending formal school in the Administration both in urban and rural schools are considered as the population of this study. Accordingly, 205 male and 159 female

with the total of 364 students with disabilities are considered in this study.

Actively enrolled students with disabilities found in the Administration who are above age 12 and starting from grade 6th to 8th. Further more teachers who are actively involved and working with students with disabilities were also included.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n= refers to sample size

N= refers to population on study

e= error of tolerance at 0.05% level

Using this formula, and considering the already mentioned inclusion and exclusion criteria the researchers have selected only 98 students' with disabilities from 57 schools both from urban and rural kebeds and additional of 28 teachers were selected purposively.

The study used primary data which was collected from actively enrolled students with disabilities of both urban and rural schools of the Dire Dawa Administration. It included students who are in a grade range of 6th to 8th. The questionnaire was translated in to local languages (such as Amharic and Oromiffa) and all participants were asked to complete the questionnaire prepared for the study. An interview was also held with some key informants. Variables related to students' self-esteem was managed using likert scale in 1 up to 5 rating scale. The study also used secondary data which was obtained from published and unpublished works or materials, journals, books and articles and mainly from Dire Dawa Administration education Bureau.

Prior to data feeding the questionnaire was checked and edited for any errors. Descriptive data analysis was carried out for variables such as socio demographic characteristics, level of school enrollment and participation and self-esteem. Nevertheless, data on enrollment status and challenges of students with disability were analyzed in qualitative way.

3. Results and Discussion

The table (**Table 1**) below presents the age, sex, educational level, family income level, the time when schooling started, the type of disability and whom are you living with. Based on this the table clearly depicts that from the total of 98 students 57 (58.14%) of the respondents were males while the other 41 (41.84 %) of respondents were females which shows that nearly equal number of male and female students are participated in this study. The table also shows that the age limit of participants totally ranges between ages 16-20 (52%). Besides, the average number of respondents, 49 (50%) are 5-8th grade students. More over most of students' families' income is less than 100 birr per month (49.92%) and less than 10 % of the families earn more than 1500 birr per month. Students were also asked about the time when they started schooling and accordingly majority of respondents 52 (53.06%) have started schooling at the age of 8-10 and insignificant number of students 5 (5.1 %) have started their school life at the age of above 14 years old.

With regard to the type of disability, according to this survey, 36.73% of students are physically impaired, 21.42 % of students are visually impaired and 24.48 % of students have hearing impairment which is followed by 11.22% of intellectual impairment and 6.12students with % of other type impairments. Moreover, about whom they are living with, 37.75% of respondents are living with parents followed by 31.63% of students who are living with relatives. And only 2% of respondents are living alone.

Nature of School Enrollment and Participation of Students with Disability
Table 1 Socio Demographic Characteristics of Student respondents

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	57	58.16
	Female	41	41.84
Age	12-15	35	35.7
	16-20	51	52.
	>20	12	12.3
Educational level	1-4	42	42.86
	5-8	49	50
	9-10	7	7.14
Family Income Level	<100 birr	45	49.92
	100-500 birr	23	23.46
	600-1000 birr	15	15.3
	1100-1500 birr	10	10.2
	>1500 birr	5	5.1
The time when schooling started	5-7 years	27	27.55
	8-10 years	52	53.06
	11-13 years	14	14.28
	>14 years	5	5.1
The type of disability	Visual impairment	21	21.42
	Physical impairment	36	36.73
	Hearing impairment	24	24.48
	Intellectual impairment	11	11.22
	Other	6	6.12
Whom are you living with	Parents	37	37.75
	Alone	2	2.04
	Relatives	31	31.63
	Brother/Sister	25	25.51
	In institution	1	1.02
	Other	2	2.04

Source: Researchers' survey data, 2014

As it can be seen in the table 1, 42.86% of students have supposed school enrollment and participation of students with disability as medium and close to this number (31.63%) of respondents have supposed the enrollment and participation of students with disability as low. In addition only 1% of students have rated their perception on enrollment and participation of students with disability as high. Similarly, 39.28% and 32.14% of teacher participants have supposed the enrollment and participation of students with disability as medium and low respectively. But 7.14% of teacher respondents perceived the participation and enrollment as very high.

Table 2 Students' and teachers' perceptions on school enrollment and participation of students with disability

Items	Respondents	Characteristics	Count	%
How do you perceive school enrollment and participation of students with disability?	Students	Very low	19	19.39
		Low	31	31.63
		Medium	42	42.86
		High	5	5.1
		Very high	1	1
	Teachers	Very low	5	17.86
		Low	9	32.14
		Medium	11	39.28
		High	1	3.57
		Very high	2	7.14

Source: Researchers' survey data, 2014

Student Services accessed by Schools

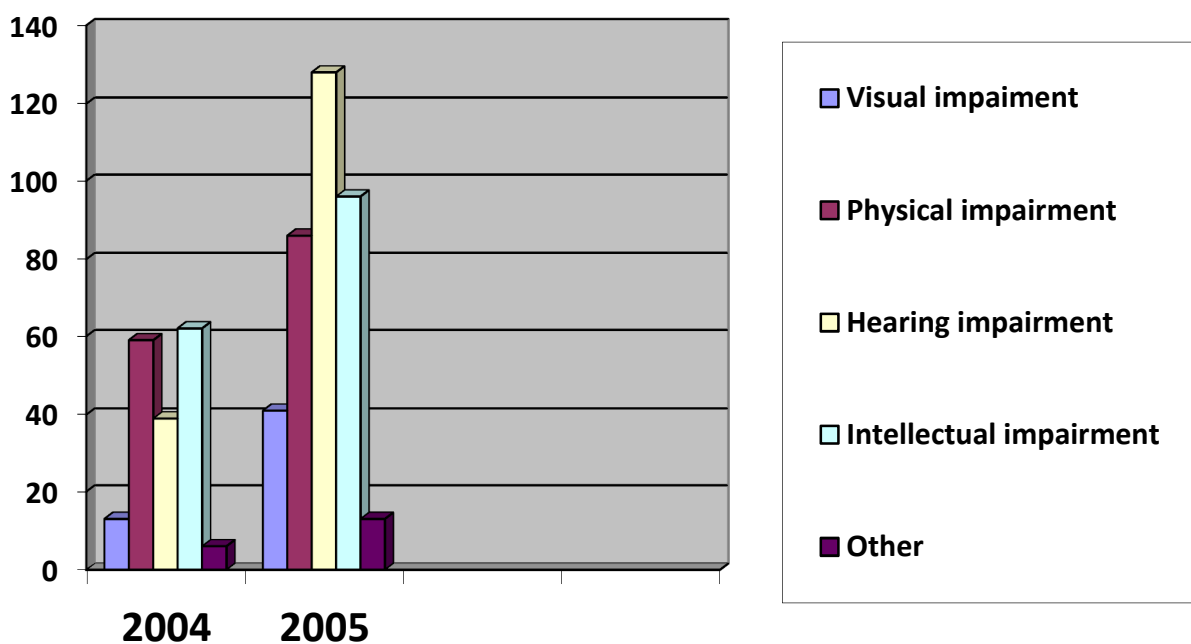
As it is depicted in the table (Table 3) below, students were asked to show their feeling about the types of services accessed by schools. Accordingly, only 12.24% of participants have got pre-school training, 10.2% have got remedial treatment by schools, 8.16% have got financial aid, 18.36% have got mental health services, 89.8% of students are enjoying the services provided by the school resource centers and 40.82% of students are participating in school extracurricular activities.

Table 3 Breakdowns of Student Services Accessed by schools

No.	What type of help are you given by schools?	Response	Frequency	%
1	Pre-school training	Yes	12	12.24
		No	86	87.76
2	Remedial treatment	Yes	10	10.2
		No	88	89.8
3	Financial aid	Yes	8	8.16
		No	90	91.84
4	Mental health services	Yes	18	18.36
		No	80	81.64
5	Resource center/special services	Yes	88	89.8
		No	10	10.2
6	Participation in extracurricular activities	Yes	40	40.82
		No n	58	59.18

Source: Researchers' survey data, 2014.

Chart 1. Evolution of numbers of children with disability enrolled in schools from 2004-2005 E.C



The above chart (Chart 1) depicts that, from 10 schools included in this survey, seven (7) schools are inclusive nature. Whereas, two (2) schools have special class nature for students with disability and only one (1) school uses both inclusive and segregation form simultaneously.

Challenges of Students with Disability

Barriers to access and success can be viewed in physical as well as structural sense. But more than that, it is the curriculum, the pedagogy, the examination and the school's approach, which create barriers. Unless these unseen barriers are taken care of, access to all children and an assurance of success to all would remain a far problematic. Challenges to education for students with disability can take a variety of forms. They can be physical, technological, systemic, financial, or attitudinal, or they can arise from an education provider's failure to make available a needed accommodation in a timely manner. According to this finding the following appeared to be the main challenges for students with disabilities:

a. Lack of public awareness

The society is more or less not aware of possible consequences and significance of teaching education for people with disability and potential abilities and skills to be gain for people living with disability. Even the concept of challenges of students with disability is not evenly familiar to our society. Mostly our society perceives it as natural that children with disability are not accessed and enrolled to schools and attributes this in to being unlucky and curse. Even though at a government level, there is a consensus among schools about the necessity of promoting equal opportunities; however, at practical level this is not the case as there are serious misconceptions related to, disability and education, inclusive education and even about disability itself.

In line with this point, in table (Table 5) below; students were asked to express their feelings about how the society that they are living with perceive them comparing with people with no any disability cases. Accordingly, most students (66.3%) have replied they (society) did perceive them as not equal with people with no disability cases.

Table 5 Societies' Perception about Students' with disability

Statement	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Does the society that you are living with perceive you as equal as people with no any disability cases?	65	66.3	33	33.7

b. Physical Inaccessibility

Students with disabilities continue to encounter physical barriers to educational services, such as a lack of ramps and/or elevators in multi-level school buildings, heavy doors, inaccessible toilets, and/or inaccessible transportation to and from school. Usually what is known is, schools, hotels, hospitals and most other places where public services are provided are built with no valuing the interest of people with disability. Most students at the secondary schools of rural kebeles in Dire Dawa Administration such as “*lege oda gunnunfeta kebele*” also experience difficulty in securing accessible students housing since most of them came from far to school.

c. Lack of Individualization

At the elementary and secondary levels, where students with disability are few in numbers (*Aba Yohannes, Harela, Hula hulu, lege oda gunnunfeta*), some teachers are relying on “blanket” approaches to teach, rather than assessing and evaluating each student on an individual basis. Some assessment and evaluation schemes rely on pre-set categories and labels, and emphasize on student “with no disability” rather than implementing inclusive approach working for both groups. Inclusive education policies are rigidly applied and do not take into account the interest of student’s with disability. At all schools participated in this survey, there is a need to be a greater recognition of how to apply inclusive approach effectively. But this doesn’t mean that all students have experienced discrimination in the same way. For example, some students with disabilities in “*Sabiyan*” and “*Afetessa*” Schools have replied that there is no such discrimination and exclusion during assessment and evaluation in classes.

d. Negative Attitudes and Stereotypes

Students with disabilities in all schools included in this study have faced negative attitudes and stereotypes in the education system. Lack of knowledge about and sensitivity to disability issues on the part of some educators, staff, students and the community have sometimes made academic life difficult for students with disabilities to access educational services equally as it is shown in the table (Table 6) below.

Table 6 Attitude and Stereotype against Students with disabilities

Question	Concerned personnel	Positive		Negative	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
What is the attitude of the following personnel towards children with disability?	Teachers/Staff	89	90.81	9	9.19
	Community	22	22.4	76	77.6
	Students with no disability	45	45.9	53	54.1

e. Lack of Trained Teachers

As it is clearly known students with disability should be taught by teachers who got training in special need education. The educational policy document of Ethiopia has stated it clearly. But in schools where this study has focused there are very few teachers got the training. From 28 teachers involved in this study 6 of them have got short term training in special need education, 3 of them have either diploma or degree in special need education and majority (19)of them have no any training in special need education. The following chart is about number of teachers trained by special need education;

Chart 3 Level of Teachers' Training in Special Need Education



In addition to this teachers respondents included in this survey have listed lack of training, lack of attention from regional education Bureau and concerned stakeholders as an other problems related with teaching students with disability.

f. Material problems

For successful completion of the objective of a lesson materials are very essential. According to the views of the participants in this study, material problem is another problem challenging not only students with disabilities but also the general teaching –learning process in schools. Speaking to materials related to students with disability, both teacher and student respondents have listed out material problems like

- ❖ Lack of books prepared for students with disabilities (like books for brail reading)
- ❖ Lack of hearing aid which would facilitate/help learning for students with hearing impairment
- ❖ A number of studies have shown that many school systems, particularly those in urban and high-poverty areas, are plagued by decaying buildings that threaten the health, safety, and learning opportunities of students. Good facilities appear to be an important precondition for student learning, provided that other conditions are present that support a strong academic program in the school. A growing body of research has linked student achievement and behavior to the physical building conditions and overcrowding. Therefore, physical building conditions decaying environmental conditions such as peeling paint, crumbling plaster, nonfunctioning toilets, poor lighting, inadequate ventilation, and inoperative heating and cooling systems can affect the learning as well as the health and the morale of staff and students. According to this investigation, many of respondents have showed problems related with building and infrastructures.
- ❖ Overcrowding schools are also found to be a serious problem in many schools surveyed, particularly in the rural schools. As a result, students find themselves trying to learn while jammed into spaces never intended as classrooms. Although research on the relationship between overcrowding and student learning has been limited, there is some evidence, particularly in high-poverty schools, that overcrowding can have an adverse impact on learning.

g. Problems within the Self /Self -esteem of Students with Disabilities/

Table 7 Self Esteem of Students with Disabilities across Gender

Level of Self -esteem	Sex		Total	Percentage
	Male	Female		
0-16(Low)	36	30	66	64.68
17-25(Average)	18	10	28	27.44.
26-40(High)	3	1	4	3.92
Total	57	41	98	100

Source: Researchers' survey data, 2014

As it is depicted in the above table, majority of students have low self esteem (67.35%) and 25.57% with average type of self esteem. Of those respondents there are only 4% of students with high self esteem. Therefore, in this figure it is shown that the challenge is not only from group afar to the victims but it is also within them. In the table above, majority of students with disability have low self esteem. Hence it could be considered as challenge with the self.

Comparing the self esteem of respondents across sex, around 63.15% of male students have low self esteem but 73.17 % of female students have low self esteem. Only 3% of male students and 1% of female students have high self esteem.

Mechanisms to Improve Participation and Enrollment of Students with Disabilities

Identification of students for enrollment, participation and special education placement serves multiple purposes that have direct and indirect benefits as well as risks. In this study, current special education identification,

classification, and assessment in Dire Dawa Administration practices are described.

Suspected disabilities should be evaluated to increase the enrollment and participation of students with disabilities and to determine whether they are eligible for special education services and, if eligible, to determine what services will be provided. In many schools, the results of this evaluation may also affect how much funding assistance the school will receive to meet the students' special needs.

Special education classification is more or less not uniform across schools. Students with identical characteristics can be diagnosed as disabled in one state/school but not in another and may be reclassified when they move across state or school district lines.

Usually most disabilities with a clear medical basis are recognized by physicians or parents soon after birth or during the preschool years. In contrast, the majority of students with disabilities are initially referred for evaluation by their classroom teacher (or parents) because of severe and chronic achievement or behavioral problems.

Though there are many classification systems, there is, however, no official special education classification system which is used uniformly across schools in Dire Dawa Administration. But simply for statistical purposes, students are registered by their disability type.

Schools in Dire Dawa Administration have been applying the following ways to address students with disabilities who are not enrolled to formal education.

- Through different local associations within Dire Dawa Administration community. This is with the view that when members of those local associations are informed about the relevance of education for children with disabilities, they are going to disseminate this information for those families of children with disabilities and even they may encourage disabled children to do so.
- Through social workers/ mobile animators working with disabled people and their family. They are working under the supervision of different local and international nongovernmental organizations (the likes of Handicap international, Cheshire ...etc.) aiming at addressing the problems of disabled people. Of those tasks expected from social workers one is creating awareness on the importance of education. Doing that business means improving the number of students with disabilities enrolled in to schools. Therefore, both Education Bureau of Dire Dawa Administration and schools are working together with those organizations in line with this objective.
- Through different associations formed by victims of disabilities
- Through students' parent committee
- Through mass media and publications (TV, FM radio, flyers, brushers etc.)

I. Involvement of Parents' of Disabled Children

Both disabled students and teachers in the study had noticed there should be improvements in parental involvement in schools. They suggest that the schools shall focus on increasing parental involvement in reaching those children with disabilities. Consequently, students with disabilities and teachers have said the following types of approaches and supports that parents should participate:

a. Involvement in individual Student's learning

- Parents of students with disabilities should welcome and receive information from schools concerning education and the right of children.
- If parents find specific information about their own child's schooling activity and if they are provided information in advance, they can plan ahead on how to support their children on educational issues.
- Sometimes parents' impairments to involve make them tired or mental distress makes concentration difficult. Therefore, meeting and continuous dialogue with schools and concerned bodies are helpful here to come up with the solution.
- Some schools should have dedicated staff to support families where a child needs extra help. Therefore, disabled students' parents should find these staff very helpful and should work together for the betterment of their children's academic life.

b. Involvement in the life of the school

- Some disabled students in some schools like "Sabiyan" and "Afetessa" told us about some very good experiences of volunteering in schools. So here flexibility by the school and trust between the school and the disabled parent is a key. Parents have to be volunteers at their children's school. And some schools with few students with disability cases have to set flexible policy that allowed parents to volunteer for as many hours as they liked and to help children with a subject of their own choice.

c. Involvement on representative bodies

- Schools have to allow and actively encourage parents of disabled children to get involved in Parent Councils and School Boards.
- Schools can include parents of disabled students in sending information in to society and it can help to recognizing that some parents will need enroll their children and to become involved and to stay involved in their children's issue.

In general supporting parents' participation in their children's schooling has been a goal of education policy for decades in Ethiopia. In the contemporary education policy of Ethiopian government, parents are seen as partners for schools in improving educational standards, with an entitlement to be involved at least in the following three areas;

- ❖ In helping their own children to learn ('individual child's learning');
- ❖ In the life of the school;
- ❖ On representative bodies

II. Schools involvement

The educational policy document introduced a disability equality duty for most educational authorities in Ethiopia. According to the participants of this study, Schools in Dire Dawa Administration are required to be:

- ❖ Promote equality between disabled and non-disabled people;
- ❖ Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment of disabled people;
- ❖ Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- ❖ Encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

4.1.6. Mechanisms to Improve the Challenges of Students with Disability

The principle of basic education as a human right has been accepted internationally. However, the experience in many countries shows that a large number of children with disability are not able to complete minimum number of school years. They face variety of barriers before coming to school and even within the school. This study has attempted a response by analyzing the enrollment, participation, challenges of students with disability and solutions for those challenges. The following are some of possible solutions recommended by participants of this study

a. Rising public awareness

As it is clearly shown in the above part, lack of public awareness about what disability connotes and importance of education for those children with disability is one of the problems; working on this agenda has to be one of the solutions for the challenges of students with disability.

One of the strategies and identified solution by different studies is to increase awareness of disability and education via a collaborative effort, both at the government level and throughout all segments of society.

It is clearly understood that in developing countries there is no clear voice pushing for change on these issues and awareness raising can be accomplished at relatively minimal cost. The stigma surrounding disability and the fear people have of "catching" disability are additional issues that can be addressed through raising awareness.

There are several approaches in increasing awareness about the educational needs of disabled children. Mainly the following are the basic points to be focused to rise public awareness about disability;

- The community of people interested in these issues should start writing letters to high-level individuals.
- Stories and anecdotes about educating children with disabilities can be used to help people understand the issues and see the potential for change.
- The issue could also be elevated and made more compelling if looked at from an economic and human rights standpoint.
- Networking the parents of disabled children is an important opportunity for raising awareness as well as for improving education at a local level.

b. Put into operation the Rights of people with Disability

There are human rights laws for people living with disability. However, sometimes the mainstream human rights community doesn't currently recognize disability as falling under their scope of work. Instead, the disability cause is seen as a charity topic. The UN, however, has already had a treaty on the rights of people with disabilities. All of the rights declared by UN have to tie back to human rights, a notion that resonates with a broad spectrum of people.

Focusing on the human rights of people with disabilities has great potential to increase enrolment and participation of people with disability in to schools.

c. Equitable access to education

The general and universal right to education has been well established for some time. In recent years the main reference point to inform this debate has been the UNESCO Statement on Special Needs Education, in which 92 governments participated. The Statement affirmed international agreement on the principle of 'education for all' but also emphasized the principle that disabled children should be taught in the same mainstream schools as their non-disabled neighborhood peers.

Thus regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.

Therefore, Education systems are required to:

- Ensure persons with disabilities' access to 'inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary compulsory education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live
- Provide 'reasonable accommodation of the individual's educational needs
- Provide adequate support 'within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education
- Develop 'effective individualized support measure in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion'.
- Take appropriate measures enabling persons with disabilities to 'learn life and social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education and as members of the community'.

d. Inclusion: a solution to barriers and success

Inclusive schools are designed with a vision and principle that believe in the culture of rights, social justice and equity. It believes that all children are not the same, and accepts diversity as strength rather than a problem. It believes in certain basic pedagogy that children learn in different ways, and relates success more with the learning of life and social skills than scoring high marks in exams. The admission policy of such schools would accept children from a diverse community rather than reject on the ground of admission test scores or other physical, social and economic factors. Inclusive schools follow flexible curricula that would respond to the diverse needs of children. Child-centered pedagogy and application of Gardner's (1993) Multiple Intelligence (MI) theory are other major departure from the traditional schools that inclusive schools would follow. The UNESCO Framework has again highlighted the need of child-centered pedagogy for addressing the educational needs of the disadvantaged and the disabled.

Inclusive schools use variety of innovative practices to get children with disability involved and participating in learning processes. Some of the inclusion strategies are listed as under (Jha, 2002,)

- Whole class inclusive teaching
- Group/cooperative/collaborative learning
- Peer tutoring/child-to-child learning
- Activity based learning
- Team approach/problem solving
- Equity in assessment/examinations

Inclusive education and its evolution in school system as a process for removing barriers to access and success is a growing phenomenon. The strategies suggested above have been tried out in many schools across the countries and have also conceptual and pedagogical backing.

e. Attitude change

Several studies provide evidence about the ingredients of attitude change in the context of disability awareness. Some of these studies reinforce theories of contact or exposure, whilst others engage with a wider range of factors influencing attitude change. Murfitt (2006) states that attitude change towards people with disabilities is most likely to occur through experience, and therefore attitude change should be based on experience whenever possible. This experience can range from an everyday event to a once off occurrence through a formal awareness program. Although continual contact over a period of time between people with disabilities and people without a disability is preferable. So, to come up with positive attitude change towards disability the concerned body would most likely develop awareness programs addressed the following three key factors:

- Interactions between people with disabilities and people without disabilities must be based on experience as much as possible;
- There must be equal status in the relationship between the person with a disability and the person without a disability;
- Each person should be working towards a common goal

Thus it is assumed that if these key factors are addressed, positive attitudes towards people with a disability are more likely to emerge.

f. Training

According to this investigation most of teachers teaching students with disability are not trained in special need education. So they may need training and support to understand and implement their role and responsibilities appropriately. Such training can equip teachers with the tools, skills and knowledge to be effective in their teaching profession. Training should include guidance on their roles and responsibilities, inclusive education as well as on the management of confidential information, conducting research, speaking on behalf of others and strategies for reaching the voice of others. Such training could be incorporated into the curriculum or provided by the Educational Bureau of Dire Dawa Administration at an institutional or regional level.

g. Solution for material problems

One of the biggest problems to schools in developing countries is lack of educational material like books, furniture, crowded class room etc. This is a problem for schools in Dire Dawa Administrations too as it is shown data gathered via questionnaire and interview with key informants. Therefore, for this problem any concerned party from school administration to Education Bureau has to give attention and try to alleviate the problems as

soon as possible and for the sake of success of students with disabilities.

Conclusion

Results of the present study suggest the following major conclusions:

- ❖ The distribution of male and female students with disabilities is more or less equal with a little bit larger number of male students with disabilities as compared to female counter parts.
- ❖ With regard to economic conditions almost more than half students with disabilities are from economically poor families who are struggling with fulfilling the necessary materials for education.
- ❖ Concerning to the type of disability most has physical impairment followed by visual impairment.
- ❖ School enrollment and participation of students with disabilities in present study area is still limited compared to their counterparts without disabilities due to many reasons like inaccessibility of school settings for people with disability, stigmatized and discriminating attitude from both parents and society, lack of confidence from the disabled people from themselves, inappropriate curriculum, lack of trained teachers in the area and lack of teaching and learning materials. However, compared to earlier times recently there is improvement and progress.
- ❖ Although the effects of societal and home background variables on school participation and enrollment in all school students, the effects of these and other factors is more on students with disabilities. On this regard the participants of this study responded that there is huge challenge from the society and even from their parents which makes them not to be actively involved in school activities and not to continue their education. All in all the major identified challenges for school enrollment and participation of students with disabilities are lack of public awareness, physical inaccessibility of schools, lack of individualization, negative attitude and stereotypes, lack of trained teachers, lack of teaching materials and low self-esteem.

Recommendations

It is believed that the country's GTP plan and the millennium development goal of reducing poverty at a regional level cannot be achieved without an all-inclusive strategy which considers the wellbeing of people with disabilities. Thus along with other measures, taking disability issues into consideration in the realm of academic world is the most important strategy that can promote the overall development of the country as well as Dire Dawa Administration. Therefore it is logical to propagate the issue of school enrollment and participation of students with disabilities and challenges that hinder these disadvantaged groups from school. It is also tough to bring meaningful contributions for the wellbeing of society without considering the needs of people with disabilities. Therefore, in order to bring about meaningful change in the academic world of people with disabilities, there are some fundamental things that need to be set. So based on the present study the following are some of the important points that should be considered by all concerned bodies as tools to increase school enrollment and participation of students with disabilities and to overcome the barriers that hinder people with disabilities from school enrollment and participation.

Perceived barriers to educating children with disabilities may be the interaction of various factors. For instance it might be due to physical, social financial or emotional. Therefore the recommendations suggested here under consider all these dimensions. More specifically the societal attitude towards students with disabilities, challenges from the school environment, challenges from policy issues and challenges that arise from the students with disabilities themselves have been taken in to consideration.

- ❖ It is better if the concerned bodies of the administration mainstream the issues of students with disability in various related policies and plans since the issue of disability is far reaching. The administration should have to sustain pressure to keep inclusive education as part of mainstream agenda and for this reason they have to continue to build understanding and knowledge through researches and awareness raising programs in partnership with Education Bureau, Labor and Social Affairs Office and other concerned organization. The concept of mainstreaming disability in development is broadly defined as the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of development efforts.
- ❖ The concerned organizations both governmental and nongovernmental should play crucial role in providing awareness raising programs concerning disability issues to the society.
- ❖ Even though inclusive education has its own positive impact on students' process of learning the administration should have alternative learning environments which includes settings like specialized schools to incorporate students with various forms of disabilities.
- ❖ As it is revealed in this study most schools are not as such suitable enough to incorporate students with disabilities. Therefore it is better if the concerned bodies of the administration look in to the standardization of physical settings of schools like class room buildings, toilet and other infrastructures so as to address the needs of students with disabilities. For this reason the mandated organs of the Administration has to take the initiation in consulting and informing all who are involved in designing and construction of the school building to consider the special needs of students with disabilities. This of

course needs further research from the side of all stakeholders. To create a school environment that is free of discrimination and accessible to all; the fundamentals that need to be right are awareness, good will and coordination of all stakeholders including disabled peoples' organizations, government authorities and nongovernmental bodies.

- ❖ Despite of strong initiation from the Labor and Social Affairs office of the Administration and some other concerned bodies in ensuring full participation of students with disabilities still they have to stand firm on enhancing the capacity of disabled people's organizations substantially so as to sustain the enrollment and participation of students with disabilities and helps us to overcome the barriers.
- ❖ Local organizations who are working on the area should have to take the advocacy role for the implementation of legislative issues and pro-disability strategies within the administration and this should be accelerated, with the active involvement of organizations that represent different categories of disability alongside efforts to mainstream the issue of students with disabilities.
- ❖ Actively involved schools on the area should have to observe better service delivery opportunities for students with disabilities through local and international NGOs with increasing government partnership and ownership.
- ❖ As indicated in this study, lack of teaching and learning materials is one of the barriers that hinders the school enrollment and participation of students with disabilities almost in all schools and seems remain so. However, still there is an opportunity to overcome the problem. One of these solutions is that teachers who are working with students with disabilities should apply participatory learning that gives an opportunity for them to become knowledgeable learners, help them to share what others have and empower them to advocate their rights to education. To this end all participants should have to be encouraged to actively join in the activities and teachers should welcome this in order to suit the needs of their learners. For instance visual graphics, drawings and so forth are an important part of the participatory learning process for some students with disabilities. Different research findings also reveal that the vast majority of special education students (80-85 percent) can meet the same achievement standards as other students if they are given specially designed instruction, appropriate access, supports, and accommodations.
- ❖ This research also shows that there is not only poor and delayed assessment and identification process of students with disabilities but also poor support process. Therefore it is better if both GO's and NGO's develop professional systems for the early assessment, identification and support process for these disadvantaged groups. In addition to this it is important to provide short and long term trainings for teachers to use a variety of assessment techniques to facilitate teaching and learning process.
- ❖ Parents/caregivers, teachers, service providers and other agencies who are working on the area should have to make a partnership to build on the strengths of students with disabilities and to give them the opportunity in achieving to the best of their ability.
- ❖ Efforts should be directed at reducing the risks of disability such as birth injuries.
- ❖ Finally, there should have also a need for future in-depth studies to gain detailed and rich understanding in how to ensure school enrollment and participation of students with disabilities and to tackle the barriers. Moreover, there is a need for more research to explain the specific challenges faced by the students with disabilities.

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