



RESEARCH ARTICLE

CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF MAINSTREAMING CHILDREN WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENTS  
IN ATTAINING EDUCATION FOR ALL

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ABSTRACT

The thought of integration of students with disability in to regular educational system has old history even though there is no clear vision of why, when and how it applies in the schools of our country. Since this integration needs well organized educational delivery system, the challenges one can observe in the regular education has to get resolved based on relevant evidences supported by scrutinized study. Consequently, this study was designed to investigate the challenges children with hearing impairments face in the integrated classes. The method employed in the study was descriptive and qualitative in nature. The populations of the study were students and family of the hearing impaired children selected employing availability and purposive sampling technique. Instruments used for data collection were interview, focus group discussion and observation done at natural settings. Special education teachers also participate in the study. The results drawn from data shows that most of the students are post-lingually deaf who never benefit from oral presentation/ lecture/. The school, municipality/social affair/ and education offices have no idea about education of these children except reporting their statistics. Lack of willingness to cooperate with schools on the parents' side; lack of awareness about disability on the community viewpoint; and unclear directives regarding the child's education made the problem more intricate. Based on the results obtained from the schools: assignment of interpreters and training of the teachers in the integrated classes are recommended as immediate solutions while availability of detailed educational policy towards education of children with disabilities; awareness creation for the community and responsible bodies; and assignment of professionals at government and non-government organizations further assist in resolving the challenges these children faces in augmenting their education in the education for all realm.

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INTRODUCTION

In attaining the Education for All goals as indicated in UN report (1993), Countries should recognize the principle of equal primary, secondary and tertiary educational opportunities for children, youth and adults with disabilities, in integrated settings. They should ensure that education of people with disabilities is an integral part of educational system. In order to implement inclusive education, countries should have a clearly stated policy that is understood at school and wider community levels. They should allow for a flexible curriculum as well as additions and adaptations. It should also provide quality materials, ongoing teacher training and support for teachers. Inclusive education and community-based programs should be seen as complementary approaches to cost-effective education

and training for disabled people. Communities should also develop local resources to provide this education. Mainstreaming education involves different visions of regular education: a vision based on heterogeneity instead of homogeneity. As it happens in some societies, educational differences have been ignored by developing parallel structures and educational approaches for different groups of learners. For this reason the actual challenge consists on the recuperation of the true nature and function of the regular education, progressing towards schools without "entry requirements" developing parallel structures and educational approaches for different groups of learners. Ability of the school to produce substantial changes in its structure, operation and pedagogical approaches to meet the educational needs of each and every learner, including those that present a disabling condition are also other challenges (Batshow, 1992). Even though there is no well advanced literature available on the

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education of children with disabilities in Ethiopian context, Tirusew *et al.* (1995) stated that out of the 50,000,000 population of Ethiopia; about 1,435,000 people have disability in one way or the other. Out of which, the hearing impaired cover 14.9% of the total population of the disabled. From these amount most of them have no access of education because of communication barriers that torment against hearing impaired on the top of the family's lack of awareness towards education of the disabled children.

According to the study result made by Abeshu (2003), the approaches used in schools mostly focuses on the oral method in classes since most teachers have little or no knowledge in employing sign language which would be appropriate for the deaf. This reveals that there exists communication barrier that has great impact on the education of these children. In his study, Abeshu (2003) disclosed that the special education teachers are the sole responsible professionals in the education of children with disabilities. They teach, follow, counsel their students and coordinate parent groups. In addition to these all activities, they are the only responsible constituent to offer awareness and orientation to the staff since most of them have no or little acquaintance to disability matters.

### Statement of the problem

For integration to be a viable consideration, particularly in developing countries like Ethiopia, we need to examine what challenges face these students in mainstreaming classes and prospects of these children in their educational activities. The prospected teachers in mainstreamed schools also face similar problems where they would be assigned and get in to challenges from the staff itself who has no awareness of special needs children's education. This study therefore, attempts to assess that whether the existing gap in the integration scheme affects the effectiveness of teaching-learning process of the integrated hearing impaired children in Junior and High school levels and explore some useful ways to solution in the future direction.

Hence, the study attempts to answer the following research problems.

- What are the challenges hearing impaired children faces in the integrated classrooms?
- What would be the prospect of these children in teaching-learning activities held in integrated/mainstreamed classrooms?
- What was the intervention techniques employed in assisting education of the hearing impaired in the mainstreamed classes in EFA goal attainment?

**Objectives of the study** - The main objective of the study is to investigate educational challenges students with hearing impairment faces in the mainstreamed classes to attain EFA 2015.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- Examine the problems children with hearing impairment faces in the teaching-learning processes.

- Assess the prospects of mainstreamed hearing impaired students in mainstreamed educational settings;
- Explore educational assistance strategies employed for students with hearing impairments in mainstreamed classes.

### Significance of the study

The students with disabilities may be served in regular classroom settings and/or special classes. Most of the classroom teachers both (special and regular) use alternative strategies based on common sense, and professional supports are based only on the interests of the individuals. The curriculum, education acts and teachers training are key ingredients in the effective education given for children with hearing impairments in the mainstreaming condition. Jimma University as one of the leading training center for teachers' education has to work with the challenges our prospected teachers face in high schools and review its curriculum based on the authenticated studies to be made at different levels. Therefore, examining the problems and challenges these children face in education is of vital importance in the development of SNE courses. The findings could be of some assistance to the educators, institutions, families, curriculum designers and decision makers also.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The method used to conduct this study was qualitative. Qualitative design was intended to investigate the challenges children with hearing impairments face and their experience in the school settings in a comprehensive method. The study includes integrated hearing impaired children in second cycles and secondary schools, family of these students and teachers of the mainstreamed classes who have at least basic knowledge of disability. The study sites were three towns of different regions (Jimma TTC and Jiren High School – Jimma, Kotebe TTC and Yekati 12 – Addis Ababa, and Asossa High School - Asossa) among which five schools were identified where integrated hearing impaired students' constituent in their respective classes. The study populations as a source for information were drawn from five schools of these towns and administrative region. The total hearing-impaired student populations registered in the five schools and colleges were 17 as the initial registration record reveals in the year. The samples were drawn employing simple purposive and availability sampling techniques. The availability technique was employed where student populations were not accessible, while purposive sampling technique was used where student population allow the technique. Seventeen students from integrated classes were selected utmost and the parents of these children (14) were incorporated as informants of the study. One teacher who has good knowledge in sign language was selected purposively for sign language interpretation when interviewing the hearing impaired students. The overall respondents from student population were 17 and families of the same participated on the focus group discussion in three small discussion rooms of each town/city. One teacher from the integrated classes participated on focus group discussion and prepared performance list of the students. Special Needs Education (SNE) Instructors also participated in the study as interviewee.

Data collection tools employed were interview done with the integrated hearing impaired students and SNE unit staff selected purposefully. Semi and unstructured interview were employed through the assistance of interpreters with the students. The same was also done with the teachers/instructors. Interview guide was prepared to guide the discussion among FGD participants aided by informal discussion with some of the school staff, experts and parents. Check list was prepared to aid the researcher conduct observation at the natural settings as external observer. Additionally, student records were examined as secondary sources of data to observe the integrated hearing impaired student's academic performance. Research procedures were followed commenced with formed consent from each respondent first with the school administration, students and the parents through their respective children. Research ethics were also considered as much as possible to reduce discontentment. The interview and discussions were taped and reserved as recorded. The recorded and taped information was finalized and analyzed based on the qualitative data analysis procedure by describing the transcribed and translated document from Afan Oromo and Amharic to the target language. Based on the study result, conclusion and recommendations were drawn that could be probably incorporated in the curriculum revision of the Inclusive Education in EFA goal attainment.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Participant's perceptions towards integration

Mainstreaming of hearing impaired children in the regular class settings was accepted by all participants. One respondent from Asossa specifically stated that *'integration is best to facilitate communication between the disabled and the non-disabled which is useful for socialization of the hearing impaired. But academically they are disadvantageous.'* The group agreed that education of their children is under question since there was no support from any institution or organization or responsible government bodies like social affair, education office, school administration, etc. *'I can say that nothing was arranged for the hearing impaired since there is no interpreter, arrangement of material and other resources support in the mainstreamed class'* one discussant mentioned. As raised, the hearings impaired were not exempted from school fee payment which may at least needs attention of the responsible bodies. SNE teacher from Asossa High school summarized the points as follows.

*'Teachers feel much of the integrated class on how to assist these children but have no knowledge or idea of sign language. In this view, sometimes, teachers fail transmitting expected lessons. One of the civics and ethics teachers told me that he is worrying about these children since the lesson by nature relies on oral presentation. He uses giving intensive notes to assist them.'*

The commitment teachers and school members made to assist education of these children has an impact on their future. As pointed out by Gearheart, Weishan and Gearheart (1988) stated, a highly important variable in placement decision is the degree of administrative commitment to serve all students

regardless of their disabilities and abilities. The administrative staff from the superintendent to the principal must have a real commitment to developing the most appropriate, least restrictive environment for the students. All the parents know one another informally and sometimes contact each other when called by special needs education unit regarding education of their children. But the special needs education teacher summarized his view to the same question stating that

*'the family themselves didn't appear or send responsible bodies representing them; they rather be silent and ignore our call. We are now getting hopeless to assist education of the integrated hearing impaired.'* Question of what to do was posed by him and pended to get solution at the end. One respondent further elaborated saying that *'I am extremely happy with the integration of the students learn, talk, play etc. together when compared to the previous lonely life in family context and special classes. But of this, all of us assume special needs education teachers as the only responsible persons for our children.'*

He specifically appreciates effort of the SNE teacher and magnified the effort and asks excuse for the ineffectiveness so far done on the family side. The special needs education teacher appreciates integration, raising about global trend of hearing impaired children's education. By extending his narration, he commented on the impact of plasma on the integrated hearing impaired children.

*'Plasma at all didn't consider the hearing impaired from its initial preparation. It has to use interpreters since it is directed by MoE. Ministry of Education therefore, has to endeavor incorporating education of the hearing impaired in plasma teaching by giving attention to these students.'*

The other point the discussants from Jimma raised was that during the first join to integrated classes, all the class gazed at them as unique, which demoralized the children. *But the situation has been changed after acquaintance, even though left shame and doubt. The hearings even were disturbed while looking at our children rather than giving attention to the lesson presented in a class. Hence, these children faced new environment without any orientation on both sides (the hearing impaired and school community). But now, the situation has been totally changed.* Finally the discussants of Jimma underlined of the optimum use of sign language to continue in the mainstreamed class and prefer special class since it focuses on education of the hearing impaired in separate settings. Among the four respondent students from Asossa, one of the senior and preparatory class students have both parents and one from each school have only mothers heading the family. They stated that all have no disabled child in the family. As observed and clearly seen from their effort of communication, one from high school and one from preparatory class benefit much from body language and lip reading than the other two respondents. Both high school students replied 'yes' for the question 'are you satisfied in integration'? The reason they raised was the benefit they get from exposure and mix up with the hearing peer group. But preparatory class students compare life in special class with integrated situation and preferred the special class to integration. The reason stated was that they

didn't get any form of support and attention from their respective classes (students, especially teachers and school administration). One other respondent interviewed was from college in the department of IT who started his narration as following. *'Integration is not good since I never hear what the teacher presents. All language subjects also are hard to me to understand except Afan Oromo.'* One of the responding ladies didn't join special education program and have no knowledge in sign language at all and now trying to capture attending sign language club in the school since she gets impaired after joining kotebe TTC. She was incapable of comparing special class to integration but revealed that all subjects are not easy for her to understand. Finally, both of the respondents prefer integration because of the assistance they get from the hearing peers and play together.

### **Parents' responsibility in the education of their children**

All the discussants from Jimma agree that they are responsible assisting their children; but raised the challenges they face from the hearing impaired children side like of behavioral disparity and communication barrier between them. Older siblings assist education of their children showing them from their note books. They communicate mostly through writing and sometimes use simple sign and traditional signing at the same time to communicate. Comparable with this finding Werner (1987) emphasized the role of parents in developing language skills stating that: 1. Parents must communicate and talk to the deaf child as much as possible. The hearing impaired child must be talked to, read to, sung to, and played with just like families do with hearing children, so that the deaf child learns about turn taking and learns to enjoy communication. 2. The deaf child must be given the opportunity to communicate. He/she needs to practice using different communicative functions just like the hearing child and will not get this chance if his/her needs are always supplied without him needing to communicate. 3. The deaf child is unlikely to use spoken language as his/her main communicative method but he/she will use other methods, pointing, gestures, noises. The family must encourage the use of these different methods. Parents need to learn sign language to facilitate their interaction with their hearing impaired child and enhance their psychosocial and cognitive development.

One discussant replied, *our children get assistance from special needs education teachers in lower grades but after grade 5, no one considers of them. No teachers or principal call us for meeting or gives suggestion on our children's education. Our worry is their fate; because, the children are unable to read what they have written and I didn't understand what comes next.* Other discussant declared the following on his child's placement. *Jiren secondary school refused to register my child since he is hearing impaired. The principal told me that 'attending regular class is meaningless for your child' as he said and told me that even if my child completes grade 12, didn't join tertiary education nor win job. So I felt sorry and ashamed. I instigate thinking of his fate but beg him to register the class level he is now in, leave aside of the assistance.* One more discussant raised that their children benefit much from Special class attendance than integration. He further stated that *my daughter was competent enough and active in junior class and even strives to win rank (1-3<sup>rd</sup> level).*

*But she repeated grade 9 this year. When I ask her why? She convinced me that there is no sign language assistance or interpretation. Our children forget sign language and lost skill of communication. This means, she didn't get proper assistance from subject teachers if didn't understand the lesson. I only send her to school since there is no place for her to stay and because of the failure she experienced last year she hates the school and everything related to schooling even though has strong interest and wish to learn.*

The parents stated that no one come to discuss about their child's matter and simply gathered to hear what the special needs education teachers present. The aim as one of them stated was fulfilling of school material, sending the students to school, and waiting for their fruit at the end. The discussants underlined the usefulness of integration if at least aided by upgrading existing special education teachers or train interpreters in assisting education of the mainstreamed hearing impaired students. The other point raised was orientation and skills training of sign language for all subject teachers at basic communication level. They emphasized on the accountability and responsibilities of school administrations to facilitate conditions for the integrated children by giving them the minimum available resources and try to assign supportive groups.

### **Language of communication in Education**

One special education class teacher from Asossa mainly uses total communication in classroom even though it was time consuming to present the lesson orally since the integrated students may get confused initially. She stated the situation as follows.

*I use total communication during presentation. But many students may be confused and I favor to lately use the sign assisted presentation for my students. I also give additional support outside the class session when the students get confused or didn't understand other subjects.*

No teacher in Jiren high school is responsible for the integrated children except the student's interpreter who is their colleague in junior class learned sign language from his personal interest and willingness. Here, the researcher observed and confirmed that the student assists education of the integrated children in the high school on personal interest. Respondents from all sites mentioned that there is poor and insignificant attention given to the area that leads special needs education teachers change their field and join other areas.

*We always shout to the office, but no one from expert position is willing to hear us. If you see me, I have completed BA degree program and am interested to help these children being interpreter even in high school. But no one is willing to hear voice of the disabled, especially children with hearing impairments.*

The communication method preferred by the respondents is via loud /high noise and slow speaking to better understand from lip reading during presentation. Additionally, one respondent favors sign language assisted teaching and Afan Oromo as

instructional media. As one from IT mentioned, *all teachers utilize lecture method that is not suitable for them. 'I read different texts to augment the lesson that I lost in the class to compete with my colleagues. No one allows me to practice on the computer and my left option is only striving to catch up the students making additional effort personally rather than waiting to unforeseen support.'* Finally, they underscore the application of sign assisted presentation as the best method of teaching for integrated hearing impaired children than oral method. According to Lowenbraun (1988), *for some children with severe and profound sensori-neural hearing losses, the attainment of intelligible speech is an unreachable goal.* Even for those who do attain intelligible speech, the process is arduous, slow and difficult. Luckasson and Smith, (1993), support similar opinion expressing that *educational program for deaf students must have special features. The students require intensive instruction to learn how to communicate others effectively and to learn academic achievements.*

### **Effectiveness of teaching methods employed**

The respondents with special needs education background from Kotebe TTC strongly held that *the teaching methods and techniques are totally ineffective. Because, as mentioned by one respondent, only few of the integrated hearing impaired students benefit from body language and lip-reading since some are pre-lingually deaf. The others only rely on the support of students sitting beside them and referring to books.* Another respondent declared that *we don't have principles and policy issues in giving assistance to the hearing impaired in integrated or segregated schools and/or classes. The question is not of strategy or policy or rule but there is no guiding principle governing how to make mainstreaming classes facilitative.* One of the respondents illustrates hierarchical structures of education office and human resources to be available at schools. The chart shows that there should be one professional in special needs education in every specific school starting from 1<sup>st</sup> cycle elementary level to secondary school level. He then replied, turning his face doom, *the problem is of application.* He concluded that *it seems better if education offices give attention implementation of available strategies.* The severity of the hearing loss, the age of its onset, the hearing status of the students' parents are related to the academic success experienced by students with hearing impairments.

Children and young adults who have mild hearing losses generally perform better academically than those with severe losses. Students who are deaf from birth tend to have more difficulty acquiring academic skills than those who hear. In a setting where the teaching-learning process favors hearing children and is not responsive to the special educational needs of the hearing impaired group, the academic performance of the hearing impaired is normally lower than the hearing. The absence of sign language as well as lack of hearing aid provision in all the study areas put the deaf and the hard of hearing students at a disadvantage in the learning teaching process respectively. The next question raised was to rate appropriateness and effectiveness of the methodologies used, communication methods, support given and others in terms its supplement to their education in the mainstreamed classes. All

the respondents check good peer group interaction when compared to the first time of joining the mainstreaming classes. The reason they raised was, their acquaintance to the school community. Some students care for them even though there is communication barrier. Because of these and related compassionate feelings the hearing peers developed, most of them prefer to be in the integrated classrooms even if they didn't benefit much from the teaching learning. The respondent students underlined the benefits they gain from special class justifying that they learn through total communication method and all subjects were easily grasped. They confirmed that they have better understanding of all subjects in special classes even if preferring the integration for socialization. Supporting the finding of this study, Batshow underlined that the methods of teaching to assist education of children with disabilities should facilitate their ability to understand the lesson. He states that, *depending on the disability, teaching methods can include individualized instruction, problem solving assignments, and small group work* (Batshow, 1992).

They all rated that they poorly benefit from teaching-learning activities in the classroom situation. This is because of the oral presentation irrespective of sign language use. Most of them prefer to be silent on the appropriateness of the methodology. When stating why, one says that *we have repeatedly affirmed that only lecture is in use that didn't benefit us.* All the respondents strongly condemn the communication method in use and suggest on the accessibility of interpreter considering *doomed fate* if not at all. Harvey, in 1993 reach on similar result by collecting information from deaf community, educators and parents of the deaf explaining that *inclusion far too often becomes exclusion if not properly planned.* As the respondents mentioned, they are also uncomfortable with the instruction and instructional materials. Especially, they benefit little from plasma teaching in the case of 9<sup>th</sup> graders. The researcher also observed that these children sit idle, only looking at the picture which is meaningless for them. Even the hearing hardly take notes in rare cases. Both high school students thank the school administration for the borrowing of plasma teaching cassette freely to attend in their own home with the assistance of students or parents.

### **Teacher's responsibility in the education of children with disabilities**

Most of the high school SNE teachers suggested that they only assist the hearing impaired students by speaking slowly and standing nearer to help them understand lip reading if they can. One of the lady pointed out saying that *I am teaching Amharic language which is difficult for the child to understand since his first language is Afan Oromo as to grasp lip reading. Hence, I sometimes translate the language to Afan Oromo to help him read my lip. We are highly burdened and hold overloads that didn't allow me to think about the integrated child as expected of me.* 'The study done by Woodward, Schildroth & Karchimer (1988) supports this finding elaborating that even though professionals maintain improved achievement scores of students to facilitate the use of sign language, most teachers didn't employ it in the educational programs since they have no skill of signing. ASL is not used by most teachers of the

deaf in most elementary and secondary settings. Only 3% of teachers for the deaf use American Sign Language. The teachers stated that, they utmost use oral presentation and employ writing instructions on the board when assigning the students do homework and class works and may tell the students refer to book pages. Other SNE teacher additionally mentioned that nothing special has been done for these students other than admitting them to the school or classes. She furthered her speech saying *'integration is good if other necessary resources are available to assist education of these students. Trained special needs educators help students more in integrated classes by clarifying what the students didn't grasp from the oral presentations. It seems better, as I think, if the students get attention from school administration, education offices, other responsible and government bodies. Additionally, better to train all regular class teachers, the family and interested peers in sign language skills to further assist the students in the holistic ways.'*

One special need education instructor from JTC responded to the point indicating that, *'we have established a club to teach sign language skill at least at basic level for the teachers, family and interested peers. But very few interested students and siblings of the hearing impaired benefit from the club and no teacher appeared yet. Our door is still open to the interested ones.'* She further elaborated that *'responsible experts in the field didn't appear at least to observe on what condition the children are but there are professionals working on the title. The budget to be released for tea before years was by half reduced and the incentives given for special education teachers totally stopped before years. I can say that these children are disregarded even by experts from education office with us. But I would like to admire the school head for his cooperation and support he renders to the students and special education teachers.'* Another teacher from Information Technology explained his view as follows. *'I have one hearing impaired student in my class whom I didn't recognize before, because my subject is more of practical. I display objects on projector and show everything on computer and projector screen. After I realized deaf students' presence in my class, tell the students sitting nearer to him assist and explain things when faced confusion. The student is highly competitive and has a score of greater than 75%. He is also curious to ask questions when he didn't get the point.'* The teacher finally appreciates the student in his effort to communicate with peers and raised the usefulness of trained professionals at least to assist him understand what he feels and avoid confusions he may face in education. He also underlined the application of visual materials like video assisted education to assist integrated hearing impaired students. It is therefore, clear that no relevant body is concerned about the student and was admitted him to the school without identifying his problem as asserted by the instructor.

All the respondents support mainstreaming of the hearing impaired mitigating that these students benefit much since they learn much from social and physical integration. Not only benefit from socialization, but they psychologically build up sense of belongingness, group identity and dynamics. It was finalized by suggesting on the crucial service of special needs education teachers, formation of support groups (the

immediate responsible body to facilitate conditions), avail resources; arrange classes by government so as to make easy access of education for the hearing impaired. The special needs education teacher raised that they are ready to teach school teachers the skill of sign language and request for the incorporation of sign language in the curriculum of teachers education at colleges and universities to assist education of the mainstreamed hearing impaired students. In practical instructional process the teachers for hearing impaired should pay attention to the following ten tips according to the statements of Ysseldyke and Algozzine (1995) highly supporting the result of this study: Reduced distance between student and speaker as much as possible; speak slowly and stress clear articulation; reduce back ground noise as much as possible; sit the student near the center of desk arrangements and away from distracting sounds; use face-to-face contact as much as possible; use complete sentences to provide additional context during conversation or instructional presentations; use visual cues when referring to objects in the classroom and during instructional presentations; have classmates who take notes during oral presentations for students to transcribe after the lessons encouraged independent activities, cooperative learning and social skills; be sure that the hearing aid functions properly.

### **Challenges faced in the integrated educational settings**

Challenges family faced in relation to the education of their children with hearing impairments as stated by the discussants are the following. One respondent raised *'I am the oldest in the family and all younger siblings except the hearing impaired secured job. She is still in the school. Her academic performance is poor that worries me when thinking of her future after completing grade 10. Since all her teachers are in the unit, no more assistance shall be given to her in high school. I have also fear in the child's fate of winning job. She has got skill training in sewing; had machine; but the society had problem communicating her even though, there is need to sew cloths with her. I was suffering since my family especially wife never understands her because of communication barrier existing.'* All the respondents share the same thought and stated that the children would be burden to the family and community if not properly handled and assisted. They rose about holistic integration in the community life by extending the school integration further.

Other member discussed what he faced as continued. *My sister always personalizes her communication problem as a defect made by her and sometimes cries for a long. Even she didn't listen to my advice. I confirm that she has committed wrong but she never believes her mistake but tries to justify by crying always. She has inconsistent behavior, feels in most cases unhappy. I therefore, prefer her at school especially, after integration. She has more than two friends trying to share her views. Her future may be in the hands of her teachers.* The study done by Abeshu (2003) supports this finding describing that impaired hearing can influence a child's social and emotional development. Most individuals cope with the reality of deafness and deafness itself has no direct either positive or negative impact on the social, emotional development of a mentally healthy individual. Recent evidences suggest that

those who are deaf prefer to be with others who are deaf, and tend to cluster in groups, socialize and marry. This is because many people who are deaf see the experiences and signed language of deaf communities as the most important factors in their lives. The obvious barrier to hearing-impaired relationships is communication.

Mother of the hearing impaired integrated child to High school stated that her child is active enough and have coping skills like embroidery. Academically as she stated, the child is brilliant and didn't get below 10<sup>th</sup> rank even in integrated classroom standing. She has raised also about crucial assistance of responsible bodies especially education offices. Luckasson and Smith, (1995) stated the following pointing on at least minimum support *With certain modifications to the environment, students with hearing impairments benefit from attending regular classes.* She stressed on the point *we don't need any more tongue hope, but application of what to act upon today.* All the discussants raised problem of communication with these children that they face challenge to understand the students and know their feeling to assist them even at family level. The respondents also try tracing the supports rendered to their children and all turn by turn appreciate the assistance and effort of help from Special Needs Education unit and demanded them to add their effort. The special needs education unit leader raised about life of one hearing impaired student narrating as follows. *His name is Johannes who walks to his home when students' chaos was made last year. Armed police ordered him to stop calling him from the back. But the student continued going and didn't stop without any expectation. The police quickly run to the Childs side and caught him from his back beating him with dry stick he holds. The police identified him after harming the child badly.* He further stated about negligence of parents regular participation on meetings when requested to do so and lack of awareness.

Yekatit high school students stated the following. *We have problem with calculation related subjects specially physics, chemistry and mathematics.* They also complain of plasma teaching since it was so hard to integrate the body language and lip reading to the actual sound because of the fastest nature of the lesson. The student who follows and tries to assist them is also in hurry by himself to catch up what was broadcasted. Junior (2nd cycle) class students have also problem in all subject areas, specifically math but they get support upon request from special education teachers. All the respondents complain about lack of interpreter since they benefit least from oral presentation (speech). One of the high school respondents mentioned that *all Subject teachers didn't give attention and care for our education. They use to write on the board even if almost all the students are unable to produce notes. We do the same in subjects like physics, chemistry and math since we are not lucky benefiting from oral presentations.*

They all complain shortage of teaching materials, visual texts as well as other resources like numerical charts and sign symbols in the case of hearing impaired students. With regard to comfortability of classes, high school students appreciate it justifying that they share the same bench and chair with their colleagues nowadays. But, one college student stated that, *on*

*October 2007, when we joined the integrated school, the classes were not willing sitting on the same bench with us even though the situation has been changed now.* The students complained of uncomfortable teaching and learning with low awareness of classmates when he first joined mainstreamed class. The researcher's observation to certain classes revealed that lecture method, reluctance of peer to support, problem communicating and shortage of materials support.

All the respondents didn't know their hearing level even though counted when registered for the target. But as of their assumption, they have agreed, they didn't hear and because of this, didn't benefit from oral presentation in education. Even though there are expectation and need of support from government organizations and NGOs, no support is obtainable up to now as the respondents mentioned. Only the special units are the one who strives for the benefit of the children with special needs. Their parents, as stated, are also struggling to assist them with very limited communication capacity. Both respondents from Asossa, replied that their brothers are the sole assistants in all academic, material and physical matters and live with them. Finally the respondents propose on the accessibility of recourses (human, material and educational tools, etc.) with an interpreter. They also raised governmental support, especially, in availing the mentioned resources stretched their interest to the support to further their education and join university.

Both respondent girls from Addis Ababa have residual hearing and sit on the front line during presentations. As they responded, they get support from peers and copy from student's papers in the areas they faced confusion. They say that *'no support has been given for us from teachers and school administration. Even books were supplied equally with the hearing and no one considers as special population yet in the integrated classes. I failed to pass regional exam last year and am in doubt even this year.'* As observed from their record and notebooks, they have problem understanding and poorly achieve from the lessons in the class. This illuminates that the support given for these children are insignificant. Consistent with this study Luckasson and Smith (1995) further stated on support needed from teachers as modification to the class is crucial like giving handouts for the students. Classmates can also help the non-hearing peers in mainstreamed classes by using carbon paper for note taking during lectures to make a copy for the student with hearing impairments.

### **Suggested elucidation by the discussants**

The SNE teacher from Jiren high school appreciated their gathering and discussion uttering that there are many disability areas that need attention. Even though the challenge they faced when accepting these hearing impaired children to their school was soaring, it was the new attempt in the history of their surrounding schools. But now, he and the school community loved the students and start concerned about their education and how to help them. The school borrowed for the students' plasma teaching CD cassette to take it home and attend personally if they get interpreters or anybody to help them in their homes. The families in the discussion group appreciate the school and confirmed that they will do together for the benefit of their children for the future. Finally they raised

certain points as a summary suggestion to improve education and life condition of the hearing impaired asserting that proper support has to be given for the hearing impaired since didn't benefit from lessons presented orally nowadays. Exemption of school fee, having attention from government and community, and massive training in sign language and collaboration of the family with special needs education unit and High school for the benefit of their children are some points raised by the discussants.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

### Conclusion

Integration of the hearing impaired is a viable effort to be supported by all concerned bodies: the family, teachers and responsible government bodies like educational offices, labor and social affairs and the community. Sabata as the only boarding center in the country for the visually impaired children before years has taken additional responsibility in training special needs education teachers at primary and junior level. Addis Ababa University in collaboration with Universities abroad also opened specialization in Special Needs Education from BA to PhD while other HEI also follow its footsteps. The opening of special needs education classes and great demand of the community to the education of their impaired children further paves way for the emancipation of integrated classes in Junior and High School classes. The problem rests, as stated in the study, on how to implement integration in the actual school context. No study and needs assessment were done with the target groups and responsible government offices. Experts at zonal and district level didn't know about the hearing impaired, leave alone the integration of these children. The gap identified here is that there is no common ground set forth on how to facilitate integration and no mutual understanding between government sectors working on special needs children and the target groups. Schools only accept the hearing impaired via the push exerted up on them by parents. Hence, one can say that the support given for these students were/are very poor and nearly zero. Except the SNE teachers, no one remembers their existence in all schools. This entails that there is lack of awareness about the children with special needs in general and mainstreaming of the hearing impaired in particular. Teachers and school community look the hearing impaired as different and feel sympathetic that didn't surpass lip-sucking.

The best educational method where the hearing impaired is placed was/is oral communiqué that is used as the best practice. The oral approach employed in the schools could not be the only solution for better communication in the school settings where the hearings impaired are integrated. Teachers in the integrated classes use the oral method that is too difficult for the hearing impaired to understand even from lip reading and facial expression of the teachers. Lukasson and Smith revealed that *the amount and type of individual's hearing loss are related to the ability to understand information presented orally* (Lukasson and Smith, 1995). They further stated that a student with moderate loss might not benefit from typical instructional methods like lecture and oral directions that directly support the finding of this study. The respondents

confirmed the same that they never benefit from lecture method employed even though they didn't know the hearing threshold of their hearing ability. The educational provision regarding education of children with impairment, specifically, the mainstreamed hearing impaired children at bureau and education offices are imprecise. The educational structure in schools and offices are disparate and didn't know one another. In its entire system, there is no consistent regulation from school to regional offices concerning education of children with impairments. Experts also didn't know what is expected of them specifically, some accuse zonal heads and regional decision-makers for the inconvenience nature of the department and the disregard exerted up on the section. The finding revealed the same and much is left to assist education of children with special needs in augmenting the mainstreamed children in particular.

Assigned experts are also nonprofessionals who didn't know the field and not concerned of the mainstreamed children. With regard to educational facilities, support and material availability in the school, one can enunciate many things from what is observed on the actual field. The mainstreamed children benefit much from classroom integration since they share benches and chairs equally with the hearing. This clearly signifies that integrated special classes are the forgotten, overlooked and weakened unit in the region. The family and teachers are the immediate responsible body for the education of children and has to have communication skills to assist children with hearing impairments. Lee, D. and Antia, S. (1992) disclosed as they are primary responsible for the child's integration in to the family, neighborhood, school and community. It is only possible if the parents choose to learn some form of sign language or manual communication system so that they can communicate more fully with the children with hearing impairment. The educational provision at regular classes for the mainstreamed hearing impaired students need further reform to halt the challenges these children face in schools to demonstrate better prospect in the educational endeavor scale up. Integration has to look for full incorporation of instructional methods to be employed for both students whether hearing or non-hearing, since they are attending classes in the same room by same teachers. The diagnosis rests mainly up on employment of total communication, awareness raising for the regular school community, and integrated effort of family, schools, education offices and other responsible organizations in the attainment of proper education.

### Recommendation

The following recommendations were forwarded to alleviate the problems children face in the mainstreamed classes and facilitate learning in the same.

- There should be clear and detailed rules and regulations declared by responsible bodies of the region, especially the education bureau, social and labor affairs, universities and colleges. It is therefore, obvious that if social and labor affairs, education offices, human right agents, lawyers, university professors working in the area and NGOs working on related field jointly work to assist education of

children with impairments in general and the hearing impaired in particular to supplement education of these children. Education bureau has to take the lead.

- It is advisable to assign professional experts on the departments of special needs education from district level to regional bureaus' with full responsibility and accountability. It is therefore believed that the overlooked sector could get hold of responsible person to achieve EFA goal.
- Short term and long term awareness raising workshops and trainings has to be arranged by professionals in the university and college level to the school community (elementary, secondary, preparatory, vocational, etc.), the family, community (idirs, kebele, etc) and government and Non-government organizations. Unless professionals aware and empower the community in bringing desired behavioral changes to assist education of children with special needs, the prevailing segregative attitude persevere for long.
- It is better to train regular education teachers in the new techniques of teaching all children in the same setting. Teaching methods like cooperative learning results in a better understanding of content since students share discuss and model each other. It also encourages interactions and help students develop positive relationships with classmates for better socialization.
- Assignment of special needs education teachers as interpreter and/or resource room where children with hearing impairments integrated is a binding. This is because, the children benefit a little from the lessons presented orally and need assistance in the schools employing other relevant media for the hearing impaired. Since training regular education teachers is a long term solution, the immediate solution could be employing trained human power at hand to alleviate existing on the spot problem in EFA goal attainment.

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