



REVIEW ARTICLE

INTEGRATIVE POSITION OF PARENTS AND SCHOOL COMMUNITY IN EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES: THE CASE OF SELECTED INSTITUTIONS IN ETHIOPIA

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ABSTRACT

Issues of professional roles have been overlooked in developing countries, including Ethiopia. Due to this fact, the present study was undertaken to investigate the integrative positions and capabilities of parents and professionals in relation to the education policy statements of children with disabilities. The subjects of this study were purposefully selected from eight schools (six high schools & two colleges); experts of zone Education Office and Bureau. The instruments employed to collect data were interview, FGD and observations. The finding of the study disclosed that there was role confusion among professionals concerning their areas of expertise. Professionals were reluctant or have poor awareness concerning education of students/children with disabilities. Certified professionals were misplaced and most assigned experts were unfamiliar to the field. Lack of specific policy and laws that states responsibilities of teachers at school level were not communicated to institutions and offices that in turn hampers the education of these children. Special education teachers were regarded as the only responsible professionals in the education of children with disabilities in all areas. Hence, there is a need for a clear communication of available education guide at MoE that uncover the integrative roles and responsibilities of professionals in the education including their participation in curriculum planning, educational decision making, and placement of children with disabilities in the regions/country. Empowering, training and counseling parents, conducting further researches on the educational intervention were some suggested ways to further assist education of children/students with disabilities.

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INTRODUCTION

The professional role of different agencies involved with children with disability and whom teachers may have contact is the significant area concerned bodies have to consider. Educational intervention, monitoring/follow up, finding appropriate space for educational services, counseling are the areas to be treated by professionals as the major interrelated bodies of assistance for these children. Parents and the home are the most influential factors in a child's life. As children grow up, their life environment extends to include their friends, day care centers and their schools. Therefore, it is very important to integrate the education given at home with the education given at day care centers; so that, they will support the child's development homogeneously. Education in day care is a process of interaction in which the main purpose is to support children's social, emotional, and cognitive development in close cooperation between day care personnel

and families (Hibbs, 1988). Differences were made in family attitudes, support result in variations in how children with special developmental problems deal or adjust to education or cope with their special conditions. Thus, it is essential to reflect on the role of family and professionals in child's education. It in turn helps to better understand what has happened to them around their home before they entered school, and what is going on in their school life. As a rule, parents have great deal of information about their child. One important means of getting information is regular communication and cooperation between the professionals and the parents. Making both partners to participate in assessing pupil's needs and interests in reflecting over long term aims of those students is essential (Johnson and Skjorten, 2001). As cited in Johnson and Skjorten 2001, (from the work of Fox and Williams, 1991; Stick land and Turnbull, 1993) individual curricula and individual educational programs recommends that parents join cooperative groups of curriculum makers. Flexibility and adaptation of cooperation practices to individual parental needs are therefore essential. Furthermore, teacher's cooperation in order to get an overview of individual learning potentials and

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special needs in a class setting is so important. All teachers and special educators working with the same learner should be part of a working team with clear coordination of responsibility.

The students with disabilities may be served in regular classroom settings and/or special classes in the school with a number of specific modifications and adaptations. But 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. Reaction from parents and communication with those professionals in supervising and supporting children with disabilities were key ingredients in the effective education. Therefore, examining the roles of professionals and parents in accordance with education of children with disabilities in our country in the accentuate of other developed countries is the timely issue. As is evident in Ethiopian context, different special schools and classes were flourishing after the emancipation of Ethiopian Education and Training policy which specifically elaborates about children with special needs in Art 29 of the policy statement. The informal observation done at certain schools and institutions revealed that there exists great disparity in support system extended from family and responsible education sectors and among regions as well. To abridge this gap existing in the support system and the disparity amongst regional states, there arises a need to make thorough study in the area to fill the presumed gap.

For this purpose, six high schools employing mainstreaming classes, two colleges, two Regional education Bureaus and four zonal Education Office experts in special needs education were selected to involve in the study.

Statement of the problem

The educational success of children with disabilities by large depends on the support given from school agents and the family. The need for support and supervision is equally important by both partners in the attainment of effective teaching-learning activities. For integration to be a viable consideration, particularly in developing countries like ours, we need to examine what support can be offered to the children with disabilities in terms of training and resources to help them function as independently in later adult life. Families who have a child with a disability report numerous challenges and triumphs associated with the unique status of their child. Each family's history is different, yet one of the common themes is the inevitable relationship of the school and other public service agencies that provide assistance to their child and family. Sometimes the family—professional relationship is collaborative and mutually supportive; in other cases it is adversarial. We are standing at an important crossroads, with opportunities to create strong ties between schools, communities, and families. Parents and teachers do not always cooperate. They sometimes even seem to be on two widely different sides, doing battle over what is best for the child. Both home and school must be supportive for the child with disability in his/her job of learning. The debate existing between parents awareness and need of supporting the child with disabilities in educational settings to be independent members of family and disorganized approaches employed by

different educational institutions and education offices initiated the researcher conduct detailed study to fill the gap existing in the contemporary inclusive settings.

Based on the stated ideas above, the study attempts to ponder an answer for the following research problems/ questions.

- What are the roles of parents in assisting education of their students with disabilities?
- What major responsibilities are expected from the school community (teachers, school management, peers ...) in the education of CWD?
- What professional expertise were/are assigned by education offices and other institution personnel?
- Is there any form of collaboration between the family and professionals in enhancing education of students with disabilities?

Objectives of the study

The main aim of the study is assessing integrative roles ever in practice by responsible bodies of experts, professionals and family in the education of students with disabilities in schools.

Specific objectives

Taking the above situations in to consideration, the specific objectives of the study intended to:

- Assess the role played by parents in assisting their children with disabilities in schools if at all?
- explore the deliberation of teachers and other teaching professionals in the education and training of students with disabilities;
- identify possible educational assistance strategies employed by the institutions, and Education offices in assisting education of these students;
- examine the integrative role hitherto played by family, professionals and education experts in the education of students with disabilities

Significance of the study

A challenge within the school is to see how to establish effective partnership between parents, teachers and other experts or professionals in supporting education of students with disabilities. In doing so, this research output serves as a spring board for other researchers conducts further studies filling the limitations observed. The study also serves policy designers and decision makers to use as a resource for effective educational planning in the education of children with disabilities in the inclusive settings. On the other hand, local education offices and schools may use the result in their integrative effort if approaching the researcher as an input to assist their attempt horizontally.

Delimitation of the study

The study was aimed to include different disability groups. But conducting survey study throughout the country including all disability area and covering all regions does not seem visible

with a teaching task and other responsibilities in the university. Therefore, the study focus was geographically delimited to selected zonal education offices, high schools and Teachers Training Colleges of two regional states (Region 14 and Oromia).

Operational definition of key terms

Disability: lack of ability to perform an activity as is expected of him/her in the community settings due to loss or abnormality of anatomical structures.

Family: Any individual that gives care for the child with disability (parents, caregivers, siblings, or any of these from extended family).

Integrative position: collaborative task or duty undertaken by parents, experts and school community in supporting or augmenting education of children with disabilities.

School community: persons who are responsible in the education of children with disabilities (special and regular school teachers) instructors in Education, psychology, and special need education and (school principals, experts, and Local Education Authorities) responsible supporting education of students with disabilities.

METHODS OF THE STUDY

The study was designed to examine the integrative responsibility of professionals in the education of students with disabilities. It employed qualitative research study focusing on ten high schools where students with certain forms of impairments are integrated; five educational institutions (colleges and/or universities) and two Regional Education Bureaus and three zonal Education Offices.

Study sites – The areas selected to conduct study were two regional states including Oromia and region 14 Education Bureaus, four zonal education Offices (two each from Oromia and region 14); six High Schools (three from each) involved in the study. One institution from each regional state (Kotebe and Jimma TTC) and four experts from each region engaged in the study as key informants presumed decisive for the study. The schools and institutes which were involved in the study were determined by the researcher and experts of regional education Bureau.

Population and sampling – The study population varied depending on the purpose of the study. Even if it was not easy to determine the exact number of population, the total number of sampled respondents was 45 parents, 10 professionals (regular and/or special needs education teachers, psychology, EDPM, curriculum...), 6 key informants /experts/ from regions/zones were included in the study. Hence, the total numbers of informants included were 61 respondents who have awareness and good background of disability related issues.

Sampling techniques – The sampling techniques employed in the study were non-probability method where purposive and availability sampling was used as a major ones. In schools where appropriate professionals were not found, only availability technique was employed as a tool to select

pertinent informants for the current study. Since the study relies on collecting collective attributes from key informants, both tools were the efficient ones in getting proper information that represents the school and parents' opinion. Seven parents of the three disability areas were selected purposively from each high school based on the remark of the principals.

Tools of data collection – In this study, qualitative data collection tools were employed where Focus Group Discussion, Interview and observation (non-participant & informal) at natural settings got due consideration. The FGD was used as a key tool to gather data from parents and professionals (high school teachers) where interview was used to collect information from experts and teachers in institutions. Semi-structured and unstructured interview was held with the experts at their offices and colleges. Focus Group Discussion guide was employed to direct the session with flexible points of conversation. Observation was employed at schools and institutions where students with disabilities were intentionally or accidentally mainstreamed or included. The primary areas of observation were classes, resource rooms, and pedagogic centers, sports field ... where students involve in academic and non-academic activities in a group.

Methods of Data analysis - Qualitative methods of data analysis were employed in the study using words and statements in describing the information gathered. Descriptive techniques of data analysis had taken place using statements after transcription and translation of raw data in to meaningful coded categorization of information. The coded information was further described in manageable wordings and statements in the finding and results part. Conclusions and recommendations were drawn from the result for future implication of research works and applications.

Procedures of data collection – The researcher had followed appropriate ethical procedures from the set up by soliciting consent of the key informants and experts from each center. Forming rapport with responsible experts and team leaders to facilitate positive relationship in giving relevant information had underlying effect on the result where the researcher gave great emphasis. Being with the assigned experts and assistant data collectors, the researcher conducted FGD in all centers of the study sites concurrently conducting observation in and around the institutions. Interview with key experts on SNE was also handled in their respective offices. The recorded data was finalized for analysis and conclusion using statements and words.

In the study of this topic ethical deliberation and safety dealings were considered since we are dealing with human beings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Background of the professionals-All respondents from special education units come to this profession having different intentions. Some of them have great interest in this field and helping those children with disabilities. Others join the field since local education authorities recruited them to teach in the unit. Teachers from colleges and certain high schools competed

their studies from accredited universities – AAU and abroad. Special education unit teachers and few experts have got training for a year/s and have got certificate from Sabata special needs education training center. Some of the experts at LED (Local Education Department) and zonal education offices (ZEO) are individuals from different disciplines assigned to head the department. Nowadays, different departments were merged to one and special education unit was included under primary education department. Other professionals who participated in the study were two psychologists responding to the question in a group discussion. Even though the respondents were two in number they gave interesting views and reflect professional stance on the FGD. Some of the principals have awareness on the idea of special education obtained through participation in different workshops and with good interest to work with these students. Other four respondents were special educators. Even though the respondents were on two far sides of the country, similar responses were organized in to themes. All of them got their MA in special education from AAU and one in sandwich program with Joensuu University, Finland and other with Norway. Therefore, four of them have good background in the area of special needs education.

Role of teachers and classroom management—The regular classroom teachers were with mixed mood of mainstreaming while teachers with SNE background are at ease. The challenge regular classroom teachers raise is their inability to support the students who need assistance. The problem is intense when referring to students with hearing problem since they have different way of communication, which is sign language. The essence of the study result done by Ysseldyke and Algozzine (1995) support similar opinion that regular classroom teachers tend either not to participate or, if they do, to participate in a superficial manner. They perceive the situation as burden, culturally different, attached with extra duty, etc. and try to avoid them by avoiding them and looking at them as a test. This all had been before years as for the respondents in special needs education and they assume that the situation is more including if resources are fulfilled.

But the situations in certain schools of Oromia regional states were different where no responsible bodies didn't give attention to the students than assignment or student placement. As for the respondents from Bushoftu high school: Integration is excellent philosophy not yet understood by the zone or regional education partners. The major target of the top management of offices is assignment of students with disabilities to our schools. No one considers about the material, resources (human and financial) needed to support these students. You see! the physically impaired students come from far areas (rural) where there was no facility to move. No wheelchair, no crutches or prosthetic materials. On our effort, we have made a committee to search for NGOs support these students to at least furnish them with basic walking tools. These tools need repair and maintenance after years. No one gives ear to hear your cry accept requesting for statistics of SwD. Most of the high schools share similar problems with minor differences. They agree that the sub-city education offices (region 14) or zones (Oromia) and education Bureau only send letters of request to know the number of students

integrated in each school. Otherwise, question of facility, resource materials, problem of students and education were not their concern. For the sake of supporting their students, school principals, regular and SNE teachers, parents (frequently) and other interested humanitarian groups involve in the educational assistance of students with disabilities. Similar situation is evident in Teacher Training Colleges where both the Regional Education Bureau assigns students with different disabilities purposefully. Region 14 Education Bureau pay subsistence money which is amounted to 105.00/month where no such practice was exercised in Oromia. Teachers at high schools were paid 30/month as a top-up which was determined before fifteen years even if there are enormous changes occurred in all life styles within these years.

In almost all the involved schools, the respondents created smooth environment among their staff members on their view to special needs students as the problem is non-contagious and wouldn't transmit from person to person especially in the case of mental retardation. The respondent from Kotebe TTC declared that: *Nowadays communication among staff was through direct channel. Some teachers asked to learn sign language to communicate easily with their hearing impaired integrated children. They request for sign language training for communication. But, the number of chatters is exceeding by far to the helping professions.* Respondents from Jimma Teachers College in education and psychology support such training for the benefit of these students and effective learning teaching activity. The key informant from Kotebe TTC didn't conceal the difference among professionals (teachers) attitude where one Amharic teacher ill-treated a student with disability which he presumed anguishing.

All the respondents from different institutions were willing to train teachers in SL where some involve willingly while others participate for nominal. The SNE teachers also train students with disabilities and others who were interested to involve. They do teach and train their students in academics; daily living skills, and they give counseling services; coordinate parent groups; give awareness and orientation for staff; assess and evaluate their students performance; visit them at home; prepare tea for their children in group participation training; arrange physical activity sessions with non disabled groups; give physical exercise training; actively monitor the students ability to walk properly; discuss on their progress with parents or guardians (intermittently); evaluate the performance report filled by parents every year, etc. one can therefore, consider that they shoulder the entire burden.

The special education teachers stated that they organized parent groups to assist education of their own children even though some of them didn't form association of parents. They apparently call family of these students; give awareness on how to deal with the student's disabilities, support systems, student's ability, motivation and needs. In their studies (Kirk, Gallagher and Anastasiow, 1988), stated on the usefulness of Special education teachers as they often bring family together with a support network of professional service providers and coordinating their activities. As of the informants from yekatit high school: *Families of the hearing impaired established their cooperative associations while parents of the mentally retarded*

simply ask each other, share experience with each others, discuss on the life and issue of their child's education. When they face problem, they come to the school and get advice from the teachers. The same was true in Bushoftu and Arbagugu where teachers and parents come together and form certain form of collaboration. Consistent with this study, Webster indicated that, the lead role in advising parents about the first educational steps is likely to be taken by the teacher (Webster & Wood, 1995).

One of the respondents from special educators indicated responsibility of parents by saying that: *The parents are responsible and courageous enough to send their children to schools. They have to surpass the stigmatizing norm of the society and convince themselves that their child should join a school. They are the primary assistants to the child in all its activities beginning from moral support up to necessary material supports that facilitate development of the child's learning ability and well-being.* As mentioned by some of the zonal and sub-city assigned experts, the teachers (SNE or regular) were responsible to search for students with disabilities roving from home-to-home and bring them to schooling. But, they didn't mention a statement on how to assist education of these students. One responsible person of OREB (Oromia Region Education Bureau) stated that 'the area of SNE is core of their confusion'. In the contrary, professionals in schools facilitate all the things to assist education of the SwD to the level of their capability. To perform all these things teachers need support from the zone or sub-city experts and Regional Education Bureau on appropriate training, conducive teaching environments (minimum number of students), material and other resources, right to act and ask assistance, from government, NGOs and the community.

Special education and regular class teachers are the prominent ones in teaching these students according to these respondents. The Public law 94-142 USA supports opinion of the respondents by indicating that regular and special education personnel work together for the good of the students. They state that they are the most significant individuals in teaching academic and other life skill activities. It would be more practical if supported by the staff, administrative bodies of the school, local and zonal education departments, the MoE and other executive bodies. Because of lack of moral, material and legal support from these bodies, education of children with disabilities is getting overlooked from year to year as for these respondents.

Response of experts at MoE, Regional and Zonal or sub-city: Region 14 Education Bureau had experts with SNE profession at their office. The major roles played by the professionals were sending letters back and forth, preparing pamphlets and leaflets on SNE, planning to have increased number of students in schools, reporting registered and students on study and giving certain forms of oral guidance to sub-city assigned experts. They disclosed that, the sub-city were authorized to recruit or hire professionals since they have their own budget and the region had no power to force them hire appropriate professional on the area. Accordingly, they presume that, sub-city education office was/is responsible and accountable for all the practices regarding education of SwD.

Conversely, sub-city education offices blame that REB didn't provide them with appropriate policy guidelines, regulations and specific rules that states responsibilities of different stakeholders including their office, schools and other professionals.

The situation at OREB seems different where the assigned expert was non-professional in the field and didn't know about the national and international issues regarding education of students with disability rights. Because of this, he had indifferent when interviewed as well and didn't know who were assigned to lead SNE department at zonal levels. He revealed that, the work of SNE was additional duty where his primary duty was on training. In this situation, area of SNE was ignored or purposefully disregarded by the office /Bureau/ where no one gave attention to the area and always under jeopardy. The zones included in this study criticize the OREB for their total abandon of the field even for filling the statistics. They mentioned that the data to be gathered were inclusive with the regular educational schools where a colon was given to report number of students with disabilities in the system. Some of the zonal education offices search for support systems based on their personal interest when the quest from schools become a bottleneck urge to their office. All the three zonal education offices involved in my study were paraprofessionals or non-professionals to SNE.

Ministry of Education is one of the highly responsible government agents to capitalize on education of students with disabilities. They were responsible to assign appropriate professionals to run and guide education, service delivery, maintenance and intervention of SwDs in the integrated regular and special schools. Actually, all the experts were professionals who were actively involved in discharging their responsibilities. But, they were unable to communicate the regional education bureau due to enormous perplexing challenges. Decree statements, SNE strategic plans, guiding principles were shelved in their office without communicating the REBs at different levels. The respondents mentioned that: *Regional Education Bureaus were/are responsible and highly authorized entity to run, administer and monitor any educational move in their respective regions. We experts have no power to communicate them or didn't find participate on the meetings they were involving to discuss about the materials dumped here. The responsible bodies were informed many times to find solution on the dissemination of these pertinent materials to be implemented by regions. The regions didn't approach us and concerned bodies also didn't mind about strategic plan papers distribution to regions.* One thing the researcher identified is that there seems great gap between policy makers and end users where one is complaining the other instead of accessing relevant guiding and strategic work plans to support education of Students with disabilities. The researcher also observed that all except, Kotebe TTC, where the SNE teacher voluntarily composed the strategic plan and guidelines from MoE, no institution in the country (colleges and universities) found the policy and guiding papers till the end of this study.

As the entire special needs education respondents mentioned nobody was/is concerned to guide them how to teach or handle

their students. They teach the students based on their own experience and early practices. They teach and train their students based on their own knowledge and understandings. Secondary school directors also complain of the same situation on the management, integration style, the curriculum to teach these students, their relationship with the zones/sub-cities and others. They said that they establish smooth relationships based on their own experience and administrative initiation. The school heads ask volunteer teachers to give tutorial classes for those children. But there is abridged amount of willingness and found difficult to get unpaid assistant regular teachers who give extra support for these students since they need extra support to catch-up the lessons taught. As mentioned by respondents, most of the students with disabilities possess difficulty in the area of natural sciences and math. Because of this, they always need additional support as a rule. Due to the inaccessibility of rules, regulations and guiding principles at the institution levels, the principals/deans, regular and SNE teachers ultimately support education of students with disabilities in their respective institutions.

Challenges encountered

All the respondents from colleges and offices forwarded the challenges they presumed that might obstruct education of students with disabilities in mainstreamed classrooms. FGD participants raised issue of the fate their children may face in the future since they were/are forgotten by responsible education officials except the support given by schools. They presumed it as a life confronting issue unless right of SwDs were/are put to ground including right to work and participation in the community settings. Actually, as indicated by MoE experts, there was a proclamation that focused on the fear of parents (Proclamation 676/2002) promulgated which parents and school community have no knowledge about. The inconvenience of school environment for their children, lack of relevant materials convenient for students learning like Braille and styles for the visually impaired, hearing aids and sign based reading materials for hearing impaired, lack of wheelchairs and crutches for the physically impaired, poor knowledge of parents to advise, counsel and support their children at home, inability to easily understand sign language skills, reluctance of responsible offices (Education offices, municipalities and NGOs) and parents poor economy were some of the major challenges underlined by the respondents of focus group discussion.

Professionals raise number of challenging factors in assisting education of students with disabilities. One SNE respondent from Kotebe TTC affirmed that: *Region 14 Education Bureau assigned student with different disability groups without considering the capacity, environmental and material service provision of the institution. These students come to this college with different difficulty. Some of them have poor family who couldn't afford to buy a cane for the visually impaired and the families were responsible to bring them to classes. When coming here they request for Braille writing materials and Braille prepared library resources. Unless these basic materials are fulfilled, there is less probability to succeed in their schooling. Some students with physical problems come to class using traditional wooden sticks that may slide on the*

asphalted road when moving and damage them. Furnishing crutches and wheelchairs to the students who need the material is another challenge in this regard. The very critical challenge is on the side of the hearing impaired students where there are no interpreters or regular teachers were not equipped with necessary sign language skills to interpret what they have presented orally in the classroom to these students. Since these students lack ability to catch-up what was delivered through lecture method, they are unable to participate in group discussion or else have communication barriers between them and peer groups to do so. Hence, they are always victimized from the education delivery system even if they have the right to access of education. Only one translator was assigned (payment was facilitated by one NGO) where the student population assigned to different departments were large. Some high schools share similar view points specifically around the hearing impaired students. Higher 4 and Dagmawi from region 14 and Bushoftu high school from Oromia experienced similar difficulties and underlined that the hearing impaired students are victims of lack of translators in educational settings. The SNE teachers from Kotebe and Jimma share similar opinion on the poor resource allocation of Education Bureau which was the same in all high schools.

Most of the principals and high school teachers reveal the magnitude of challenges these students faced in the integrated classrooms and feel discontented of the outcomes obtained. This is mainly attached to the reluctance or unresponsive nature of respective education offices towards education of students with disabilities. Most of them converse about lack of resource materials to support these children, no translators assigned for the hearing impaired if mainstreaming is a must, lack of guiding principles and strategic plan that illustrate duties and responsibilities of each stakeholder, be in short of support system, poor curriculum that didn't consider education of the SwD, the great gap between what had been talked and practiced, lack of appropriate monitoring and evaluation of the program, and interest of the students to bear these all challenges were some major challenging points discussed by principals, regular and SNE teachers. Finally, those institutions got policy document and strategic plans confer of its deficiency since it has no space for the budgeting regarding resources provision for these students.

Opportunities in the schools and colleges

Most of the respondents believe that there are numbers of opportunities the school management and offices should tap and integrate in their plan to assist education of students with disabilities. The policy guidelines and strategic plan preparations are one way forward in the strengthening of integration. Availability of interested groups to assist education of SwD in colleges is also one promising opportunity like psychologists and counselors. Other teachers from some of the high schools were dedicated to advise, give tutorial class and try to learn sign languages. The regular meetings several SNE teachers and principals hold with regular education teachers and the parents are seen as a green spot on the development of the provision of education and facilities to SwD. The involvement of community based organizations like idirs and kebele leaders was another prospect mentioned by respondents

from Jimma. Some of the respondents from region 14 mentioned that attitude of parents to engage in support groups and other education professional glimpses an opening. The psychologists and counselors inclination to work with SNE teachers and few heads of schools/departments in the colleges were taken as good chance in colleges. Generally, accessibility of educational services for students with disabilities where proper rules and guidelines were not furnished was taken as excellent prospect by the parents and their awareness through strong effort of school community was admired. The students discipline to adjust to new environment and participation of few NGOs in service provision and material assistance now had been considered as potential input for the future in assisting education of these students. Some NGOs support schools in fulfilling better toilets, ramps and walking materials for the physically impaired; basic materials like Braille papers and writing tools for the visually impaired which has to be seen as better initiations.

Suggested way outs by respondents

As of the research direction/objective of this paper, it is binding to get preposition of respondents on the way forward to tackle the challenges disclosed for giving a clue to the curriculum planners and policy makers. As stated by the respondents, structural problems has to be resolved where a to-be-experts were assigned at zonal [sub-city] and regional level to coordinate education of students with disabilities without any background knowledge and professional expertise. The structure mingling/merger with other areas like adult and non-formal education and/or primary education was also another concern that led issue of students with disabilities to the serious weakness which needs structural modification at all levels of the MoE. The interests of MoE and REB for statistical data collection to fill their reporting styles improvement was another area that get thought of the respondents highlighted for government deliberation. A study done by Webster and Wood come-up with different finding stating that *the local educational Department (LED) collects the views of parents, teachers, medical officers, and any other professionals involved with the child* (Webster and Wood, 1989). Involvement of professional team in the area like psychologists, social workers, nurses, physicians and language pathologists interest and initiation to work on the benefit of students with disabilities. Additionally, the respondents suggested on active contribution of municipalities, education offices and NGOs in educational assistance to be rendered for the students with disabilities. Gearheart, Weishahn and Gearheart, (1988) stress on the same view supporting the study result declaring *the administrative staff from the superintendent to the principal must have a real commitment to developing the most appropriate, least restrictive environment.*

Conclusion

Teachers were supposed to be the sole responsible persons to take all responsibilities in teaching special needs children in mainstream classes. But the decisive professionals to assist education of students with disabilities were/are curriculum designers, and executive bodies who play significant role in making policy statements, rules and regulations, providing

resource materials and human power allocation, child placement, providing health care services, counselors, sociologist, physicians, etc. in addition to the school teachers and parents. The questions of coordinated effort of professionals in assisting education of SwD took longer period without any decision since concerned educational personnel from MoE to local level didn't give due attention to the area. Education of these children was politicized when occupied mind of the authorities as consumption of reporting than supporting. Because, every walk of special needs education, now inclusive education was/is at a standstill since its commencement of 1994 when it was flourished throughout the country. Many things were deteriorating, specifically when one considers material resources and furniture to be fulfilled for the students. The top-up allocated for SNE teachers during these periods were still the same after 20 years of move and in many areas/regions teachers were devoid of the incentives that made the support system and involvement of professionals more intricate. Since the areas of work in assisting education of children with disabilities were not motivating and didn't show progress, many professionals refrain from joining the group. This is due to the poor attention and insignificant concern of higher officials at Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, NGOs and municipalities who should take leading position to organize, invite and bring together all the teams of professionals from different disciplines work collectively to support education of students with disabilities.

Even if the support given at different institutions were minimal and negligible, some of the students with disabilities effectively achieve/score good points in their schooling. As of the report from Special Needs Education in Kotebe Teacher's Training College and researcher's informal discussion with some of the students, one of the SNE student won gold medal scoring excellent points in his academic performance. Actually, effort of interested individual professionals and parents were of paramount importance. One of the major hurdles that hamper development of assistance strategy for students with disabilities was a contravene existing between Regional Education Bureau and the MoE. Every strategic plans, guiding principles, proceedings of national and international workshops and regulations were/are dumped at MoE where it warmth shelves of experts. This great gorge opened another impediment between REBs and the zonal /local/ education offices where all assigned or delegated expert can move his own way in the SNE field of work. Almost no expert knows about what disability is, why support education of children with disabilities, what disability rights are, what national and international rules and regulations were promulgated, and what is expected of them to assist education of children with disabilities. Because of this, the outcome and response to the request of parents and school management was/is 'we were/are tired of these questions!' etc. If education personnel didn't take lions share to support education of students with disabilities, the integrative effort of parents and professionals we sought of is by no means will be unachievable for years.

Recommendations

Students with disability need proper assistance from their classroom teachers, parents and other related professionals.

Having Service delivery like hearing aids, use of visual aural learning materials, or accessibility of overhead projectors and slides, incentives or monetary aids to the economically impoverished, ease of use the cane, slates, styles, etc are among crucial elements to be delivered by authorities, NGOs and municipalities. Allocation of budget to assist fulfillment of the resources and needed materials for the students looks compulsory. There are children having personal problems like academic, economic, social, psychological, emotional and other problems. There exist individual learning preferences among college students and secondary school regular education students. In regular schools, teen-age sex and fear of HIV/AIDS is also a problem. Hence, collaboration of professionals to assist students with disabilities in relation to satisfying health services and awareness programs to consider the health of the students becomes apparent that concerned bodies should recognize. Additionally, districts and executive bodies of the Ministry should make certain all personnel who work with special needs students have access to relevant in-service training opportunities in order to foster professional competency. Most of the suggested solutions acknowledged by the respondents were easy to apply by concerned bodies since there are rules, regulations, proclamations and strategic plans shelved at MoE. It was/is the duty of Regional Education Bureau to approach MoE to get all these documents and disseminate to the schools and colleges as soon as possible. There is also a need for professionals' participation in the preparation of curriculum at national and regional levels. The curriculum designed should leave room for adaptations at institutional (school) level that could be done by active participation of teachers, parents, and the target learners as well. The existence of clearly stated rules and regulations from national level up to institutions should be spread out.

This policy statement is the base for the professionals and the learners themselves to use all services without any form of segregation. UN, (1997) stated the following concerning policy of countries.

In order to implement the education for all statements, states should have: a clearly stated policy; i.e., understood at school and community levels; they should allow for a flexible curriculum as well as additions and as adaptations; provide quality materials, ongoing teacher training and support teachers.

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