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College of Education and Language Studies
Department of Special Needs Education
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The Challenges of Deaf Students in Inclusive School:
The case of Minilik Primary School

Prepared by: Tigist Alemayehu
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School: The case of Minilik Primary School**

By: Tigist Alemayehu

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partial fulfillment of the requirement for the
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Advisor: Andargachew Deneke (PhD)

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Approved by Board of Examiner:-

1: Advisor	Signature	Date
<u>Andargachew Deneke (PhD)</u>	-----	-----
2. Internal Examiner:	Signature	Date
_____	-----	-----
3. External Examiner	Signature	Date
_____	-----	-----

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List of Acronyms

CRPD	Convention of the Rights of Person with Disabilities
EthSL	Ethiopian Sign Language
IE	Inclusive Education
ENAD	Ethiopian National Association of the Deaf
WFD	World Federation of the Deaf
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
UN	United Nation
MoE	Ministry of Education
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

Abstract

Inclusive education is a fundamental human right that ensures equal learning opportunities for all students including those with disabilities. However deaf students in inclusive schools face significance challenges that hinder their academic and social development. This study explores the practices, challenges and gaps in inclusive education for deaf students in Minllik Primary Scholl in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

A qualitative case approach was employed using interview, focus group discussion and classroom observations to collect data from deaf students, hearing students, teachers, sign langue interpreters, and school administrators. The finding reveal that while inclusive policies exist in Ethiopia their implementation is inconsistent due to communication barriers, lack of teachers training, inadequate sign language interpretation, and insufficient adapted learning materials.

The study highlights that deaf students experience social isolation, struggle with inaccessible curriculum, and rely heavily on limited interpreter services. Teachers faces difficulties in balancing the needs of both deaf and hearing students as they lack formal training in Ethiopian Sign Language [EthSL] additionally the gap between inclusive education polices and classroom practices remains a major challenge affecting the quality of education for deaf students.

Based on these findings the study recommends training teachers in EthSL, increasing the number of interpreters. Adapting curricula for visual learners and ensuring stronger policy implementation. These interventions are essential to bridge the gap between inclusive education theory and practice, ensuring that deaf students receive equitable learning opportunities.

Key words; inclusive education, deaf students, Ethiopian Sign Language, teachers training, communication barriers, policy implementation.

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter is the introduction part of the study, including the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives of the study, the general and specific, scope and limitation of the significances of the study. The chapter gives a trace of overall the background of the study.

1.1. Background of the study

Education is a universally recognized fundamental human right that should be accessible to all citizens. In order to implement vision of UN "Education for all" inclusive education had adopted the idea of inclusion is necessitated as the need to address the verity needs of learners, such as learners with disability including those with hearing impairment(Adoyo p.2007)

As Inclusive education is about ensuring access to quality education for all students by effectively meeting their diverse needs in a way that is responsive, accepting, respectful and supportive. Students participate in the education program in a common learning environment with support to diminish and remove barriers and obstacles that may lead to exclusion.

The Un convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities article 5, emphasize that All deaf children have a right to quality inclusive, multilingual education in their national sign language and the national written language. Article 6 All the deaf children have the right to learn the linguistic identity and culture. (UNCRPD,2006)

The Ethiopian Sign Language is the language that the deaf community enables to communicate each other. Without language there is no communication. If a child is born deaf in the family of become late Dear families are a must to communicate in sign language.

The UN 2019 report on Persons with disabilities reveals that people with disability encounter multiple barriers in terms of access to education; an inadequacy of special school possesses basic skills and enjoys school year opportunities. The report further identified discrimination, prejudice, lack of specialized professional teachers, shortage of educational materials and disaggregated research data about disability continued to deny persons with disability the right to have quality education. (UN, 2019). Innumerable le problems inhibit learners with

special needs education to attain their full potential by hindering their full participations. These include stigma or community attitude inadequate special teachers and resource centers, shortage of teaching and learning and assistive devices ignorance or not aware of most people about disability (Adoyo, 2007)

In addition, the UN 2019 report reveals persons with disabilities face many barriers in accessing education. These barriers include physical obstacles, lack of inclusive facilities, discrimination practices insufficient support to service and shortage of trained educators. Additionally societal attitude and misconception about disability may contribute to exclusion and hinder the full participation of persons with disability in educational opportunities.

The report emphasizes the need for inclusive policies and practices to address these challenges and ensure equal access to education for everyone, regardless of disability.

As a deaf person myself, I have personally experienced the challenges faced in accessing inclusive education. This lived experience has motivated my interest in conducting this research to explore the conditions and needs of deaf students in inclusive schools. My experience have given me a deeper understanding of the communication barrier, lack of resources and limited awareness that often hinder the academic and social development of deaf learners. My personal journey has not only shaped my academic interests but also inspired me to carry out this research with the aim of contributing to more inclusive and supportive educational practices for deaf students in Ethiopia.

1.2. The Statement of the problem

Inclusive education is about how we develop and design our schools, classrooms, programs and activities so that all students learn and participate together. However, It is nonetheless to remember that the understanding of the educational process for deaf students and teachers abilities to promote their learning are more difficult by the fact that as a group deaf students(DDIA, 2020)

Inclusive educations in the developed countries have better opportunity than in Ethiopia. It is accessible to the deaf students providing the needs as much as possible. It must be pointed out that this is not going to achieve easily since there are difficulties and challenges to be overcome on the way. Availability of resources is one area of concern, Sign language which is the language of Deaf people in inclusive schools could be put in place to find out the

needs of Deaf students and then make recommendations for learning materials to be made. More time would be needed by both teachers and Deaf students in order for them to cover all the skills.(Tonegawa, 2022)

Deaf students in primary schools face significant challenges that hinder their academic progress and overall development. Despite global advocacy for inclusive education many primary schools struggles to provide an environment deaf student can thrive alongside their hearing peers. Key issues limited access to qualified teachers trained in sign language inadequate classroom resources and communication barriers between teachers, hearing students and deaf students.

Furthermore inclusive classroom often failed to meet the specific needs of deaf students leading to their marginalization and reduced participation in academic and social activities. The lack of full access to learning materials, insufficient use of visual aids and the absence of supportive policies exacerbate these challenges is critical to fostering these challenges denying deaf students equal opportunities to succeed.

Therefore, this research aims to explore the current situation of deaf students in Minilik Primary School and to identify practical strategies for creating inclusive classroom with full access to quality education to deaf students is critical to build educator and other school staff who use sign language in response to this problem, this research proposes to investigate inclusive education doesn't support deaf students in inclusive education based on the current situation.

1.3. The Research Questions

With the above three major problem, this study tried to respond the following research questions:

1. How are inclusive education practiced to deaf students in Inclusive School?
2. What are the challenges of Deaf Students faced in Inclusive school?
3. How does Inclusive School provide support for their Deaf students?
4. What are the practice of Inclusive School and principles of Inclusive Education?

1.4. The objective of the study

1.4.1. General objective of the study

The general objective of this study is to explore the challenges faced by Deaf students in Minllik Primary School.

1.4.2. Specific objective of the study

The specific objective of this study is:

- To identify the practices of inclusive education in Inclusive School
- To investigate the challenges of Deaf students faced in Inclusive School
- To clarify how Inclusive School provide support for their Deaf students
- To identify the practice of Inclusive School with the principles of Inclusive Education

1.5. The Significance of the study

This study is vital for addressing the educational challenges faced by Deaf students in Minilik Primary School by examining the barriers to inclusion and identifying strategies to improve access. The research will contribute to the development of inclusive classrooms that accommodate the unique needs of deaf students.

1.6. The Scope of the study

This research investigates on the challenges of deaf students in inclusive classrooms, in Minllik Primary School in Addis Ababa Ethiopia. The research examines grade four to grade seven as this levels include deaf students actively participating in inclusive classrooms.

The study primarily investigates educational accessibility, teacher preparedness, communication barriers, curriculum limitations and role of sign language interpreters, within the school environment.

Geographically this study is limited to Minllik Primary School and does not extend to other schools or regions in Ethiopia additionally it focuses on the current state of inclusive education and dose not analyze historical trends of past intervention in detail.

By narrowing its scope to this specific school and time frame the study provides the in depth understanding of the challenges of Deaf students in an inclusive settings.

1.7. The Limitation of the study

While this research aims to provide valuable insights into challenges of the deaf students in Minllik Primary School it's subject to the following limitation.

Limitation in time, funding or access to schools may affect the breadth of data collection, potentially reducing the sample size or depth of analysis.

The research focuses only Minllik Primary School in Addis Ababa, meaning the findings may not fully represent the challenges faced by Deaf students in other school or regions in Ethiopia.

Also there is limited access to official documents some relevant government reports, school policies and statistical data on inclusive education were not readily available restricting the ability to compare the findings with broader national policies.

The study involved a limited number of participants including deaf students, hearing students, and school administrators. A large sample size from multiple schools would provide a more compressive understanding of the challenges faced in inclusive education.

Despite this limitation, this study provides valuable insights into real challenges faced by Deaf students in in inclusive education.

1.8. The organizations of the study

The researcher prepared the whole study in to five mutually interrelated chapters. The first chapter includes the back ground of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, and objectives, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study. In the chapter two are literature review, theoretical and conceptual frameworks. The research meted ology that consists, research design, sampling procedures, methods of data collections and analysis are in chapter three. The fourth chapter is the result discussion of the study. The final chapter five includes the summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

1.9 Definition of Terms

Deaf: In this study, "deaf" refers to individuals with a significant hearing loss who use sign language as their primary mode of communication and are part of the Deaf community and culture.

Inclusive Education: A system of education where all students, including those with disabilities, learn together in the same classroom with necessary support and accommodations.

Sign Language: A visual-manual language used by deaf individuals for communication. In the context of this study, it refers specifically to **Ethiopian Sign Language**.

Mainstream School: A general education school where both hearing and students with disabilities, including deaf students, attend and are taught in the same environment.

Communication Barrier: Any obstacle that prevents clear and effective exchange of information. For deaf students, this often refers to the absence of sign language use or lack of interpreters.

Primary School: In this research, it refers to grades 1 through 8 in the Ethiopian education system, where deaf and hearing students may be educated together in inclusive set

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

2.1. Introduction

Inclusive Education aims to provide equal learning opportunities for all students including those with disabilities UNCRPD, 2006 Emphasize that Deaf students have the right to access quality education in their national sign language. However the implementation of inclusive education varies and deaf students often face challenges related to communication, curriculum, accessibility and teachers preparedness (Marchark and Spencer, 2016)

This chapter review existing literature on inclusive education focusing on the concept of inclusive education and its application to deaf students, challenges faced in inclusive classrooms, support system to deaf students and gaps between inclusive education practice and deaf education principles.

2.2. Concept and Definition of Deafness

Hearing impairment is a broad term that comprises hearing losses ranged from mild to profound. The term comprises various degrees and types of hearing loss as well diminished role hearing, understanding speech and communication of linguistic information that results from auditory disorder hearing impairment include both deaf and hard of hearing (Moore, 2001).

Deafness refers to a partial or total inability to hear which can significantly impact communication, language development and social interactions. It is classified as disability under the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) requiring special accommodation to ensure equal access to education.

Deafness can be categorized based on the degree of hearing loss cause and onset. Based on degree of hearing loss mild hearing loss difficulty hearing soft sounds but can follow conversation in quite setting. The moderate hearing loss struggles with normal conversation requiring hearing aids or other assistive devices.

The profound hearing loss (deafness) no hearing ability primarily depends on sign language for communication (Marschark and Spencer, 2016). Sensory neural hearing loss results from damage to the inner ear cochlea or auditory nerve. It is usually permanent and requires sign language, cochlear implants or hearing aids mixed hearing loss a combination of conductive and sensor neural hearing loss (Schwartz, 1996).

Conductive hearing loss due to problems in the outer or middle ear it is often treatable with medication or surgery. Sensory neural hearing loss results from damage to the inner ear (cochlea) or auditory nerve. It is usually permanent and required sign language cochlear implants or hearing aids. Mixed hearing loss, a combination of conductive hearing sensorial hearing loss (Schwartz, 1996).

Pre lingual deafness occurs before a child acquires language from birth or early childhood individual primary relay on sign language for communication (Ladd, 2003). Post lingual deafness occur after language development. These individuals may retain some spoken language skills but often require assistive communication methods (Spencer and Marschark, 2016).

World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that there are around 120 million people with hearing impairment across the globe out of this number around 78 million are from least developed countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. In Sub Saharan this number is high more than 1.2 million children ranged from 5 – 14 years suffer from moderate to severe hearing loss in both ears which raise from ear infection and lack of hygiene as well poor treatment (WHO, 2012).

Deafness is as restricted access to hearing and deaf students as whose primary communication means is sign language and has restricted access to the hearing world in education and other aspects (Alemayehu, 2016).

2.3. Concept of Inclusive Education

2.3.1. Definition and Theoretical Aspects

Inclusive Education is defined as ‘a system that ensures all students regardless of their abilities, have equal access to learning mainstream schools’ UNESCO, (2005) Inclusive education as a developmental approach in education that seeks to address the learning needs of all children, youth and adults with specific focus on those who are vulnerable to

marginalization and exclusion. Inclusive Education is practice of educating students with hearing impairment in classrooms together with students without disabilities (Kigotho, 2016).

Social Model of disability (Oliver, 1990) focuses on removing societal barriers than fixing the individual also argues that Deaf students struggle due to lack of accessibility, not because of their deafness. The Vygotsky's Socio Cultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) emphasizes that learning happens through interaction, suggests and suggests that deaf students needed language rich environments with sign language communication.

The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) recognizes that scholars take a range of positions with regard to a definition for inclusion. However, a definition that focuses only on placement does not meet the criteria for inclusion. Inclusion is the learner's right to participate and reach their potential in public institutions such as schools. In other words, inclusion is an experience, not a placement. With regard to deaf learners, educators must pay special attention to the need to support language and social development as outlined in WFD Article 24(3) and (4), UNCRPD and must have awareness of sign language milestones and assessments. Moreover, educators must pay special attention to deaf learners' socio-emotional development needs that are often met by opportunities to participate with a peer group and teachers with a shared sign language and cultural identity.

Inclusive education is important to hearing students as well because they learn Ethiopian Sign Language that enables to communicate with the deaf student. It is also an additional knowledge of language. Inclusive Education creates equal partnership to offer suitable education with in the regular classroom for deaf children (Adoyo P, 2007).

Inclusive Education provides the deaf students an opportunity to interact with the school community in their daily life in this regard students with disability share an experience (Ibrahim A., 2012) Successful inclusive enables students with hearing impairment part of a classroom and makes them active learners its benefit also related to academic personal, social and communication language skills (Asiif, 2008). The benefit of inclusive education extends also for teachers in order to effective and efficient delivery of the lesson for divers groups as well achieve deaf students academic and social integrations (Stinson, 1999).

2.3.2. Inclusive Education in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia the Ministry of Education (1994,2020) introduced inclusive education policies but implementation remains weak.. A study by Adoyo (2007) found that many Ethiopian schools lack trained teachers and sign language interpreters, limiting deaf student's full participation.

In Ethiopia before secular education traditionally education transferred through religious institution churches and mosques that had been accessible for visual and physical impairment before 1917. Blind persons have good opportunity than any other traditional church education. However due to lack of awareness and attitudes for other disability groups where oppressed and mainstreamed (MOE, 2011).

2.4 Challenges of inclusive Education for Deaf Students

2.4.1. Communication Barriers

One of biggest challenges in inclusive schools is limited access to sign language (WFD, 2018) A study in Gondar city revealed that deaf students face significant communication challenges due to the absence of sign language interpreters and teachers proficient in Ethiopian Sign Language this gap hinders their academic inclusion and participation (Tedela and Negass,2019). Most teachers are not trained in Ethiopian Sign language (Marschark and Spencer, 2016).

Language is an essential component of normal human development and a means for discovering the world. However, because the majorities of deaf children are born to non-signing, hearing parents, many of them do not have full access to the language of their world until they have passed the most critical ages for language acquisition (Marc Marshark, Harry G. Lang and JohA.Albertini, 2002). Sign language interpreters are few and some lack subject specific knowledge (Schwartz, 1996).

Not all children, especially children with hearing loss, have access to a requisite reading rich environment. In fact, many studies demonstrate that deaf children are read to less often than their hearing peers. Interactive reading practices, when conducted in the home lead to positive literacy outcomes. Hearing students struggle to communicate with their deaf peers, leading to social isolation (Ladd, 2003).

2.4.2. Curriculum and Teaching Challenges/Instructional system

Curriculum is one of the obstacles or tools that need to be carefully designed and adapted in

order to facilitate the development and implementation of a proper inclusive system. It facilitates the development of more inclusive settings when it leaves room for the center of learning or when the individual teacher makes adaptations to enhance sense in the local context for the individual learner.(Educating Deaf Children in an Inclusive Setting in Kenya: Challenges and Considerations.

Inclusive school follows the regular curriculum, which is extensive and demanding, centrally designed and rigid, leaving little flexibility for adaptations for teachers to try out new approaches. The timing for the completion of the curriculum is also unrealistic for the deaf students as the teaching and learning processes are slowed down due to the processes involved.(Adoyo P.O, 2007) The mainstream curriculum is designed for hearing students, creating difficulties for deaf learners(Stinson and Anita, 0999) lesson are delivered orally making them inaccessible to visual learners (Schwartz, 1996). Examinations do not accommodate sign language users, putting deaf students at a disadvantage (Adoyo, 2007).

The process of inclusive education towards providing access, participation and achieving the goal of ‘learning for all’ requires a multi-sectored approach. It’s a human development initiative that must support teachers, principals, and other school staff the best possible way.

UNISCOW inscow, (2005)stated that pedagogy in particular was highlighted as the key to meeting all students educational needs by making the curriculum flexible and so more assessable. By recognizing that teaching methods which can make curriculum accessible to children with disabilities can also make learning accessible to all students a teacher or school principal is well on the way to improving the overall quality of their school. In this way, inclusive education is not a disability only issue but an educational quality issues.

2.4.3 Social and Emotional Barriers

Deaf students often experience social isolation and low self-esteem due to communication barriers and lack of understanding from peers and teachers. This social exclusion negatively impacts their overall education experience (Tedela and Negass, 2019).

Teachers and hearing students often have low expectations of deaf students, affecting their confidence (Marschark and Spencer, 2016).

2.4.4. Policy and Resource Challenges

Despite the Ethiopian government's commitment to inclusive education many school lack financial and material support (MoE, 2020), finding for sign language resources and teacher training is limited (UNESCO, 2005). The (WHO, 2021) Viewed that no clear policies exist on how to adapt teaching material for deaf students.

The Ethiopian government has accepted international and national legal and policy frame works relied to inclusive education. On December 1991 Ethiopia accepted the international convention on rights of Children. On 1948 Ethiopia ratified Universal declaration of human right. The 1989 convention on the right of the child. In 1993 the standard rules. The Salamanca framework on inclusive education signed on 1994 and 2006 the convention on rights of person with disability in provision of rehabilitation service, improved access to education and social services in the inclusive setting.

FDRE constitution article 47 and 91 stipulated that state is responsible for the provision of necessary back up and rehabilitation service for people with disability. Furthermore education and training policy purposely drew the principle of special need education as the essential for all c children in need for person with disability to learn in their full potential.

In this regard the in 1994, the Education and training policy of explicitly devised quality primary education as their right to assure development it intended provision of quality primary for all regardless of any discrimination (MoE 1994) it lay its foundation on FDRE constitution article 45/5 which bear state parties as responsible to ensure right of person with disability to have access to primary, secondary and tertiary inclusive education (Constitution 1995).

2.5. Support System for Deaf Students in Inclusive Schools

2.5.1. Teacher Training and Professional Development

Research shows that teachers trained in deaf education can significantly improve learning outcomes (Adoyo, 2007). Training should include Ethiopian Sign Language, visual teaching strategies and deaf culture awareness (Marschark and Spencer, 2016).

Deaf education is the education of students with any degree of hearing loss or deafness which addresses their differences and individual needs. This process involves individually-planned, systematically-monitored teaching methods, adaptive materials, accessible settings and other

interventions designed to help students achieve a higher level of self-sufficiency and success in the school and community than they would achieve with a typical classroom education. A number of countries focus on training teachers to teach deaf students with a variety of approaches and have organizations to aid deaf students. (Marc Marshark, Harry G. Lang and John A. Albertini, 2002).

The important service for deaf students is note taking. Deaf students obviously have to rely on visual communication when hearing students look down to take notes, they still are able to follow the lecture or classroom communication because they can hear it. Deaf students who rely on signed communication do not have that luxury. Each time they look down to write something, part of the spoken or signed message is missed. The alternative of not taking notes at all puts the deaf students at a clear disadvantage, especially as student's progress through school materials becomes more complex and technical. (Marc Marshark, Harry G. Lang and John A. Albertini, 2002).

2.5.2 Role of SIGN Language Interpreters

Sign language interpreter is a professional who is fluent in two or more sign languages and interprets between a source language and a target language and mediate across cultures. The interpreter's task is to facilitate communication in a neutral manner, ensuring equal access to information and participation. Sign language interpreters can be both Deaf and hearing but should always carry appropriate sign language interpreter qualification from the respective country. A sign language interpreter is bound to a Code of Ethics, ensuring impartiality, confidentiality, linguistic and professional competence, as well as professional growth and development. (European Union of the Deaf)(EUD), 2019).

Interpreters bridge the communication gap but their availability is limited (WFD, 2018). Many interpreters lack formal training making it difficult to interpret technical subjects like science and mathematics (Schwartz, 1996).

2.6. Gaps between Inclusive Education Practices and Deaf Education Principles

2.6.1. Lack of Bilingual Bicultural (BI-BI) Education

The best approach for deaf students is BI-BI Education which prioritize sign language as the first language and teachers written language separately (Marschark and Spencer, 2016). However many inclusive schools focus on oral methods which are not effective for most deaf learners (Adoyo, 2007).

2.6.2. Policy VS Implementation Gap

The International Convention on rights of person with disabilities is signed on December 6, 2006. UNCRPD Article 1 stated that the purpose of the present convention is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity. These article shows that person with disabilities have the right to equal opportunities like any other citizens in the country. In the second paragraph of Article 24 is about the rights of Education to person with disabilities, it states person with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary education or from secondary education on the basis of disability. As the UNCRPD put rights of access to education that means deaf students have right to get education in sign language, use sign language in school interaction, access to sign language interpreters and receive services as well as information's in sign language.

The Salamanca statement reaffirms concern on special needs education, the right of everyone to education and educational institution should accommodate all learners regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic and other condition and provision of support service is paramount importance for access and success in education for all (frame work, 1994)

The objective of Salamanca statement is to reconstruct the provision of education for students with disabilities and expand learning opportunity to marginalized group who had little or no chance of learning historically (UNCRPD, 2006) The statement outlined the social benefit associated with inclusive education include increased acceptance appreciation skills, enhance moral standard and develop self-esteem (schemer, 2001).

The Ethiopian government has accepted international and national legal and policy frame works relied to inclusive education. On December 1991 Ethiopia accepted the international convention on rights of Children. On 1948 Ethiopia ratified Universal declaration of human right. The child right on 1989. In 1993 the standard rules. The Salamanca framework on inclusive education signed on 1994 and 2006 the convention on rights of person with disability in provision of rehabilitation service, improved access to education and social services in the inclusive setting.

FDRE constitution article 47 and 91 stipulated that state is responsible for the provision of necessary back up and rehabilitation service for people with disability. Furthermore education and training policy purposely drew the principle of special need education as the essential for all c children in need for person with disability to learn in their full potential.

In this regard the in 1994, the Education and training policy of explicitly devised quality primary education as their right to assure development it intended provision of quality primary for all regardless of any discrimination (MoE 1994) it lay its foundation on FDRE constitution article 45/5 which bear state parties as responsible to ensure right of person with disability to have access to primary, secondary and tertiary inclusive education (Constitution 1995).

2.6.3. Limited research on Deaf Education in Ethiopia

Most research focuses on general disability inclusion but specific studies on deaf students are rare (WFD, 2018) More data driven policies are needed to improve inclusive education for deaf students (WHO, 2021)

2.6.4 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in two major theories: Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and the Social Model of Disability. These theories help to understand the challenges that deaf students face in inclusive primary schools, particularly in the Ethiopia

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory: emphasizes the role of social interaction and language in the development of cognitive skills. According to this theory, children learn effectively through interactions with others within their cultural environment. Language plays a central role in this learning process. For deaf students, the use of sign language is essential for interaction, learning, and cognitive development.

In inclusive schools, when deaf students are placed in classrooms where teachers and peers do not use sign language, their ability to engage socially and academically is severely limited. This leads to communication breakdowns, social isolation, and poor academic outcomes. Therefore, this theory supports the idea that language accessibility and social interaction are crucial in inclusive settings for deaf learners.

Social Model of Disability

The Social Model of Disability shifts the focus from the individual's impairment to the barriers created by society. It argues that people are disabled not by their condition, but by the way society is organized including lack of accessible communication, discriminatory attitudes, and inadequate support systems.

In the context of this study, the challenges faced by deaf students in inclusive primary schools are viewed as a result of systemic failures, such as the absence of trained teachers, lack of sign language use, and poorly adapted teaching methods. This theory emphasizes that the responsibility for inclusion lies with the school system and society, not with the child.

By using these two theoretical perspectives, this study aims to explore how the inclusive school environment can either support or hinder the educational participation and success of deaf students. These frameworks provide a foundation for identifying the barriers and proposing strategies to create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for all

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter presents the research design, target population, the sampling techniques, instruments, data collection methods, data analysis procedures, and ethical consideration used in the study. The methodology was carefully selected to ensure that the study effectively explores the challenges faced by deaf students in an inclusive education setting at Minillk Primary School. As an insider who is deaf I was able to build strong rapport with the deaf students and staff. This positionality enriched the data collection process.

3.2. Research Design and Approach

This study employs a qualitative research approach to gain an in depth understanding of experiences of deaf students, teachers, school administrators, and sign language interpreters in an inclusive education. A case study design was selected because it allows for detailed and contextualized exploration of research problem. It also provides rich descriptive data through multiple sources (interviews, observations, and focus group discussion. It is suitable for studying educational challenges that require real life perspectives.

3.3 Target population

The study area is at Minilik Primary School, which is an inclusive education school. Both hearing and deaf students attend in the same classroom. The school is found in Addis Ababa. The population for this study includes deaf students (Grade 4-7) at Minllik Primary School targeted teachers, hearing students learning alongside deaf students teacher teaching inclusive classrooms, sign language interpreters, school administrators and special needs advisors managing inclusive education programs.

This population was selected to provide compressive insights into the practices, challenges and gaps to inclusive education. In Minllik primary school there were 96 teachers out of this 52 female and 44 male. The total of students is 681 out of this number 394 are female and 287 male. Out of this number a total of 21 deaf students (14 male and 7 female)attend in the inclusive school from grade four to grade eight. Two sign language interpreter participated

one male the other is female. The other participant of this study is the school directors (one male) and special needs advisor one female.

The school adopted an inclusive education. This study focused on grade three to grade Eight; there were no deaf students in grade four. The school informed those grades the foundation of knowledge and the school faced high challenges.

The following data presented in the table I indicated that total target population of the study.

	Gender		Deaf	Hearing	Total
	Male	Female			
Grade 3 students	4	2	2	4	6
Grade 4 students	0	0	-	-	0
Grade 5 students	2	8	10	-	10
Grade 6 students	1	6	5	2	7
Grade 7 students	5	2	5	2	7
Sign language interpreters	1	1	-	2	2
Teachers	4	6	-	-	10
School Director	1	-	-	1	1
Total	18	25	22	12	43

Table1. Target sample of the study

3.4. Sampling Techniques and size

A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants with direct experience in inclusive education for deaf students. The study included 10 teachers teaching deaf and hearing student, 10 deaf students' from grade 3 – 8, 8 hearing students from same the classes as deaf students. Two sign language interpreters working at the school and one school director and 1 special needs advisor. These sample size divers perspectives while maintaining manageable data collection and analysis.

3.5 Methods of Data Collection

In this study the data were collected from primary and secondary sources of data collection using three primary methods were used, that are interview, observation and focus group discussion.

3.5.1. Interview

In this study Semi-structured interview were used to gather information from participants because it is the most appropriate method of data collection to get in-depth information from the participants respond. Teachers to understand their challenges in teaching deaf students, deaf students to explore the experiences in inclusive education, hearing students to examine their interaction with deaf peer. The school administrator to assess inclusive education policies and sign language interpreters to evaluate their role and challenges. This interview included pen ended questions to allow participants to express their views freely.

The school director,(1) teachers (10), deaf students (10), hearing students (8), special needs dvisors (1) and sign language interpreters (2) towards Minllik Primary School. It designed for each group of respondent in a suitable way for respondents to reflect, explore their challenges towards inclusive education. The interview questions comprises open ended questions in order to enable respondents provide clarification on challenges of inclusive education of participants toward inclusive education and their practice.

3.5.2. Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Focus group discussion were conducted one group with deaf and hearing students(10) participants, The group with teachers and special needs advisors (12) participants, the FGD explored students interaction and classroom experiences, teachers perspectives on inclusion education, challenges in communication and curriculum delivery. The FGD explored students interaction classrooms experiences, teachers challenges on inclusive education, challenges in communication and curriculum delivery at Minllik Primary School.

3.5.3. Observation

Classroom observation were conducted to assess teacher student interactions in inclusive classrooms, use of sign language and interpretation services, deaf students participation and engagement in lessons. An observation checklist was used to ensure consistent data collection.

An observation check list were used in this study to obtain information in the class room on the teaching and learning process, in the school environment and how the deaf culture is practiced. Data collection employed through participatory and non-participatory observation in this work. Participant observation method was the key for collecting crucial information for practice of inclusive education in the target school through informal communication with stakeholders of the research, Participant observation was conducted to obtain more detailed and accurate information on inclusive education practice and explore additional information on the subject of investigation.

The researcher informed the teachers and students while joined the class (Grade 4, Grade 5, Grade 6, and Grade 7, Grade 8) for the observation.

3.6. Procedures for data Collection

Procedure of the data collection is connected with requesting for permission of the administration through the formal letter guaranteed from Addis Ababa University and Minllik Primary School. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, interview and focus groups were conducted in Amharic and Ethiopian Sign language with interpretation when needed. The classroom observations were carried out during six lessons also the ethical guideline were followed to ensure confidentiality and voluntary participation.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data Collected from various sources where processed and analyzed in a coherent format. The collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis, which involved transcribing interviews and FGDs, identifying key themes like communication barriers, curriculum challenges teacher preparedness. Also comparing responses across different participants groups.

This data obtained from interview respondents. The observation were interpreted and analyzed in text format. This categorization was conducted repeatedly watching the recorded video of their responses.

The six approach of data analysis noted down by colzsizzi as follow:

Watch the recorded sign language interpretation several times then write down

- Reduced unnecessary, unrelated and redundancy data
- Formulated significant statements from the interviews
- Important participant experiences descriptions are put using exact quotes

- The finding results are put into short and clear statements
- The research participants were asked to validate the findings.

The above 6 process were employed to analyze the interview data throughout the study (Colaizzi 1987 cited in (WellerD., 2000)).

Narration of participants views were taken as the main qualitative e data analysis. Besides of the participants' actual statements from interview were reported as quotes and participants own language and sign language translation into the English.

3.8. Trustworthiness and Authenticity

Trustworthiness and Authenticity is common to test qualitative research. Qualitative study can establish honesty and genuineness by addressing the credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability this demonstrate the trustworthiness and authenticity of this research. Interview items were defined clearly for the participants by their own language. The researcher follow similar manner to study interview in order to verify the accuracy of the result. Lastly similar interview question were asked twice for the same group participants in order to verify reliability result. The researcher cross checked different respondents earlier and recent responses to test trustworthiness and authenticity.

3.9. Ethical Consideration of the Research

The approval of the research was obtained from the College of Education and Behavioral Studies. The researcher received supporting letter from Special Needs Department of Addis Ababa University in order to get permission from the target area and population of the study. In this regard the investigator acted in a professional manner, this avoids bias towards the subject or individuals.

The study confirmed the confidentiality of the response ensure reliability and validity of the finding cross checking each responses. Overall research process is acquired with courtesy communication took place a polite manner guarantying security and permission of the respondents and school. Finally researcher requested their permission to video record the interview by the will of the respondents. Thus all the information is promised to be used for academic and knowledge construction purpose.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents and analyzes the results towards inclusive education challenges and its practices in the school it also included the results and discussion of those findings based on interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations at Minllik Primary School. The results are organized into key themes aligned with the research questions. Additionally, the findings are discussed in relation to existing literature education theories.

4.2. Results of the Study

4.2.1. Background of the participants

The study involved teachers, deaf students, hearing students, Sign language interpreters, school administrators, and special needs advisors. The demographic information of participants is summarized below.

Participant group	Number	Gender	Age Range	Experience Teachers/Interpreters
Deaf Students	10	6 male 4 female	10 -16	N/A
Hearing Students	8	5 male 3 female	10 -16	N/A
Teachers	10	7 male 3 female	28 -54	6-30
Sing Language Interpreters	2	1 male 1 female	25-40	3-7
Administrators and Special Needs Advisor	2	2 male	40 -55	10 plus years

Table 1. The demographic information of participants

4.3. Findings of the Study

4.3.1. The practice of Inclusive Education in School

Teachers are not trained in Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL) and depend on sign language interpreters for communication, because in Ethiopia there are no sign language interpreters training centers this not to build professional sign language interpreters. Hearing students have no sign language background until they meet deaf student in their classrooms therefore, they have minimal interaction with their deaf peers due to communication barriers. The classroom modifications for deaf students are not accessible as the students sitting arrangement itself has challenges, also there are no materials that are visually focused, books, visual audios with sign language teaching to teach the deaf students with no visual aids or sign language-friendly materials.

One of the teacher said that,

"I try to include deaf students in lessons, but I am not trained in sign language. I rely on the interpreter, and this slows down my teaching."

4.3.2 Challenges Faced in Inclusive Schools

The study identified four major challenges:

4.3.2.1. Communication Barriers

Teachers do not know sign language, limiting direct engagement with deaf students. Sign language interpreters are few, leading to delays in lesson delivery. Hearing students do not understand sign language, preventing peer interaction.

4.3.2.2. Curriculum and Teaching Challenges

The curriculum is designed for hearing students, with no adaptations for visual learners. Examinations are based on written language, disadvantaging sign language users. Limited visual learning materials, such as videos with sign language interpretation.

4.3.2.3 Social and Emotional Barriers

Deaf students feel socially isolated due to limited communication with hearing students. Hearing students view deaf classmates as different, reducing social inclusion. Teachers focus more on hearing students, unintentionally marginalizing deaf students.

4.3.2.4 Policy and Resource Gaps

- No national policy recognizing Ethiopian Sign Language as a language of instruction.
- Lack of monitoring and evaluation of inclusive education policies.

4.3.4. The challenges of Teachers, School Directors, sign language Interpreters and Students towards Inclusive Education

4.3.4.1. Teachers Challenges towards Inclusive Education

Teachers are not trained in Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL) and depend on sign language interpreters for communication, because in Ethiopia there are no sign language interpreters training centers this not to build professional sign language interpreters. Hearing students have no sign language background until they meet deaf student in their classrooms therefore, they have minimal interaction with their deaf peers due to communication barriers. The classroom modifications for deaf students are not accessible as the students sitting arrangement itself has challenges, also there are no materials that are visually focused, books, visual audios with sign language teaching to teach the deaf students with no visual aids or sign language-friendly materials.

One of the teacher said that,

"I try to include deaf students in lessons, but I am not trained in sign language. I rely on the interpreter, and this slows down my teaching."

These findings align with Adoyo (2007), who states that many African inclusive schools lack trained teachers and appropriate materials for deaf students.

Teacher's response on the challenges of inclusive education is blameless for the teaching learning process. They never deny the situation in their school for the lack of fertile operational foundations. Among the data the all the interviewed all the teachers responded that the philosophy of inclusive education is very important for both deaf and hearing

students and teachers believe it has positive impact for the inclusive education in the school. But only the inclusive philosophy itself alone cannot be achievable. One of English teacher shared below message.

“I am a deaf person who teaches English for grade 3 and 4 students. As a born deaf person I cannot speak so while teaching the students in the inclusive class the hearing students missed the vocal or speech language this making me sick”

This respondent viewed that the teaching in the inclusive classroom is normal it has not better teaching system for her. Inclusion of deaf and hearing students are just sitting in classroom without providing their needs.

Teacher’s profession, interest and accessibility are the prior the school needs to provide. The other teacher responded that he is teaching in the inclusive classrooms for grade 6 and 7 while teaching it is difficult to teach both and hearing students at the same time because his sign language is not good enough to teach the deaf students. Most of the time he couldn’t find the sign language or finger spelling that fill the said word. Therefore it created confusion to deaf students so they don’t clearly understand what they are learning. He doesn’t blame the students for not having good results but the failed system and non-equipped inclusive education program the school is providing.

The two special needs advisors teach other subject instead of their profession. Both have passion to teach in the special needs school but since they are teaching without their profession they feel not happy and do not believe the students in the inclusive school do not benefit from their teaching as expected.

One of grade 5 teachers explained that “while teaching the deaf and hearing students the brain process two or three language at the same time that are sign language, Amharic and English this three language are provided to the students of deaf and hearing at the same time so it create confusion because the hearing students are not well equipped by Ethiopian sign language again the deaf students cannot hear the spoken language the other one if the teaching instruction is in English it first translated to Amharic then to sign language. This is the big challenge they are facing.

According to the SNE teachers teaching in inclusive classes enquire more energy and time for preparation, less delivery and meet educational need for all students.

One of the deaf teachers answered that:

‘it is said that the school provides an inclusive education for both the deaf and hearing but at the same time the students are separated in two groups only few students attend class in the classrooms with hearing students. This is not fair! If the school believes on inclusive education no need to separate in two.’

The hearing students who are willing to learn with the deaf students join the special needs school.

The other teacher said that

‘I have no sign language skill but assigned to teach the deaf students using sign language interpreter but he hesitated that all the said words are not correctly delivered to the students in sign language’

All the teachers agreed that it is better to assign teachers who are professionals to the inclusive education to teach the deaf and hearing students.

4.3.4.2. The school Directors challenges towards Inclusive Education

The school Director has positive perspective for the Inclusive education as it supports the deaf students to develop the social interaction between the hearing students and the school in general. It also has benefit understanding deaf culture, learn sign language and the diversity of students that the school welcome, besides he believed that there are many challenges in the school to reach the deaf student’s needs. Because hearing and deaf students are sitting in the same class room it doesn’t mean they are getting equal access on the teaching learning process.

“He said the challenges that deaf students are facing cannot be improve by the Minllik primary school only but it needs collaboration with all the responsible stockholders provide all the needed access to the deaf students. As am a school director questions about accessible education for deaf students come from teacher, students and special needs advisors but I have no the answer as it is written in the inclusive education philosophy practically”.

There is very high limitation to reach the deaf students like the regular class the deaf student’s potential and ability to achieve their education is covered by the hearing students.

Comparing hearing students with the deaf students is not fair at all because both have different way of learning. When the eyes hear and hands speak the ears hear and mouth

4.3.4.3. Deaf students challenges towards Inclusive Education

The deaf students enjoy learning with hearing students benefits for both deaf and hearing students as they support each other. Also the deaf culture and behaviors reflected in the class rooms. When misunderstanding appeared between deaf students and the teacher the hearing students support. Beside there are some challenges that the deaf students are still facing. One of the interviewed girl said

“while the teacher is teaching there are many new words that I never see or read so I asked the meaning repeatedly so it takes time until we, the deaf understand the word well. So he let us to wait and stay only the deaf group to sit together so the teacher explains it again until we understand the word and the general idea of the teacher thought”.

Teaching deaf students needs additional time because sign language is the only communication way. Even though both the hearing and deaf students are in the same classroom the teacher still needs to separate them to explain again and again. This still show the challenges for the deaf students are not easy.

The other challenge is there is no sign language for each word. One of grade seven deaf student shared that:

‘when the teacher teaches the interpreter cannot interoperate all the said because the words have no sign language or the interpreters doesn’t know the sign for example physics and chemistry this two subjects have many words that are difficult for interpretation. The interpreter some sometimes try to show in finger spelling that is fast to understand because he must catch the next said word by the teacher. So it is difficult to have clear understanding on the subject”

4.3.4.4. Hearing students challenge

Hearing students also encounter difficulties in classrooms where both deaf and hearing students learn together One of the biggest challenges hearing students face is difficulty communicating with their deaf classmates due to:

Limited knowledge of Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL) Most hearing students do not receive sign language training and struggle to interact with their deaf peers. Dependence on interpreters Hearing students often rely on sign language interpreters to communicate, but interpreters are not always available in group activities or informal settings.

Miscommunication and misunderstandings without a common language, group discussions, teamwork, and social interactions become difficult.

"I want to talk with my deaf friends, but I don't know how to sign. It makes me feel bad that I can't communicate with them easily," said one hearing student in the focus group discussion.

Marschark & Spencer (2016) found that hearing students in inclusive settings often struggle with communication, leading to frustration and decreased interaction with their deaf classmates.

Hearing students often experience social discomfort and hesitation when interacting with deaf classmates because, they fear making mistakes when trying to use sign language. they feel awkward in group activities where communication is not smooth and lack awareness of deaf culture, which can lead to misunderstandings.

"Sometimes, I avoid group work with deaf students because I don't know how to explain things to them," admitted one hearing student.

In inclusive classrooms, teachers must balance instruction for both deaf and hearing students, which sometimes causes learning difficulties for hearing students lessons take longer to deliver because teachers repeat content using sign language. Visual learning methods designed for deaf students may not always suit the learning styles of hearing students. THE hearing students may feel neglected as teachers focus more on ensuring that deaf students understand the lesson.

"Sometimes, the teacher takes more time to explain things in sign language, and we have to wait. It slows down the lesson," expressed a hearing student.

Hearing students often avoid group projects with deaf students because they are unsure how to communicate they feel frustrated when working on assignments that require a lot of discussion.

Some hearing students dominate classroom discussions, while deaf students remain passive due to communication challenges.

A teacher from the focus group discussion noted

"Hearing students sometimes take control of group work because they feel that working with deaf students slows them down."

Hearing students often lack awareness about deaf culture, leading to unintentional exclusion of deaf students from activities. Stereotypes and misconceptions about the abilities of deaf students limited empathy toward the struggles that deaf students face.

"Some students think deaf people are not smart because they don't talk like us, but I know that's not true," shared a hearing student.

Hearing students feel that their school does not provide enough opportunities to bridge the communication gap with their deaf peers also there is no formal sign language training is provided to hearing students and there are no structured activities to promote inclusion.

Some feel that they are not encouraged to interact with deaf classmates.

"If the school gave us sign language lessons, we could be better friends with deaf students," suggested a hearing student.

4.3.4.5. The challenges of Sign language interpreters towards Inclusive Education

Sign language interpreters are who fulfill the gap between the hearing and deaf world. In Ethiopia there is no training center to teach sign language interpretation. Most of the sign language interpreters learn from deaf family members, churches and school.

In Minilik primary school one of the sign language interpreter said that he graduated BA in English but she is interpreting all the subjects to the students grade 5, 6 and 7 because there is no enough sign language interpreters in the school"

People study to have specific profession to teach or interpreted the subject otherwise the interpretation confuse the deaf students to understand about the different subjects matter, because the sign language interpreter has no the knowledge for all the subjects.

The other Problem is one sign language interpreter assigned to interpreted all the 45 minutes alone.

4.3.5. Gaps between Policy and Practice

There is a significant gap between policy and implementation: Theoretical vs. Practical Inclusion. Ethiopian education policies support inclusion, but schools lack resources to implement it effectively (Ministry of Education, 2020). Bilingual-Bicultural (Bi-Bi) Education is Not Implemented. Research shows that deaf students learn best in a bilingual environment (EthSL with written language) However, Ethiopian schools do not use sign language as a language of instruction. No Standardized Teacher Training for Deaf Education Most teachers have never received formal training in teaching deaf students (Adoyo, 2007).

School Administrator Perspective:

"The policy says we should support deaf students, but we do not have enough funding, training, or resources."

countries struggle to implement inclusive education policies due to resource limitations.

4.4. Discussion of Findings

4.4.1. Introduction

This section discusses the key findings of the study in relation to the research questions and relevant literature. The results highlight the challenges faced by deaf students, teachers, interpreters, and school administrators in practicing inclusive education at Minllik Primary School. The discussion is structured around four key themes that emerged from the data: inclusive education practices, challenges, support systems, and gaps between policy and practice.

4.4.2. The study identified four major challenges:

4.4.2.1. Communication Barriers

Teachers do not know sign language, limiting direct engagement with deaf students. Sign language interpreters are few, leading to delays in lesson delivery. Hearing students do not understand sign language, preventing peer interaction.

In the response of communication the Sign language is not well practiced in the school. Teachers who are assigned to teach the inclusive classroom they are not qualified or have no enough sign language ability so it affect the teaching learning situation. Teachers who

graduated with BA degree in special needs have no enough sign language capacity to teach the subject they are assigned.

The school assigned two sign language interpreters to solve the communication problem but this still not solve the problem. Sign language interpretation needs profession. The other main challenge explained by the sign language interpreters is they are requested to interpret all the subjects but it is very difficult for them. The sign language interpreter cannot interpret all the subjects as it needs knowledge of the subject. Nowadays Minllik primary school sign language interpreters interoperate in the class without their profession this lead the deaf students to confusion and not have clear understanding about the subject matter.

One of the deaf student from grade seven said that when the teacher teaches the sign language interpreter miss the sign for the word which is new for him. The teachers continue the teaching before the sign language interpreter finished explaining the new word then the interpreter misses the said part without interpreting. Also the teachers don't like when I interrupt the class to ask because it takes time to explain until we the deaf understand. This shows that in the inclusive education it is difficult to use the time given properly.

4.4.2.2. Curriculum and Teaching Challenges

The curriculum is designed for hearing students, with no adaptations for visual learners. Examinations are based on written language, disadvantaging sign language users. Limited visual learning materials, such as videos with sign language interpretation.

4.4.2.3. Social and Emotional Barriers

Deaf students feel socially isolated due to limited communication with hearing students. Hearing students view deaf classmates as different, reducing social inclusion. Teachers focus more on hearing students, unintentionally marginalizing deaf students.

4.4.2.4. Support Systems for Deaf Students

Findings show that some support systems exist, but they are insufficient Sign Language Interpreters: Available, but too few to meet the demand. Basic Inclusive Education Policies: Recognized by the government, but not fully implemented. Peer Support Programs: Some hearing students try to communicate using basic sign language, but no formal training is provided.

"I interpret for multiple classes at the same time, which is exhausting. Sometimes, I have to summarize instead of translating everything."

While Minllik Primary School provides basic support services such as sign language interpreters and a commitment to inclusive policies, the support systems are insufficient: The school has only two interpreters for multiple classes, limiting the consistency and quality of support. Teachers lack specialized training in handling deaf students and rely heavily on interpreters. There are no structured peer support programs or sign language learning opportunities for hearing students. These findings align with Schwartz (1996), who emphasized the importance of peer support systems and comprehensive teacher training for effective inclusive education. Without such structures, deaf students remain marginalized even within inclusive classrooms.

Findings from this study align with global research on inclusive education for deaf students: Lack of teacher training, Communication barriers between deaf and hearing students, Inadequate curriculum adaptation Policy vs. practice gap in African countries

These findings suggest that inclusive education in Ethiopia remains a challenge due to limited implementation of policies, lack of teacher training, and inadequate resources.

4.4.1. Challenges of Teachers

Teacher's response on the challenges of inclusive education is blameless for the teaching learning process. They never deny the situation in their school for the lack of fertile operational foundations. Among the data the all the interviewed all the teachers responded that the philosophy of inclusive education is very important for both deaf and hearing students and teachers believe it has positive impact for the inclusive education in the school. But only the inclusive philosophy itself alone cannot be achievable. One of English teacher shared below message.

"I am a deaf person who teaches English for grade 3 and 4 students. As a born deaf person I cannot speak so while teaching the students in the inclusive class the hearing students missed the vocal or speech language this making me sick"

This respondent viewed that the teaching in the inclusive classroom is normal it has not better teaching system for her. Inclusion of deaf and hearing students are just sitting in classroom without providing their needs.

Teachers profession, interest and accessibility are the prior the school needs to provide. The other teacher responded that he is teaching in the inclusive classrooms for grade 6 and 7 while teaching it is difficult to teach both and hearing students at the same time because his sign language is not good enough to teach the deaf students. Most of the time he couldn't find the sign language or finger spelling that fill the said word. Therefore it created confusion to deaf students so they don't clearly understand what they are learning. He doesn't blame the students for not having good results but the failed system and non-equipped inclusive education program the school is providing.

The two special needs advisors teach other subject instead of their profession. Both have passion to teach in the special needs school but since they are teaching without their profession they feel not happy and do not believe the students in the inclusive school do not benefit from their teaching as expected.

One of grade 5 teachers explained that “while teaching the deaf and hearing students the brain process two or three language at the same time that are sign language, Amharic and English this three language are provided to the students of deaf and hearing at the same time so it create confusion because the hearing students are not well equipped by Ethiopian sign language again the deaf students cannot hear the spoken language the other one if the teaching instruction is in English it first translated to Amharic then to sign language. This is the big challenge they are facing.

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The other challenge is there is no sign language for each word. One of grade seven deaf student shared that:

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Miscommunication and misunderstandings without a common language, group discussions, teamwork, and social interactions become difficult.

"I want to talk with my deaf friends, but I don't know how to sign. It makes me feel bad that I can't communicate with them easily," said one hearing student in the focus group discussion.

Hearing students often experience social discomfort and hesitation when interacting with deaf classmates because, they fear making mistakes when trying to use sign language. They feel awkward in group activities where communication is not smooth and lack awareness of deaf culture, which can lead to misunderstandings.

"Sometimes, I avoid group work with deaf students because I don't know how to explain things to them," admitted one hearing student.

In inclusive classrooms, teachers must balance instruction for both deaf and hearing students, which sometimes causes learning difficulties for hearing students lessons take longer to deliver because teachers repeat content using sign language. Visual learning methods designed for deaf students may not always suit the learning styles of hearing students. THE hearing students may feel neglected as teachers focus more on ensuring that deaf students understand the lesson.

"Sometimes, the teacher takes more time to explain things in sign language, and we have to wait. It slows down the lesson," expressed a hearing student.

Hearing students often avoid group projects with deaf students because they are unsure how to communicate they feel frustrated when working on assignments that require a lot of discussion.

Some hearing students dominate classroom discussions, while deaf students remain passive due to communication challenges.

A teacher from the focus group discussion noted

"Hearing students sometimes take control of group work because they feel that working with deaf students slows them down."

Hearing students often lack awareness about deaf culture, leading to unintentional exclusion of deaf students from activities. Stereotypes and misconceptions about the abilities of deaf students limited empathy toward the struggles that deaf students face.

"Some students think deaf people are not smart because they don't talk like us, but I know that's not true," shared a hearing student.

Hearing students feel that their school does not provide enough opportunities to bridge the communication gap with their deaf peers also there is no formal sign language training is provided to hearing students and there are no structured activities to promote inclusion.

Some feel that they are not encouraged to interact with deaf classmates.

"If the school gave us sign language lessons, we could be better friends with deaf students," suggested a hearing student.

4.4.5. The school Directors challenges towards of inclusive education

The school Director has positive perspective for the Inclusive education as it supports the deaf students to develop the social interaction between the hearing students and the school in general. It also has benefit understanding deaf culture, learn sign language and the diversity of students that the school welcome, besides he believed that there are many challenges in the school to reach the deaf student's needs. Because hearing and deaf students are sitting in the same class room it doesn't mean they are getting equal access on the teaching learning process.

"He said the challenges that deaf students are facing cannot be improve by the Minllik primary school only but it needs collaboration with all the responsible stockholders provide all the needed access to the deaf students. As am a school director questions about accessible

education for deaf students come from teacher, students and special needs advisors but I have no the answer as it is written in the inclusive education philosophy practically”.

There is very high limitation to reach the deaf students like the regular class the deaf student’s potential and ability to achieve their education is covered by the hearing students. Comparing hearing students with the deaf students is not fair at all because both have different way of learning. When the eyes hear and hands speak the ears hear and mouth speak this system itself has an influence to see the deaf students as weak learner.

4.4.6. The challenges of Sign language interpretation

Sign language interpreters are who fulfill the gap between the hearing and deaf world. In Ethiopia there is no training center to teach sign language interpretation. Most of the sign language interpreters learn from deaf family members, churches and school.

In Minilik primary school one of the sign language interpreter said that he graduated BA in English but she is interpreting all the subjects to the students grade 5, 6 and 7 because there is no enough sign language interpreters in the school”

People study to have specific profession to teach or interpreted the subject otherwise the interpretation confuse the deaf students to understand about the different subjects matter, because the sign language interpreter has no the knowledge for all the subjects.

The other Problem is one sign language interpreter assigned to interpreted all the 45 minutes alone.

4.4.7. Communication

In the response of communication the Sign language is not well practiced in the school. Teachers who are assigned to teach the inclusive classroom they are not qualified or have no enough sign language ability so it affect the teaching learning situation. Teachers who graduated with BA degree in special needs have no enough sign language capacity to teach the subject they are assigned.

The school assigned two sign language interpreters to solve the communication problem but this still not solve the problem. Sign language interpretation needs profession. The other main challenge explained by the sign language interpreters is they are requested to interpret all the subjects but it is very difficult for them. The sign language interpreter cannot interpret all the

subjects as it needs knowledge of the subject. Nowadays Minllik primary school sign language interpreters interoperate in the class without their profession this lead the deaf students to confusion and not have clear understanding about the subject matter.

One of the deaf student from grade seven said that when the teacher teaches the sign language interpreter miss the sign for the word which is new for him. The teachers continue the teaching before the sign language interpreter finished explaining the new word then the interpreter misses the said part without interpreting. Also the teachers don't like when I interrupt the class to ask because it takes time to explain until we the deaf understand. This shows that in the inclusive education it is difficult to use the time given properly.

Gaps between Policy and Practice

Despite Ethiopia's policies supporting inclusive education (Ministry of Education, 1994; 2020), this study revealed a significant implementation gap: Policies exist to promote inclusion, but schools lack adequate resources and trained staff to fulfill these objectives. No national recognition of EthSL as a language of instruction limits the depth of inclusion for deaf students. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for inclusive education practices are weak, making it difficult to assess the effectiveness of current programs. This gap between policy and practice mirrors findings from other studies in developing countries (UNESCO, 2005), where inclusive education often remains a theoretical concept due to insufficient funding and institutional support.

There is a significant gap between policy and implementation: Theoretical vs. Practical Inclusion. Ethiopian education policies support inclusion, but schools lack resources to implement it effectively (Ministry of Education, 2020). Bilingual-Bicultural (Bi-Bi) Education is Not Implemented. Research shows that deaf students learn best in a bilingual environment (EthSL with written language) However, Ethiopian schools do not use sign language as a language of instruction. No Standardized Teacher Training for Deaf Education Most teachers have never received formal training in teaching deaf students (Adoyo, 2007).

4.5. Discussion

4.5.1. Introduction

This section discusses the key findings of the study in relation to the research questions and relevant literature. The results highlight the challenges faced by deaf students, teachers,

interpreters, and school administrators in practicing inclusive education at Minllik Primary School. The discussion is structured around four key themes that emerged from the data: inclusive education practices, challenges, support systems, and gaps between policy and practice.

4.5.2. Discussion of Key Findings

4.5.2.1. Practice of Inclusive Education

The study found that inclusive education at Minllik Primary School is practiced in line with the national policy frameworks, such as the Special Needs Education Program Strategy (2006). However, there are notable inconsistencies in its practical implementation: Teachers are not trained in Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL), limiting effective communication with deaf students. Classrooms lack necessary accommodations such as visual aids and adaptive learning materials. There is limited collaboration between deaf and hearing students due to communication barriers.

These findings are consistent with those of Adoyo (2007), who reported that many African inclusive education programs fail due to a lack of teacher training and specialized resources. Despite government efforts to promote inclusion, the practice remains superficial without adequate resources and teacher preparedness.

4.5.2.2. Challenges Faced by Deaf Students in Inclusive Classrooms

The challenges identified include: Communication barriers due to the absence of trained teachers and limited interpreter support, Social isolation as hearing students struggle to communicate with their deaf peers. Inaccessible curricula that rely heavily on spoken language without considering visual learning methods.

The experiences of deaf students in this study reflect global trends, where communication barriers are the most significant challenges to inclusion (Marschark & Spencer, 2016). These barriers prevent meaningful engagement in classroom discussions and limit their academic success.

The findings also support Ladd's (2003) theory of Deaf hood, which argues that deaf students thrive best in environments that recognize and integrate deaf culture and sign language.

4.5.2.3. Support Systems for Deaf Students in Inclusive Schools

While Minllik Primary School provides basic support services such as sign language interpreters and a commitment to inclusive policies, the support systems are insufficient: The school has only two interpreters for multiple classes, limiting the consistency and quality of support. Teachers lack specialized training in handling deaf students and rely heavily on interpreters. There are no structured peer support programs or sign language learning opportunities for hearing students. These findings align with Schwartz (1996), who emphasized the importance of peer support systems and comprehensive teacher training for effective inclusive education. Without such structures, deaf students remain marginalized even within inclusive classrooms.

4.5.2.4. Gaps between Policy and Practice

Despite Ethiopia's policies supporting inclusive education (Ministry of Education, 1994; 2020), this study revealed a significant implementation gap: Policies exist to promote inclusion, but schools lack adequate resources and trained staff to fulfill these objectives. No national recognition of EthSL as a language of instruction limits the depth of inclusion for deaf students. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for inclusive education practices are weak, making it difficult to assess the effectiveness of current programs. This gap between policy and practice mirrors findings from other studies in developing countries (UNESCO, 2005), where inclusive education often remains a theoretical concept due to insufficient funding and institutional support.

4.5.3. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Results and Analysis

Focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with different participant groups to gain deeper insights into the experiences, challenges, and perceptions of inclusive education for deaf students at Minllik Primary School. The participants included:

- 10 deaf students (Grades 3–7)
- 8 hearing students
- 10 teachers
- 2 sign language interpreters
- 2 school administrators

The data collected from FGDs was analyzed using thematic analysis, and the findings are presented according to key themes aligned with the research questions.

Theme 1: Practice of Inclusive Education

Deaf Students' Perspective:

- Most deaf students expressed that while they attend classes with their hearing peers, communication barriers prevent full participation.
- Some students reported that teachers do not use Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL), and they rely entirely on the sign language interpreter (when available).
- Several deaf students shared feelings of being left out during group activities due to the lack of effective communication.

"Even though I sit in the same classroom, I sometimes feel invisible because I cannot follow the lesson without the interpreter," said one deaf student.

Hearing Students' Perspective:

- Hearing students admitted that they rarely interact with deaf students, mainly due to their lack of sign language knowledge.
- Some students expressed a willingness to learn sign language if opportunities were provided through school programs.

"I would like to talk with my deaf classmates, but I don't know how. If we had sign language lessons, it would be easier," shared a hearing student.

Teachers' Perspective:

- Teachers acknowledged that they are not trained in EthSL and often rely on interpreters to facilitate communication.
- Many teachers found it challenging to balance the needs of both deaf and hearing students during lessons.

Theme 2: Challenges Faced by Deaf Students and Teachers

Deaf Students' Perspective:

- Communication was cited as the biggest challenge, especially when interpreters were unavailable.
- Deaf students also faced challenges with the curriculum, which was not adapted to their needs.

Teachers' Perspective:

- Teachers struggled with managing different learning paces for deaf and hearing students.
- Limited training opportunities on how to teach deaf students were a recurring concern.

"I want to help my deaf students, but I don't know the best methods without proper training," said one teacher.

Sign Language Interpreters' Perspective:

- Interpreters reported being overloaded due to handling multiple classes at the same time.
- A lack of subject-specific vocabulary in sign language was identified as a barrier, particularly in subjects like science and mathematics.

Theme 3: Support Systems for Deaf Students

Deaf Students' Perspective:

- Deaf students appreciated the presence of interpreters but noted that their support was inconsistent.
- Visual aids and written instructions were found helpful, but these were rarely used in classrooms.

Hearing Students' Perspective:

- Some hearing students suggested creating a peer mentorship program where hearing and deaf students could work together on assignments and projects.

Teachers' Perspective:

- Teachers highlighted the need for training workshops to improve their skills in handling inclusive classrooms.
- A request was made for additional learning materials that cater to both hearing and deaf students.

Administrators' Perspective:

- Administrators recognized the need for more funding to hire additional interpreters and provide teacher training.
- They also acknowledged the absence of structured programs to promote social interaction between deaf and hearing students.

Theme 4: The Policy and Practice

(Related to Research Question 4: What are the gaps between the practice of inclusive education and principles of deaf education?)

Administrators' Perspective:

- Policies supporting inclusive education exist, but their implementation is inconsistent due to resource limitations and lack of monitoring.
- The absence of official recognition of Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL) as a formal language of instruction was seen as a major gap.

Teachers' Perspective:

- Teachers pointed out that while they are aware of the policies, insufficient support from the education system makes it difficult to apply them effectively.

"We are asked to practice inclusion, but without training or resources, it's not practical," mentioned one teacher.

Deaf Students' Perspective:

- Students highlighted that school policies rarely translate into actual practice within the classroom, leaving them feeling excluded from educational opportu

CHAPTER FIVE

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the study, highlighting the key findings regarding inclusive education for deaf students. It also presents conclusions based on the research objectives and offers practical recommendations for improving inclusive education.

5.2. Summary of the Study

This study examined the challenges of deaf students in inclusive education settings, focusing on Minllik Primary School. The research explored:

1. How inclusive education is practiced in inclusive schools.
2. Challenges faced by deaf students, teachers, and administrators.
3. Support systems available for deaf students.
4. Gaps between the practice of inclusive education and principles of deaf education.

A qualitative case study approach was used, employing interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations to collect data. The findings indicate that, while inclusive education is officially recognized, significant barriers exist in communication, curriculum adaptation, teacher preparedness, and policy implementation.

5.3. Conclusion on the summery of the study

Implementation of Inclusive Education

The study found that inclusive education is practiced in principle but not fully implemented in a way that supports deaf students' learning needs. Teachers are not trained in Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL), interpreters are limited, and resources are inadequate.

Challenges in Inclusive Schools

The study identified four major challenges:

1. Communication Barriers:

- Lack of sign language proficiency among teachers and students.
- Shortage of sign language interpreters.
- 2. Curriculum and Teaching Methods:
 - Mainstream curricula are not adapted for sign language users.
 - Exams and assessments disadvantage deaf students.
- 3. Social and Emotional Barriers:
 - Deaf students experience social isolation due to limited peer interaction.
 - Hearing students lack awareness of deaf culture and sign language.
- 4. Policy and Resource Gaps:
 - Limited government funding for teacher training and resources.
 - Lack of implementation of inclusive education policies (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Support Systems for Deaf Students

Some support systems are in place, including:

- Sign language interpreters (though limited in number).
- Basic inclusive education policies (not fully implemented).
- Efforts to train teachers (but still inadequate).

However, these efforts are not sufficient to ensure equal learning opportunities for deaf students.

Gaps between Policy and Practice

The study revealed significant gaps between inclusive education policies and actual classroom practices:

- The Ethiopian Education Policy (1994, 2020) promotes inclusion, but schools lack resources to implement it effectively.
- Sign language is not officially recognized as a language of instruction, creating barriers for deaf students.
- Teacher training programs do not include Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL) as a core subject, leaving teachers unprepared.

5.4. Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are made:

Improving Teacher Training who teach Deaf students

- Incorporate Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL) training into teacher education programs.
- Provide continuous professional development on inclusive teaching strategies.
- Encourage collaboration between special education and mainstream teachers.

Expanding Sign Language Interpretation Services

- Increase the number of trained sign language interpreters in schools.
- Standardize sign language vocabulary for technical subjects (e.g., science, math).
- Provide sign language training for hearing students and teachers to promote interaction.

Curriculum Adaptation and Assessment Reforms

- Adapt the curriculum to be bilingual (EthSL + written Amharic/English).
- Develop sign language-friendly assessments for deaf students.
- Provide visual learning aids such as videos with sign language interpretation.

Promoting Awareness and Social Inclusion

- Integrate basic Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL) courses into the curriculum for all students.
- Raise awareness about deaf culture among teachers, students, and parents.
- Implement peer support programs to encourage social inclusion.

Strengthening Policy Implementation

- The government should enforce policies on inclusive education.
- Increase budget allocation for inclusive schools, especially for deaf students.
- Establish monitoring systems to ensure schools comply with inclusive education policies.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study focused on one primary school. Future research should:

- Examine multiple schools across Ethiopia to get a broader perspective.
- Study the effectiveness of different teaching strategies for deaf students.
- Investigate the long-term impact of inclusive education on deaf students' academic performance and social development.

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Appendixes

Observation Check List

Observed Teacher name_____Lesson_____

Observer _____Date_____

Time start_____Time end_____

Instructional Strategies

Comments

- Short and brief directions and signed instruction
- Repetition of information when students who are Deaf needed
- Written handouts on notes
- Vary instructional activities to engage out the learners
- Interaction opportunities between students who are Deaf and students with hearing
- Encouraging students who are Deaf to be active being on task engaging in the lesson

Determining preferred communication

- Sign language interpreter
- Spoken Language
- Lip-reading
- Speaking fluently, clearly and audibly with signing
- Asking brief and clear questions

Visual and technical support

- Using visual aids to deaf students
- Classroom rules
- Charts
- Task organizer
- Vocabulary chart
- Determining vocabulary in written format (eg. write on the board)
- Videos on closed captions or subtitle/sign language
- Using facial expressions and gestures clearly

Sitting arrangements

- Sitting and standing closer to the students who are Deaf
- Students who are Deaf see other students and follow classroom discussion
- Eliminating background noise
- General observation note:

Observation Checklist for Inclusive Education of Deaf Students

This checklist is designed to systematically observe and assess the effectiveness of inclusive education for deaf students in a mainstream classroom setting. It evaluates teaching strategies, communication methods, student interactions, and school support systems.

General Information

Date: _____

Time: _____

Observer's Name: _____

Classroom Teacher: _____

Subject Observed: _____

Grade Level: _____

1. Classroom Environment
2. Teacher Student Interaction
3. Role of the Sign Language Interpreter
4. Student Participation
5. Curriculum and Teaching Materials
6. Social Interaction and Inclusion
7. Administrative and School Support
8. Additional Observations and Comments

Interview Questions to Teachers

General Information

Interviewee's Name (Optional): _____

Date: _____

School: _____

Grade Level(s) Taught: _____

Years of Teaching Experience: _____

Section A: Understanding Inclusive Education

How would you describe inclusive education in your school?

What strategies do you use to ensure that deaf students actively participate in your lessons?

Section B: Teaching Challenges

What challenges do you face when teaching deaf students in an inclusive classroom?

How do you manage communication with deaf students? Do you use Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL)?

What support do you receive from school administrators, interpreters, or other teachers to facilitate inclusive education?

Section C: Support and Training

Have you received any formal training in Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL) or deaf education?

What kind of additional training or resources would help you better support deaf students?

How effective do you think sign language interpreters are in the classroom?

Section D: Interaction and Inclusion

How do you encourage interaction between deaf and hearing students in your classroom?

Do you think deaf students are fully included in school activities and social interactions?

Why or why not?

Section E: Recommendations

In your opinion, what can be done to improve inclusive education for deaf students in Ethiopia?

What support do you need from the government, school administration, or NGOs to enhance inclusive education?

Interview questions to Deaf and Hearing Students

General Information

Interviewee's Name (Optional): _____

Date: _____

Grade Level: _____

Age: _____

Section A: Learning Experience

How do you feel about learning in a classroom with hearing students?

How well do your teachers communicate with you during lessons?

Are teachers able to use Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL) when teaching?

Section B: Classroom Participation and Challenges

What are the biggest challenges you face in class?

How often do you feel included in group activities or discussions with hearing students?

Do you get enough support from sign language interpreters during lessons?

Section C: Social Interaction and Inclusion

How do you interact with your hearing classmates?

Do you feel that hearing students understand and respect deaf students?

Have you ever faced discrimination or exclusion because of being deaf?

Section D: School Support and Recommendations

What kind of support would help you learn better in class?

If you could change one thing about your school to help deaf students, what would it be?

What message would you like to share with teachers, interpreters, and school leaders to improve your learning experience?

Interview Guide for Hearing Students

General Information

Interviewee's Name (Optional): _____

Date: _____

Grade Level: _____

Age: _____

Section A: Understanding Inclusive Education

Have you learned about inclusive education before?

What do you understand about it?

How do you feel about having deaf students in your class?

Section B: Communication and Interaction

Do you know any Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL)? If yes, how did you learn it?

How do you communicate with your deaf classmates?

What challenges do you face when trying to interact with deaf students?

Section C: Classroom and Social Inclusion

Do you work together with deaf students during group activities? Why or why not?

Do you think your teachers and school encourage interactions between deaf and hearing students?

Have you ever seen a deaf student being left out or facing difficulties in class?

Section D: Support and Recommendations

What do you think schools can do to help hearing students learn sign language?

How can teachers and students make deaf students feel more included?

What message do you have for deaf students, teachers, and school leaders about making schools more inclusive?

Interview question to School Director

Name_____

Position_____

Profession_____

1. How long have you been in the school?
2. Do you use sign language?
3. What strategies do you use in the school to teach deaf students?
4. How many Deaf and Hearing students do you have in the school?
5. Do you believe an inclusive philosophy is practically use in the school? How?
6. What do you understand from an inclusive education?
7. Do you give priority to accessibility?
8. What are the needs of Deaf students in the school?
9. Do you think using only sign language make accessible to the deaf/hearing students on the teaching and learning process?
10. Do you have other students with disability rather than deaf like physical, blind, intellectual?
11. How does the curriculum fit teaching visually (deaf) and audibly (hearing) students together?
12. What are the main challenges of teaching deaf and hearing students in the school?
13. How do you see the Deaf culture in the school?
14. Do you believe the school is practicing an inclusive education in the current situation? If yes/No, how?
15. Is there anything you would like to add?

Focus Group Discussions [FGD]

General Information

Date: _____

Time: _____

Moderator: _____

Number of Participants: _____

Participant Group: (Teachers/Deaf Students/Hearing Students/Interpreters/Administrators)

Location: _____

1. Opening and Introduction

Welcome participants and introduce the purpose of the discussion by explaining that their responses will remain confidential and that participation is voluntary.

Obtain consent for audio recording.

Establish ground rules

Respect everyone's opinions.

Only one person speaks at a time.

There are no rights or wrong answers.

2. Focus Group Questions by Participant Group

A. Teachers' Focus Group Discussion Guide

(For Teachers and Special Needs Advisors)

1: Understanding Inclusive Education

How do you define inclusive education in your school?

What teaching methods do you use to ensure deaf students are fully engaged in the classroom?

2: Challenges in Teaching Deaf Students

3. What challenges do you face when teaching deaf students? 4. How do you communicate with deaf students, and do you use Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL)?

5. What are the biggest difficulties in managing an inclusive classroom with both deaf and hearing students?

3: Support and Training

6. Have you received training in deaf education or sign language? If not, what kind of training do you think would help?
7. What support do you receive from school administrators or NGOs to help in inclusive education?
8. How can schools better support teachers in inclusive classrooms?

Theme 4: Recommendations

9. What can be done to improve inclusive education for deaf students in your school?
10. If you could make one change to improve education for deaf students, what would it be?

B. Deaf Students' Focus Group Discussion Guide (For Deaf Students Only)

1: Learning Experience

- How do you feel about learning in a classroom with hearing students?
- How well do your teachers communicate with you during lessons?
- Are teachers able to use Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL) in class?

2: Challenges and Barriers

4. What are the biggest challenges you face in school?
5. Do you feel included in group activities and class discussions?
6. Do you receive enough support from sign language interpreters?

3: Social Interaction and Inclusion

7. How do you interact with your hearing classmates?
8. Do you think hearing students understand deaf culture and sign language?
9. Have you ever faced discrimination or exclusion at school?

4: School Support and Recommendations

10. What kind of support would help you learn better in school?
11. If you could change one thing to make your school better for deaf students, what would it be?
12. What message do you have for teachers, interpreters, and school leaders about improving inclusive education?

C. Hearing Students' Focus Group Discussion Guide

(For Hearing Students Only)

1: Awareness of Inclusive Education

What do you know about inclusive education for deaf students?

2; How do you feel about having deaf students in your class?

2: Communication and Interaction

3. Do you know any Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL)? If yes, where did you learn it?

4. How do you usually communicate with deaf students in your class?

5. What challenges do you face when trying to interact with deaf classmates?

3: Classroom and Social Inclusion

6. Do you work together with deaf students during group activities?

7. Do you think your teachers and school encourage interactions between deaf and hearing students?

8. Have you ever seen a deaf student being left out or struggling in class?

4: Support and Recommendations

9. What can be done to help hearing students learn sign language?

10. How can schools make deaf students feel more included? 11. What advice do you have for teachers, deaf students, and school leaders to improve inclusion?

D. Sign Language Interpreters' Focus Group Discussion Guide

(For Interpreters Only)

1: Role in Inclusive Education

What is your primary role in supporting deaf students in class?

How do you coordinate with teachers and students during lessons?

2: Challenges Faced

3. What are the biggest challenges you face as a sign language interpreter?

4. Are there any subjects where interpreting is particularly difficult?

5. Do you think teachers rely too much on interpreters instead of learning EthSL themselves?

Theme 3: Support Needs

6. What kind of training or resources would help you perform your job better?
7. How can schools support interpreters to ensure better inclusion of deaf students?

4: Recommendations

8. What would make interpretation more effective in the classroom?
9. What changes would you recommend to improve inclusive education for deaf students?

E. School Administrators' Focus Group Discussion Guide (For School Directors and Special Needs Advisors)

1: Inclusive Education Policies

How does your school implement inclusive education for deaf students?

What policies are in place to support inclusive education?

2: Resource Allocation

3. Are there enough resources (interpreters, materials, teacher training) to support deaf students?
4. What budgetary or policy constraints limit the effectiveness of inclusive education?

3: Monitoring and Evaluation

5. How does the school monitor the academic progress of deaf students?
6. Are there any strategies in place to improve teacher training and interpreter availability?

4: Recommendations

7. What can be done to strengthen inclusive education policies and practices?
8. What additional support do schools need from the government or NGOs to ensure full inclusion of deaf students?

3. Closing the Discussion

Ask participants if they have any final thoughts or suggestions.

Thank everyone for their time and contributions.

Reassure participants that their responses will remain confidential.