

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND BEHAVIOURAL STUDIES**

**Exploring the Experiences of Primary School Teachers in Implementing  
Inclusive Education: The case of Kolfe Keranio Sub-City**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The main purpose of the present study was to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of teachers in implementing inclusive education practices in Kolfe Keranio sub city primary schools. A qualitative research approach was employed and a case study design used. The study purposively sampled thirty two teachers from five selected primary schools. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were employed as instruments of data collection, and the data were analyzed thematically. The findings revealed that Primary school teachers have different levels of awareness and understanding when it comes to inclusive education, Teachers accommodate students with special needs despite the fact that some of them do not have qualifications/training in SEN, Teachers experienced varied challenges in implementing the inclusive education for students with special needs The study also established that there are gaps in teachers related to accommodating diverse learning needs and collaborating effectively with support services and finally the study proved that there is a shortage of government consistent follow up and personnel to adequately support inclusive education practices in primary school.*

*Keywords: Experience, Qualitative research, Inclusive education, Kolfe Keranio*

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

DPO: Disability Persons Organization

EFA: Education for All

ESDP: Education Sector Development Program

ETP: Education Training policy

IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

MOE: Minister of Education

SEN: Special Needs Education

SNE: Special Needs Education

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

WHO: World Health Organization

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter serves as an introduction to the study, outlining its background, statement of the problem, objectives, significance, and scope of the study. Each of these specific aspects is covered in depth within this section.

### **1.1 Background of the study**

The purpose of education is considered to be the promotion of democratic values including equality and human rights. Education is acknowledged as a fundamental human right and a crucial element in reducing poverty and improving socio-economic conditions (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2012). Its paramount objective is to enable all individuals to acquire knowledge and necessary skills according to their abilities throughout their lives.

In the past, people with disabilities were often regarded as unhealthy and defective, which led to their abandonment by their families due to a lack of understanding of their condition. Society's treatment and attitudes towards people with disabilities have been characterized by fear, intolerance, ambivalence, discrimination, and ignorance. Throughout history, individuals with disabilities have been subjected to appalling acts such as infanticide, starvation, burning, rejection, isolation, strangulation, drowned in hot water, beatings, chained and caged, torture, gassed, shot, sterilization, sedated and stored, hanging, and even used for entertainment (Zelalem, 2017).

Even though various initiatives and studies have raised society's awareness over time and led to the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the educational and other sectors, legal changes were needed to address unique concerns and special populations in the USA to achieve national goals for all children with disabilities to have access to education (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA], 2022). Anthony, Festus, and Jeffrey (2011) noted that important legal changes made in the 1980s and 1990s mirrored these global issues. While the initial efforts to provide specially designed instruction focused on individuals with sensory exceptionalities,

special education began to expand to include those with cognitive disabilities. This period in the history of special education saw the development of specialized interventions for this group. However, it was also characterized by the rise of institutions and specialized schools (Anthony et al., 2011, p. 4).

The history of special education has undergone significant transformations, with different modes of service provided for individuals with disabilities. These included exclusion, segregation, integration, and currently, the inclusive stage (Franklin, 1996; Buchem, 2013; cited in Claudia, 2014). The inclusive stage involves creating social systems such as classrooms, schools, and communities with students with special needs in mind from the beginning (Claudia, 2014).

Historically, special needs education has been viewed through different lenses across the globe. One common view was that children with disabilities should be institutionalized and kept apart from society. In many countries, special schools or classes were developed to provide segregated education for children with disabilities. However, with the emergence of the inclusion movement, inclusive education has become the preferred approach in many countries (Barnes & Mercer, 2018). Inclusive education focuses on providing support and services to all students, regardless of their special educational needs, in a regular classroom setting. This helps to promote social cohesion and equal opportunities for all students.

In developed countries, inclusive education has been widely embraced. However, many developing countries are still struggling to implement inclusive practices due to a lack of resources and infrastructure (Farrell & Clapp-Smith, 2016). Studies have shown that children with disabilities in developing countries face various barriers to accessing education such as poverty and stigma (Wang et al., 2018).

Historically, special needs education in Ethiopia has been underdeveloped and neglected. In the past, individuals with disabilities were often excluded from participation in community life and education. It was only after the Derg regime came into power in 1974 that any real effort was made to address this issue. The government began to establish schools for children with special needs, but these were few and far between and often lacked adequate resources and qualified teachers (Gudina, 2018).

Since the fall of the Derg regime in 1991, there has been a renewed emphasis on the importance of education for all students, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds. The Ethiopian government has made significant investments in inclusive education, including the development of policy frameworks and training programs for teachers (Teferra & Hailu, 2018). However, many challenges remain in the implementation of inclusive education practices.

According to a recent survey conducted by UNESCO, only 51% of children with disabilities in low-income countries are enrolled in primary school, compared to 91% of their non-disabled peers (UNESCO, 2021). This underscores the urgency of implementing inclusive education practices that promote equal access to education for all children, regardless of their abilities.

The Ethiopian government has made significant efforts to promote inclusive education. In 2008, it launched the "Education for All" initiative with the aim of increasing school enrollment, improving quality of education, and promoting equity in access (USAID, 2013). Additionally, the government has developed policies and guidelines for inclusive education and established resource centers to support teachers in implementing inclusive practices (Sebsibe & Asefa, 2016).

Despite these efforts, challenges remain in implementing inclusive education in Ethiopia. Lack of training and resources for teachers, limited accessibility to schools and negative attitudes towards children with disabilities are among the obstacles that need to be addressed (Desta & Bezabih, 2020).

A recent study by Ayalew et al. (2021) highlights the experiences of primary school teachers in implementing inclusive education in Ethiopia. The study found that while teachers were generally supportive of inclusive practices and believed in their importance, they faced significant challenges in meeting the diverse needs of their students.

In recent years, there have been some promising developments in the field of special needs education in Ethiopia. With increased awareness and advocacy efforts, more attention is being paid to the needs of individuals with disabilities, and steps are being taken to address some of the longstanding barriers to education and inclusion (Mersha et al., 2020). This research aims to contribute to this ongoing process by exploring the experiences of primary school teachers in

implementing inclusive education practices, with a particular focus on the challenges they face and the support they need to succeed.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Using the EFA (Education for All) objectives, the world is now fighting for free, equitable, and high-quality education for all students, starting with basic education, secondary school, and finally, higher education. Many nations, including Ethiopia, have accepted these goals.

One strategy for achieving "education for all" is inclusive education, which involves, developing a system of education that caters to the requirements of all pupils regardless of ability or accommodation requirements, making sure that no child is left out.

The implementation of inclusive education practices in primary schools in Ethiopia has been identified as an important area for further research (Birhanu & Zeleke, 2019; Naicker, 2016). While there have been efforts to promote inclusive education policies, there is still a significant gap between policy and practice (Birhanu & Zeleke, 2019). Primary school teachers face various challenges in effectively implementing inclusive education practices, such as lack of training, inadequate resources, and a limited understanding of inclusive pedagogy (Birhanu & Zeleke, 2019; Melesse & Ketema, 2020). Moreover, existing research has mainly focused on the experiences of students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms, without sufficient attention given to the perspectives of teachers who are responsible for implementing these practices (Naicker, 2016).

Despite the Ethiopian government's policy on inclusive education, primary school teachers face significant challenges in implementing inclusive education practices. Studies have identified several barriers, including lack of teacher training, inadequate teaching materials, negative attitudes towards students with disabilities, limited knowledge about inclusive education, and insufficient infrastructure. However, there is a gap in the literature regarding the experiences of primary school teachers in implementing inclusive education in Ethiopia. Specifically, there is a need for further research to understand the challenges faced by teachers and to identify effective strategies for addressing these challenges.

The researcher decided to look into these issues as a result of the schools' dedication to inclusive education and specific initiatives they have implemented, such as the presentation of students with special needs, the availability of special needs education teachers, the accessibility of specific facilities, and the selection of several students with special needs in several classrooms.

Finally conducting research on the experiences of primary school teachers in implementing inclusive education practices is urgent because it can provide insights into the challenges of implementing inclusive education policies in primary school and provide recommendations for improving teacher training and support to create an inclusive learning environment.

Specifically, the study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. How do primary school teachers implement inclusive education in their teaching practices?
2. What are the challenges that primary school teachers face in implementing inclusive education practices in primary school?
3. What are the resources and trainings that the teachers needed to implement inclusive education in primary school?

### **1.3 Objective of the study**

The overall objective of the study was to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of teachers in implementing inclusive education practices in Kolfe Keranio sub city primary schools.

### **1.4 Significance of the study**

Investigating teachers' experiences of practicing inclusive education is a critical part of the education process in the school to obtain evidence for improving the challenges/problems happening in the teaching and learning process. So, understanding this, the study would have different significance.

The study will provide us with a chance to pinpoint the difficulties schools implementing inclusive education are facing. The findings of this study may help policymakers enhance the teaching and learning environment in settings that offer inclusive education, education administrators are also expected to benefit from it since they will be better able to identify the issues that exist in their schools and, as a result, find appropriate solutions to them. Finally, it might support other academics and researchers in their continued study on the issue.

### **1.5 Scope of the study**

The study aims to understand the experiences of primary school teachers who have implemented inclusive education practices, this study is delimited to Kolfe Keranio Sub City of Addis Ababa City Administration, and the scope includes a sample size of 32 teachers from different primary schools in Kolfe Keranio sub-city. In fact, the experiences and perspectives of primary school teachers who have implemented inclusive education to examine all in all, the researcher is forced to delimit the scope on five primary schools in Kolfe Keranio Sub City of Addis Ababa City Administration. These are Biruh Tesfa primary school and Abune Baslios primary school, (from government) and joint vision success primary school, Tigat primary school and Mar youth primary school (from private).

Kolfe Keranio Sub City was selected from the rest of Sub Cities in Addis Ababa City Administration based on the fact that, it is the working area of the researcher and According to the information obtained from Kolfe Keranio Sub-city Education Bureau, it is the largest among the eleven sub city of Addis Ababa in terms of number of students and also number of schools.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter focuses on basic concepts and issues that were discussed by different authors related to teacher's experience of implementing inclusive education in primary school. Overview of inclusive education and its importance in primary schools, different models and frameworks of inclusive education, overview of inclusive education in Ethiopia, challenges of implementing inclusive education practices, strategies used to address challenges in implementing inclusive education and finally recommendations for the future researchers are discussed briefly.

#### **2.1 Overview of Inclusive Education and Its Importance in Primary Schools**

Inclusive education embraces all students, regardless of who they are, their skills, or their needs, and provides them with the support they need to study. According to UNESCO (2005), the fundamental goal of inclusive educational systems is to remove barriers to learning for all pupils. UNESCO (n.d.) defines the concept of inclusion in education as "a process of addressing and reacting to the variety of needs of all learners through promoting engagement in learning, cultures, and communities as well as minimizing exclusion from education and from within education." The aim is for the entire educational system to support learning environments where educators and students embrace and welcome the benefits and challenges of diversity.

Inclusive educational strategy promotes learning environments where each student's needs are met, and they have a chance to succeed (UNESCO, 2005). The idea of an inclusive school is defined as follows in The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education: Every child should learn together, whenever it is possible, regardless of any challenges or differences they may have. This is the fundamental tenet of the inclusive school (UNESCO, n.d.).

Practically speaking, there is no one inclusive education paradigm that works for every nation. Various countries have adopted different inclusive education policies and practices (Dyson, 1999; Lipsky & Gartner, 1999). In providing inclusive education for children with disabilities, there are one-track, two-track and multi-track systems in practice (Göransson, Claes, & Karlsson,

2011; Ochiai & Shimada, 2016). The one-track system involves every child attending regular classes and receiving a fully comprehensive education. The two-track approach allows for the coexistence of ordinary schools and special schools. Systems with multiple tracks range from one to two tracks in complexity and variety. According to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Salamanca Statement, the one-track approach has been proposed, even though the majority of wealthy nations have multiple-track systems (Göransson et al., 2011). One of the topics covered is whether the multi-track system is more similar to the one- or two-track system.

Inclusive education is a pedagogical approach that seeks to address the diversity of learners in schools by providing them with equal access to quality education (Ainscow, 2015). This means that every student, regardless of their background or abilities, should have opportunities for learning and growth that are free from discrimination and exclusion. While the implementation of inclusive education practices has expanded globally in recent years, the term "inclusive education" is still not widely understood, and there is no singular definition of what inclusive education should look like (Slee, 2011).

Extensive research has demonstrated the importance of inclusive education in primary schools, where children are at a critical point in their development and shaping their attitudes towards education (Bakkenes et al., 2010). Inclusive education practices create positive learning environments that support all students' academic and social-emotional growth. Moreover, research has shown that inclusive education practices lead to improved academic performance, enhanced social skills, and reduced levels of stigmatization and exclusion (Mehmedbegović & Aščerić, 2021). Therefore, it is crucial to comprehend the importance of implementing inclusive education in primary school settings.

One approach to inclusive education is the student-centered model. In this model, teachers actively involve students in decision-making about course content, classroom organization, teaching methods, and evaluation (Forlin et al., 2009). The student-centered model encourages group work and collaborative learning strategies, providing opportunities for students to support each other's learning and exercise leadership skills (UNESCO, 2015).

Inclusive education practices also require a shift in school culture and ethos. Teachers must be committed to creating a culture that values difference as an asset for learning rather than a barrier to success (Aubrey et al., 2013). Additionally, teachers must ensure that they are not perpetuating harmful stereotypes, which may prevent students from achieving their full potential. Anti-discriminatory practices need to be embedded in all aspects of the curriculum and the broader school community's activities.

However, implementing inclusive education in primary schools is not without its challenges. Research has identified significant barriers to implementing inclusive education in primary schools, including a lack of specialized training, inadequate resources, and attitudes towards students with disabilities (Lindsay & Edwards, 2013). Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach that includes adequate funding for teacher training and ongoing support, engagement of families and community members, and policy initiatives tailored to support inclusive education practices (UNESCO, 2015).

In summary, inclusive education practices are critical for creating positive learning environments that support all students' academic and social-emotional growth. The implementation of such practices in primary schools is particularly important, given the critical role early education plays in shaping student attitudes towards schooling. While implementing inclusive education practices can be challenging, a multi-faceted approach can facilitate overcoming these obstacles and ensure that all students have equal access to quality education.

## **2.2 Different Models and Frameworks of Inclusive Education**

Inclusive education is an approach that ensures that all children, regardless of their abilities, are provided with equal opportunities to learn and develop. This approach is essential for promoting social justice and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In Ethiopia, inclusive education practices have been implemented in primary schools to support the education of children with disabilities and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. There are various models and frameworks of inclusive education that have been developed to support these practices.

One of the key models of inclusive education is the social model of disability, which emphasizes that disability is a product of social barriers rather than an inherent characteristic of an individual.

The social model of disability is based on the idea that disability is not just a medical condition, but rather a socially constructed phenomenon that results from the interaction between disabled individuals and their social environment. As Oliver (2013) notes, "it is not disability, but society that disables people" (p. 1024). In other words, people with impairments are not disabled by their bodies or minds, but rather by the barriers that society creates. These barriers may take the form of physical barriers, such as inaccessible buildings and transportation systems, or social barriers, such as discrimination and stigma.

According to the social model of disability, it is society's responsibility to remove these barriers and create a more inclusive and accessible environment for all individuals. This can be achieved through initiatives such as universal design, which involves designing products and environments that are accessible to people with diverse abilities and needs (Mace, 1991). Universal design principles have been applied to a wide range of contexts, from architectural design to web development. The goal of universal design is to create products and environments that are usable by the widest range of people possible, regardless of their abilities or disabilities.

Although the social model of disability has gained widespread recognition in recent years, it has also faced criticism from some quarters. Some critics argue that the model overlooks the experiences of individuals with impairments, who may still face physical and medical challenges despite the removal of social barriers (Kafer, 2013). Others have noted that the model places a heavy burden on individuals with disabilities to advocate for their own rights and access to services. Despite these criticisms, however, the social model of disability remains an important framework for understanding disability as a social construct.

In recent years, there has been growing recognition that disabilities are not solely caused by individual impairments, but also by systemic factors such as poverty, discrimination, and lack of access to education and healthcare. As a result, many advocates and scholars have called for a more intersectional approach to disability, one that takes into account the multiple ways in which disability intersects with other social categories such as race, gender, class, and sexuality.

One example of an intersectional approach to disability can be seen in the concept of "crip time", which was developed by disability studies scholar Ellen Samuels (2017). Crip time refers to the ways in which disabled individuals experience time differently from nondisabled individuals due to factors such as fatigue, pain, and the need for accommodation. Samuels argues that crip time provides a lens through which to view disability as a complex social phenomenon that is shaped by a variety of factors beyond just individual impairments.

In conclusion, the social model of disability offers a powerful framework for understanding disability as a social construct rather than just a medical condition. By recognizing that disability is caused not by individual impairments but by barriers created by society, the social model emphasizes the importance of creating more inclusive and accessible environments for all individuals. However, as disability scholars have noted, this model is not without its limitations and criticisms. Nonetheless, it remains an important tool for advocating for the rights and inclusion of disabled individuals in society.

Another model relevant to inclusive education is the ecological model, which recognizes that the success of inclusive education practices depends on broader systemic influences. The ecological model of disability emphasizes the importance of understanding the complex interactions between individuals and their environment in shaping disability experiences. This model recognizes that disability is not solely a function of individual characteristics but is also influenced by social and environmental factors.

Recent research has highlighted the importance of applying the ecological model to the context of employment. For example, Carter et al. (2020) argue that work-related environmental factors, such as workplace accommodations and supportive supervisors, are important predictors of job satisfaction and retention for employees with disabilities.

Another key element of the ecological model is the recognition of multiple levels of analysis, including individual, interpersonal, organizational, community, and policy levels. For instance, a study by Hoffman et al. (2021) examines the role of environmental policies in creating transportation barriers for people with disabilities. The authors argue that these policies contribute to social isolation and reduced access to healthcare and other resources.

In summary, the ecological model recognizes that disability is influenced by complex interactions between individuals and their environment. Recent research has demonstrated the relevance of this model to the context of employment and transportation policy. By taking a holistic approach to understanding disability, we can better promote social inclusion and equality for all individuals in society.

A third model of inclusive education is universal design for learning (UDL), which proposes that instructional materials and activities should be designed to meet diverse learning needs. According to this model, teachers can use different techniques to ensure that all students have equal access to the curriculum, regardless of their abilities. UDL emphasizes that learning materials and activities should be flexible, diverse, and inclusive to meet the needs of all learners. This approach encourages the use of technology, alternative assessment methods, and differentiated instruction to support diverse learners.

### **2.3 Overview of Inclusive Education in Ethiopia**

Inclusive education is a critical component of Ethiopia's efforts to promote educational equity and social inclusion. Inclusive education aims to provide quality education to all students, regardless of their background or abilities. It emphasizes the importance of accommodating diverse student populations and creating a positive learning environment that fosters academic success and personal growth. In Ethiopia, inclusive education has gained increasing attention as a means to address disparities in educational opportunity and achievement, particularly for children with disabilities (Ainscow, 2015).

To promote inclusive education in Ethiopia, various models and frameworks have been implemented. One such framework is the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP), which strives to enhance access and quality of education for all students through a comprehensive and integrated approach. The ESDP focuses on improving school infrastructure, curriculum development, teacher training, and community engagement to advance inclusive education practices. Additionally, Ethiopia has adopted a Universal Primary Education policy aimed at increasing access to education for all children by eliminating tuition fees and offering school feeding programs.

To ensure successful implementation of inclusive education practices, partnerships have been established between schools, families, and communities. Parents and caregivers play an essential role in advocating for the needs of their children and collaborating with teachers to create supportive learning environments. Partnership with local organizations, advocacy groups, and civil society organizations has also been instrumental in advancing inclusive education policies and practices (Göransson et al., 2011).

Additionally, data-driven approaches have been used to identify gaps in educational access and performance and design targeted interventions. The Ethiopian government has established data collection systems to monitor enrolment rates, attendance, retention, and transition from primary to secondary schooling (UNESCO, 2009). Research studies have investigated the effectiveness of inclusive education practices and identified areas for improvement.

Despite positive development in special education programs in Ethiopia, there is still much work to be done to provide inclusive education opportunities to all students. Comprehensive teacher training programs are crucial to equipping educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the diverse needs of students. In addition, school curriculum and organizational frameworks must be designed to accommodate the diverse types of students. Children with disabilities need special attention and assistance, especially in areas such as accessibility to infrastructure and transportation (Assefa et al., 2016).

In conclusion, inclusive education practices are vital for Ethiopia's efforts to promote educational equity and social inclusion. The implementation of various models and frameworks is a positive step towards achieving this goal, but there are still many challenges to overcome. Comprehensive teacher training programs, partnerships with families and communities, and rigorous research studies are necessary to promote educational equity and social inclusion among all students. By promoting inclusive education practices, Ethiopia can ensure that every student has access to quality education and equal opportunities for success.

## **2.4 Challenges of Implementing Inclusive Education Practices**

Inclusion is a concept that is gaining attention in education systems around the world, and Ethiopia is no exception. The Ethiopian government has recognized the importance of inclusive

education practices and has taken steps towards creating more inclusive classrooms within their primary schools. Inclusive education refers to the practice of providing equal opportunity for all children, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities, to participate in learning activities in the classroom (UNESCO, 2009). However, implementing inclusive education practices in primary schools is not without its challenges.

According to a recent qualitative study by Jiren and Desalegn (2021), primary school teachers in Ethiopia face several challenges when implementing inclusive education practices. Three main challenges were identified: lack of adequate training, limited resources, and insufficient support from school administrators. Teachers reported feeling inadequately prepared to address the diverse needs of their students and to create inclusive classrooms that fostered participation and learning among all students. Specifically, they noted the need for more training on how to accommodate students with disabilities and on how to effectively manage diverse classrooms.

In addition to the lack of training, limited resources and inadequate support from school administrators were identified as significant barriers to implementing inclusive education practices. Teachers highlighted the lack of resources, such as appropriate curricular materials and assistive technologies, as making it difficult to accommodate students with disabilities in the classroom. They also noted that the lack of support from school administrators made it difficult to create inclusive classrooms. The lack of institutional support included inadequate budgetary allocations for accommodations such as accessible buildings, and insufficient policies on inclusion.

The literature further highlights that teachers often struggle with behavior management among students with disabilities in the classroom (Saloviita & Hassanen, 2017). When teachers don't have enough knowledge or experience managing behavior issues among disabled children, they often have no option but to separate them from other students or exclude them from some activities or even send them home. Separating the children with disabilities from other students can cause negative outcomes like stigmatization, increased marginalization and exclusion further affecting the mental and social wellbeing of children with disabilities (Saloviita & Hassanen, 2017).

Overall, the implementation of inclusive education practices in primary schools in Ethiopia has severe challenges that must be addressed to achieve successful inclusion. To improve inclusive education, teachers need to have access to better training and instruction on how to implement best practices successfully. Teachers also need to be equipped with assistive technologies and appropriate curricular materials that cater to the diverse needs of students in the classroom. The Ethiopian government needs to formulate policies that ensure accessibility in teaching facilities, policies that support inclusive education and frameworks that promote an Inclusive learning environment for all students, particularly those with disabilities.

## **2.5 Strategies Used to Address Challenges in Implementing Inclusive Education**

In Ethiopia, primary school teachers face several challenges when implementing inclusive education practices. These include a lack of resources, training, and support, as well as negative attitudes towards children with disabilities and their families. In order to address these challenges and promote more inclusive education practices, various strategies have been proposed.

One approach is the use of different models and frameworks to guide teacher training and support. For instance, the World Health Organization's (WHO) International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF) framework can be used to help teachers understand the complex interactions between disability, environment, and personal factors, and tailor their teaching strategies accordingly (Assefa et al., 2016). Another example is the use of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) model, which emphasizes flexible teaching methods that accommodate different student needs (Abdulrahman et al., 2020).

Another strategy is to focus on building partnerships between educators, families, and community members. This can help teachers better understand the local context and cultural values related to inclusive education, as well as foster a sense of shared responsibility for supporting all learners. For instance, a recent study by Alie et al. (2021) found that involving parents in teacher training programs for inclusive education led to improved attitudes towards disability and more effective teaching strategies.

In addition, several research studies have emphasized the importance of using data-driven approaches to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of inclusive education practices. For example, a study by Tekola et al. (2018) used a mixed-methods research design to assess the impact of a pilot inclusive education program on student learning outcomes and teacher attitudes. This type of research can help identify areas for improvement and inform the development of evidence-based policy and practice.

Overall, these strategies hold promise for addressing some of the key challenges faced by primary school teachers in Ethiopia when implementing inclusive education practices. However, it is important to acknowledge that each context is unique, and there is no one-size-fits-all solution to promoting inclusive education. Further research is needed to explore the effectiveness of different strategies and interventions, as well as to continue identifying and addressing barriers to inclusive education for all learners.

## **2.6 Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Research**

Inclusive education practices have the potential to promote better learning outcomes for all students, including those with disabilities, in primary schools. However, as we have seen from the literature review, there are several challenges to implementing inclusive education practices, including a lack of resources and training, negative attitudes towards disability and diverse learners, and limited research on effective strategies.

Overall, the literature emphasizes the need to promote more comprehensive teacher training programs that integrate evidence-based approaches to inclusive education, such as the ICF framework or UDL model. These programs should provide teachers with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to accommodate diverse student needs and create supportive learning environments. At the same time, partnerships between educators, families, and communities can help build a culture of inclusion that values and supports all learners.

There is also a need for more rigorous research on the effectiveness of different strategies and interventions related to inclusive education. Although some studies have been conducted, most have been small-scale pilots or qualitative explorations. More large-scale studies with mixed-methods research designs are needed to provide empirical evidence about what works in

different contexts. For example, studies could evaluate the effectiveness of different teacher training models, approaches to conducting needs assessments, or strategies for involving families and communities in inclusive education initiatives.

Furthermore, ethical considerations must be taken into account when planning and conducting research on inclusive education. This includes ensuring that participants understand and consent to being involved in research studies, protecting participant privacy and confidentiality, and avoiding stigmatizing or harmful language or attitudes towards disability.

In conclusion, implementing inclusive education practices is an important step towards promoting educational equity and social inclusion in Ethiopia. However, to address the challenges faced by primary school teachers when implementing these practices, more comprehensive teacher training programs, partnerships with families and communities, and rigorous research studies are needed. By taking these steps and ensuring that ethical considerations are taken into account, Ethiopia can work towards providing all students with the high-quality education they deserve.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

This chapter focuses on methods of the study. Accordingly the research design, the sources of data, data collection procedures and instruments, sample size and techniques and data analysis procedures, as well as ethical issues are presented.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The study aims to explore the experiences of primary school teachers who have implemented inclusive education practices in Kolfe Keranio sub-city. The case study design being used is a multiple case study design, where the "case" refers to the individual primary school teachers who have implemented inclusive education practices in their classrooms. The unit of analysis is each individual teacher, and the data will be gathered through semi-structured interviews.

According to Yin (2018), a multiple case study design is useful for "understanding complex social phenomena within its real-life context" and for "studying a phenomenon that occurs in multiple settings" (p.9). Furthermore, Stake (1995) suggests that case studies allow researchers to explore situations in-depth, to discover new insights, and to provide rich descriptions of experiences or phenomena.

The justification for using this multiple case study design is to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences and perspectives of primary school teachers who have implemented inclusive education practices within their classrooms. This is relevant as previous research has identified challenges faced by teachers when implementing inclusive education practices (Dantchev & Sutton, 2019). Through exploring the experiences of individual teachers, the research aims to identify effective strategies for promoting inclusive education practices in Kolfe Keranio sub-city.

In conclusion, a multiple case study design is being used to explore the experiences of primary school teachers who have implemented inclusive education practices within their classrooms. The justification for this design is to provide rich descriptions of experiences or phenomena and

to identify effective strategies for promoting inclusive education practices in Kolfe Keranio sub-city. This research aims to address previous challenges faced by teachers when implementing inclusive education practices and provide valuable insights for future policy and practice.

### **3.2 Study Area**

The study aims to explore the experiences of primary school teachers who have implemented inclusive education practices in Kolfe Keranio sub-city. Inclusive education practices are designed to create an environment where every student, regardless of their background or abilities, can participate and learn with their peers. The study is necessary as there is currently a lack of research on the challenges faced by primary school teachers in implementing inclusive education practices.

Therefore, the study was conducted in primary schools in Addis Ababa city administration Kolfe Keranio sub-city. Based on kolfe keranio sub city education bureau there are a total of fifty-four primary schools. From these, five primary schools were selected for the current study (two governments and three privately owned). These are Biruh Tesfa primary school, Abune Baslios primary school, Joint Vision Success primary school, Tigat primary school and Mar youth primary school. The reason behind selecting these primary schools is, the schools are special needs centers/units and children with special needs are placed on their grounds, in addition primary school teachers are at the forefront of implementing inclusive education practices. They have a direct impact on day-to-day teaching, developing lesson plans that consider the needs of all students, and creating an appropriate learning environment. Therefore, their experiences and perspectives are crucial in exploring the teachers' efforts in creating an inclusive educational environment. As a result, the area was expected to provide a chance to get a bigger picture or more data on the topic.

### 3.3 Participants of the Study

In accordance to the data collected from each targeted school, the profile of the general population of schools of 2022/23 academic year is illustrated here under;

**Table 1 Teachers' Profile**

No	Name of Schools	Academic Year	Sex			Teachers Information Synopsis										
			M	F	T	Qualification								Experience		
						Certificate		Diploma		Degree		MA		0-15	16-30	31 &
						M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F			
1	Biruh Tesfa	2022/23	33	77	110	-	11	41	22	22	10	1	2	68	26	6
2	Abune Baslios	2022/23	88	118	206	-	9	77	40	54	25	1	-	12 2	66	18
3	Joint Vision success	2022/23	13	36	49	-	13	6	9	13	8	-	-	35	10	4
4	Tigat	2022/23	8	27	35	-	8	3	7	12	5	-	-	21	9	5
5	Mar Youth	2022/23	12	29	41	-	14	13	9	5	-	-	-	28	8	5
<b>Total</b>			<b>154</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>441</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>38</b>

### **3.3.1 Sampling Technique**

To explore the experiences of primary school teachers in implementing inclusive education practices, a purposive sampling technique was used. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method in which participants are selected based on specific criteria, such as their knowledge or experience with a particular phenomenon (Palinkas et al., 2015). In this case, primary school teachers who have implemented inclusive education practices were selected based on their experience and knowledge of the subject matter.

Purposive sampling has been widely used in qualitative research studies as it allows researchers to select participants who can provide rich and relevant information about the phenomenon being studied (Patton, 2015). In this study, the aim was to identify effective strategies for promoting inclusive education practices in Kolfe Keranio sub-city, particularly in primary schools. Therefore, it was necessary to select teachers who have experience in implementing such practices.

In using purposive sampling, it was ensured that the identified participants were experienced primary school teachers who have implemented inclusive education practices in their classrooms. The multiple case study design was then employed to collect data through semi-structured interviews with the selected participants. This qualitative research approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of the experiences and perspectives of primary school teachers in implementing inclusive education practices.

In conclusion, given the aim of this study to understand the experiences and perspectives of primary school teachers who have implemented inclusive education practices in Kolfe Keranio sub-city, purposive sampling was an appropriate technique for selecting participants. This approach allowed for an exploration of the experiences and perspectives of those with the most relevant knowledge and experience on the topic. The multiple case study design then allowed for a comprehensive data collection process that provided rich and detailed insights into the effective strategies for promoting inclusive education practices in Kolfe Keranio sub-city primary schools.

### **3.3.2 Sample Size**

Determining the appropriate sample size is a critical step in every research study as it helps to ensure that the sample is representative of the population being studied and that the results of the study can be generalized with confidence. In this study that explores the experiences of primary

school teachers in implementing inclusive education practices, a sample size of 32 was determined based on several factors.

One approach that is often used to determine sample size in qualitative research is data saturation. Data saturation refers to the point at which the researcher stops collecting data because no new information is being obtained from additional participants (Saunders et al., 2016). In this study, data saturation was considered as a factor in determining the final sample size. The aim was to select enough participants to reach data saturation while also ensuring a manageable sample size that would be feasible and practical.

Another important factor that was considered was the nature of the research question and the research design. This study used a multiple case study design, which meant that each case was considered as a separate unit of analysis. In general, qualitative research studies that use case study designs tend to have smaller sample sizes than those using other designs (Palinkas et al., 2015). Therefore, it was considered appropriate to select a smaller sample size for this study.

Additionally, ethical considerations such as time and resource constraints were also important in determining the final sample size. With limited time and resources, selecting a smaller sample size allowed for more in-depth data collection and analysis while also being sensitive to the participants' time commitments.

In conclusion, a sample size of 32 was determined for this study based on various factors such as data saturation, the research design, ethical considerations, and practicality. While some researchers might argue for larger or smaller sample sizes based on their own preferences or theoretical perspectives, it is important to consider the specific context and research question when determining an appropriate sample size.

### **3.4. Data Collection Tools and Procedures**

To collect data on the experiences of primary school teachers who have implemented inclusive education practices in Kolfe Keranio sub-city, a multiple case study design was employed. The design included semi-structured interviews with 25 purposively selected experienced primary school teachers who have implemented inclusive education practices. In addition, a focus group discussion was held with 7 teachers who were also selected through purposive sampling.

The use of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions in qualitative research is well-supported by literature (Creswell, 2013; Morgan, 1997). In the context of this study, semi-structured interviews were thus appropriate for exploring the experiences and perspectives of individual teachers who have implemented inclusive education practices while focus groups allowed for the exploration of shared experiences and perspectives among teachers who have implemented inclusive education practices. Through the interviews and focus groups, the study aimed to identify effective strategies for promoting inclusive education practices in primary schools.

Overall, the multiple case study design employed in this research is well-suited for exploratory research aimed at understanding complex and multifaceted phenomena such as inclusive education practices in primary schools (Yin, 2018). The use of interviews and focus groups as data collection methods is also supported by existing literature and is an appropriate choice given the study's research aims (Creswell, 2013; Morgan, 1997).

### **3.5 Instrument Translation Procedures**

The data collection instruments and informed consent forms used in this study were originally written in English, and then translated into Amharic. Prior research has indicated that translating research instruments from the source language into the target language helps participants feel more at ease and improve response quality (Rosen, 1997). Given that most of the study participants were native Amharic speakers, it was important to translate the tools into an Amharic version to ensure participant comfort and high-quality responses. To accomplish this, the original questionnaire was first translated into Amharic by two expert translators who were both professionals with MA Degrees in English language and Literature and native speakers of Amharic. After making final adjustments to the instrument, the researcher administered it to participants.

Previous research studies have emphasized that utilizing translated data-collection instruments can help to improve the accuracy of responses and minimize potential language barriers (Rosen, 1997). In this specific study, the researchers made a forward translation of the tools from the original English version into Amharic. This approach was grounded on the fact that most participants' mother tongue was Amharic. The decision aimed to make the participants feel

comfortable and potentially reduce any language-related response bias. In line with good practice of a forward translation process, the team employed experienced bilingual professionals who were native speakers of the target language. The experts demonstrated mastery of both English and Amharic languages through their qualifications in English language and literature and their origin. Prior to administration, the researchers made final adjustments to guarantee standardization of the tools to enhance data accuracy during data collection.

### **3.6 Techniques of Data Analysis**

According to Bogdan (1982), Data analysis is the procedure of meticulously locating and organizing the interview transcripts, observation notes, or other non-textual materials that the researcher acquires to fully comprehend the occurrence.

Consequently, the data was gathered through interviews and FGD by the nature of the study's primary goals and objectives. In order to analyze the responses of the respondent teachers, leading questions from interview and FGD guides were used as the basis for the analysis. In line with the research design section's description of interpretative thematic data analysis methodology, the interviewees' responses of interviewees were afterward reported under each thematic area using a descriptive method.

Thematic analysis is a popular qualitative research technique used to identify patterns and themes in data. There are various steps involved in conducting a thematic analysis, including data familiarization, coding, theme generation, and refinement. Data familiarization involves reading and becoming familiar with the data, while coding involves assigning labels or tags to segments of data that relate to specific concepts. Theme generation involves identifying overarching patterns or themes within the coded data, while refinement involves reviewing and modifying the identified themes.

According to Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2020), thematic analysis is an effective method of analyzing qualitative data in healthcare research. They suggest that this approach enables researchers to identify patterns and themes within their data that ultimately contribute to a greater understanding of the phenomena being studied. Furthermore, they note that thematic analysis

allows for a flexible yet systematic approach to analyzing data, making it applicable to a wide range of research questions and types of data.

One study that utilized thematic analysis as its primary method of analysis is the work of McCusker et al. (2021). The authors examined the factors influencing the decision-making process of post-acute care admission in older adults discharged from the hospital. Utilizing a three-step approach involving data immersion, coding, and theme analysis, they identified three key themes related to the decision-making process among both healthcare providers and patients or families.

In conclusion, thematic analysis is a useful technique for analyzing qualitative data due to its flexibility and accessibility.

### **3.7 Ethical Issues**

Qualitative research is a method that involves analyzing non-numerical data to identify common patterns, themes, and trends. One popular qualitative research technique is thematic analysis, which offers flexibility and accessibility in identifying patterns and themes in data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the healthcare field, recent literature supports the effectiveness of thematic analysis (Nowell et al., 2017).

Conducting research ethically is crucial in ensuring the protection of the participants' privacy, security, and sensitivity. According to Rubin (2005), researchers must closely adhere to ethical standards to ensure they are informed of circumstances where ethical obligations are necessary. Informed consent is a crucial aspect of qualitative research, which Draper (2004) notes requires an open line of communication between the investigator and research subjects.

During the study, participants received information on their freedom to choose and their right to withdraw if they felt uncomfortable. Moreover, Boddy (2013) stresses the importance of valuing the anonymity and privacy of participants' identities and data provided. Thus, study participants were not permitted to disclose their names during interviews, and recordings were deleted after the research document was authorized.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4 RESULTS

This section of the study presents key findings garnered from the interviews and focus group discussions. The findings have been interpreted and analyzed categorized into the following sub-thematic areas of the study: primary school teachers' implementation of inclusive education and its practices, Supports for inclusion of learners with SEN and Challenges influencing teachers Understanding of inclusive education and the main finding of the study are presented.

#### 4.1 General Profile of Participants

Table 4.1. Demographic characteristics of interviewees

No	Code Name of the participants	Sex	Qualification	Experience in years
1	T1	F	BA	8
2	T2	F	BA	11
3	T3	F	Diploma	8
4	T4	M	BA	16
5	T5	F	BA	13
6	T6	M	BA	37
7	T7	M	MA	19
8	T8	F	MA	21
9	T9	F	BA	13
10	T10	M	BA	12
11	T11	M	BA	26
12	T12	M	BA	17
13	T13	F	BA	17
14	T14	F	BA	20
15	T15	F	BA	15
16	T16	M	Diploma	14
17	T17	M	BA	27
18	T18	F	BA	33
19	T19	M	BA	29
20	T20	F	BA	26

Table 4.1 depicts the characteristics of the research participants who participated in the study. These teachers were selected from five different primary schools, eleven out of twenty participant teachers were females and the remaining nine teachers were males.

Regarding the status of the qualification of the participant teachers, two teachers were diploma graduates and the majority i.e. sixteen are BA degree holders and the remaining two teachers are MA holders. The other important point presented in the table shows that the experience of teachers ranges from eight to thirty-seven years.

Table 4.2. Demographic characteristics of school principals

No	Code Name of the participants	Sex	Qualification	Experience in years
1	P1	M	BA	16
2	P2	M	MA	21
3	P3	M	BA	9
4	P4	M	MA	27
5	P5	M	BA	18

Table 4.2 shows the Demographic characteristics of school principals who participated in the study. Unfortunately, all participants of the school management staff were male as indicated on the table. Of the total of five principals, two were MA holders and the remaining three principals were BA holders. Regarding the experience of the participant principals, it ranges from nine to twenty-seven years.

Table 4.3. Demographic Characteristics of special needs education teachers

No	Code Name of the participants	Sex	Qualification	Experience in years
1	SENT 1	F	BA	6
2	SENT 2	F	BA	9
3	SENT 3	M	MA	11
4	SENT 4	F	BA	14
5	SENT 5	M	BA	7
6	SENT 6	M	BA	4
7	SENT 7	M	BA	3

The above table 4.3 shows the Demographic characteristics of special needs education teachers who participated in the study. These teachers were selected from five different primary schools, three out of seven participant teachers were females and the remaining four teachers were males.

Regarding the status of the qualification of the participant teachers, one teacher was an MA holder and the remaining six teachers are BA holders. The other important point presented in the table shows that the experience of teachers ranges from three to fourteen years.

## **4.2 Primary school teachers' implementation of inclusive education and its practices**

Within this thematic area, the study participants were asked to provide their qualitative understandings of how inclusive education could address the diverse needs of all students in their classroom. Specifically, they were probed about their practices of inclusion, their ability to recognize diversity and difference among students, their view of disability and special educational needs, as well as their attitudes towards inclusion and exclusion. Furthermore, the participants were questioned on their knowledge and skills pertaining to inclusive education practices. The aim of this thematic area was to elicit in-depth, subjective responses from the participants regarding their experiences with inclusive education practices.

Based on the interviews and focus group discussion, it is displayed that the teachers viewed the concept of inclusive education in different ways. What follows are some of their comments in this regard.

T3 said,

Inclusive education is providing educational services for students with disabilities with the help of special educational needs teachers. (T3, female, 8 years' experience)

Contrary to the above one of the respondent teachers stated that "Inclusive education means placing students with disabilities in school to decrease society's load, especially sharing the parent's feelings when their children stay at home"(T7, male, 19 years' experience). In line with this statement, another respondent added, "Inclusive education is all about students with disabilities"(T8, female, 21 years' experience)

An interesting view of inclusion was stated by all focus group discussant Teachers. They elaborated their ideas as follows,

Inclusion and inclusive education cover a lot of aspects. Students with different types of disabilities must be included in all learning activities. Learning activities, learning environment, school social and physical environment and materials should be adapted to include learners with disabilities and different types of students with special needs. They also believe that In Schools the presence of students with special needs is not enough; to realize inclusive education it needs collaborative efforts among teachers and school managements. Special needs education teachers/professionals must take the responsibility of facilitating the issue and the school should work aggressively on enhancing the practice of inclusive education by providing training for teachers and school management staff, arranging the school system for those students and providing necessary teaching and assistive materials (all FGDs)

Other participants in this study expressed an understanding of diversity in terms of cultural, linguistic and socio-economic differences in the classroom. For example, participant noted that "cultural sensitivity is an important aspect of inclusive education because it allows us to understand and respect students from different backgrounds." (T11, male, 26 years' experience). However, there were also some teachers who did not consider disability or special educational needs as forms of diversity. This was seen in comments such as "all students are the same and should be treated equally" (T6, male, 37 years' experience). This overlooks the unique learning needs of students who require accommodations in the classroom.

Another participant saw disability as a medical problem that needed to be fixed or cured rather than a unique aspect of human diversity. She also expressed negative attitudes towards intellectual disabilities and assumed that students with disabilities had low IQs. The participant stated that "students with intellectual disabilities should not be in regular classrooms because they bring down the performance of other students." (T1, female, 8 years' experience) These attitudes may stem from a lack of exposure to diverse learners with disabilities or inadequate training.

Participants identified several key knowledge areas for inclusive education such as understanding the diverse needs of learners, using differentiated instruction and assessment, creating a welcoming classroom environment, and collaborating with support services like special educators. One participant noted that "it's important to get to know each student's strengths and needs to tailor instruction accordingly," (T5, female, 13 years' experience). While another suggested that "collaboration between regular teachers and special educators can help create more inclusive learning environments." (T10, male, 12 years' experience)

The findings from this study suggest that primary school teachers have varying degrees of understanding in inclusive education. Additionally, there were gaps in knowledge related to accommodating diverse learning needs and collaborating effectively with support services. These findings have implications for teacher training and professional development in order to promote more effective implementation of inclusive education practices.

Based on the data collected from the interviews and FGDs, it is evident that primary school teachers have different levels of awareness when it comes to inclusive education. There is a need for targeted training that focuses on creating inclusive learning environments, accommodations for diverse learning needs, and promotion of positive attitudes towards students with disabilities.

### **4.3 Supports for inclusion of learners with SEN**

To successfully implement inclusive education, it is important to provide adequate support for both students and teachers. According to finding, some teachers find it difficult to include students with special educational needs (SEN), and one of the reasons for this is the lack of formal support structures. This highlights the need for ongoing teacher training and development of skills to help create a supportive learning environment. However, the study also found that although teachers receive support from the government office, there is still a shortage of personnel to adequately support inclusive education practices. The following responses were generated in light of these findings,

T9 commented

Until the current academic year, our school provides a different support services collaboration with different governmental and non-governmental organizations that includes financial support, provision of academic materials, guidance and counseling services and other relevant support services that promote the practices of inclusive education by including different types of students with special needs in all activities of the school. (T9, female, 13 years' experience)

T4 mentioned that

They receive support in the form of workshops, in-service training, and materials, but it is not sufficient. He felt that the workshops were often condensed from a full week to just a day or two, which was unhelpful. (T4, male, 16 years' experience)

T2 stated that

They received support for learners with special needs in the areas of reading and writing ability and received funding for assistive devices like hearing aids when necessary. While she appreciated the advice and workshops provided, and believed that more workshops should be organized. (T2, female, 11 years' experience)

T18 acknowledged that

While education officials are limited in number relative to the number of schools they are responsible for, there is potential for the district to help more by sending additional teachers to schools. (T18, female, 33 years' experience)

On the contrary, participants from private school raised that no government body supports the school and thus they face many challenges. One of the interviewees from private primary school also confirmed the following statement

Surprisingly, I only see support for government schools. Whether you include it or not is nobody's business. The Education Bureau says education should be

accessible. When we teach, some people are honest in themselves - those who are strong and encouraging. But there is no support from the government. We are teaching by renting premises. At least there is no answer when we ask for free space for students with special needs. We have three branches and pay 6 million per year for house rent. We have many employees. Every child with special needs wants a helper and caregiver because their behavior and needs are different. We have not yet found a body that sees all this. (P3, male, 9 years' experience)

The other question that was raised for all study participants was focused on making the resources adaptable and using them, which helps the teaching and learning processes interact and motivates students with different types of special needs in the classroom.

Accordingly, participants recruited from private schools stated that schools do not have the necessary educational resources and that there are no educational aids prepared or purchased to help special needs students. The following exemplary statement is taken from one FGD discussant of private primary school,

In our school, it is impossible to say that there is an educational tool for regular education itself. In terms of providing and using various support tools; we have not accepted students who need as much support as our school. For example, we do not accept deaf and blind students in the first place because we do not have suitable resources and conditions for these students. (SEN4, female, 14 years' experience)

When it comes to government schools, all participants stated that there are educational aids in a certain way and they have been given full Montessori resources from Addis Ababa Education Office, but they did not hide that they have problems in using these materials. In addition to this, they stated that there are various materials purchased for special needs students, but these materials are not used, and the main reason for this is the lack of attention of the teachers, and the materials are thrown away without being used.

One of the interviewees (government school principal) from primary school stated the following statement,

Various resources have been provided at the school's Special Needs Center, and these resources have been completed by talking to the Addis Ababa Education Office at different times. In addition, by talking to different stakeholders, we have procured various tools to help students with special needs, but it is impossible to say that the teachers are using these tools properly, according to our observations. Some of the materials are stored for years and become useless in the process, and I think the main reason for this is the skill problem among the teachers, they don't even know why the materials come, and this has an impact on the implementation of inclusive education. (P5, male, 18 years' experience)

#### **4.4 Challenges influencing teachers Understanding of inclusive education**

Everyone who took part in the study was asked to express their thoughts on the current challenges in that influencing teacher implementation of inclusive education in primary schools.

The study's participants from schools (One fifth of twenty-five) respondents to interviews and all focus group discussants mentioned failure to provide task-oriented training during university and at their workplace as the critical factor that hinders teachers implementing of inclusive education in their school. According to what the research's respondents said, failure to provide task-oriented training considering the situation discussed refers to the training not supported in practice, hasty and inadequate preparation (referring to summer teacher training) and these inadequate training leads to adverse effect of been disrespecting the profession, not doing practical work as required by the profession.

The following responses were generated in light of these findings,

P1 mentioned,

Believe that in-service training in teaching students with special educational needs is necessary for inclusion to succeed. (P1, male, 16 years' experience)

T19 stated that,

Teachers lacked knowledge regarding working with learners with special needs. In order to fix the problem teachers needed adequate training regarding the

practices and implementations of inclusive education. (T19, female, 29 years' experience)

SEN1 commented,

Teachers should be ready in terms of suitable and professional qualifications along with ongoing in-service training in order for inclusion to be successful. (SEN1, female, 6 years' experience)

T16 said that,

Lack of adequate teacher training contributed to teachers' reluctance to assist students with special needs. Expressed the opinion that pre-service teacher preparation effectively prepares them to handle a variety of educational requirements in the classroom. (T16, male, 14 years' experience)

Likewise, 3 out of 25 interview participants revealed that primary school teachers had difficulty implementing inclusive education practices due to a lack of necessary resources and inadequate support from the relevant authorities. Teachers stated that they needed access to more materials and assistive technology to cater to the varying needs of learners, but these resources were limited. Teachers also expressed frustration about inadequate personnel support, particularly for learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN). The lack of support at the institutional level has majorly impacted SEN students who require personalized attention, adjustment in learning materials, and unique teaching styles.

Moreover, 1 interviewee from one primary school reported that low school attention is a factor that affects teachers understanding of inclusive education and its practices.

In Addition, 1 government school interviewee regards large class size as a factor that impacts the success of inclusive education.

Exceptionally, one respondent acknowledged hating their position or the burden that many school leaders bear to inappropriate practices of inclusive education in primary school. Again, one interview participant from private primary School differently stated failure to pay sufficient

monthly salary and incentives given the workload has influenced teachers' implementations of inclusive education.

Additionally, two interviewees from public and private schools disclosed a lack of adapted curricula as a factor that affects teachers understanding and the practice of inclusive education.

Another one primary school principal of the interview participant stated that the practitioners do not know the policies, strategies, proclamations and different strategies related to inclusive education.

He elaborated on the following statements:

As we know that our nation has ratified several international agreements about the principles and application of inclusive and special needs education and numerous policies, strategies, and proclamations have also been developed to carry out these agreements. Surprisingly, however, the practitioners of inclusive education, such as teachers, principals, and other stakeholders, are unaware of these policies, which have a significant impact on the implementation of inclusive education.(P2,male,21 years' experience)

Through the analysis, it became apparent that the two main challenges faced by primary school teachers on implementing inclusive education practices arise from the lack of resources and support and inadequate training and professional development opportunities. To overcome these challenges, it is essential to provide adequate resources such as materials, assistive technology, and personnel, like SEN support staff. Teachers need regular training to develop their skills and competencies in delivering inclusive education; these programs should be ongoing to allow for the continuous application of new ideas and techniques. Additionally, strategies to increase the visibility of successful inclusive practices should be promoted through workshops, conferences, and advocacy events.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Discussion**

In this chapter, the researcher has interpret and draw meaning from the major findings of the study in light of the main themes of the research questions and the existing body of literature.

#### **5.1 Primary school teachers' implementation of inclusive education**

Several studies have reported varying levels of primary school teachers' awareness and understanding of inclusive education practices. For instance, a study by Mengistie (2019) found that while some primary school teachers in Ethiopia demonstrated awareness of inclusive education principles, they lacked knowledge on specific accommodations needed for learners with special educational needs. Similarly, a study by Mayaba and Adugna (2018) revealed that primary school teachers in Ethiopia had limited knowledge of inclusive education practices and the role of accommodations in promoting learning among students with disabilities. These findings are consistent with the results of study, which found that primary school teachers in Kolfe Keranio sub-city lacked comprehensive knowledge on specific accommodations necessary for learners' diverse needs.

The need for targeted training that focuses on creating inclusive learning environments and promoting positive attitudes towards students with disabilities has been highlighted in previous research. As noted by Pascual (2015), schools must create learning environments that are suitable for all students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities. This necessitates providing learning opportunities that suit individual students' needs and encouraging a culture that values diversity and promotes inclusion. Furthermore, as argued by Rouse, Bonti-Ankomah, and Hogan (2014), teachers should be made aware of the support required by students with disabilities to promote their optimal participation in the classroom. They should also be trained to understand the significance of promoting positive attitudes towards students with disabilities.

Therefore, the current study's findings confirm those of prior research and recommend teachers receive targeted training in inclusive education practices to ensure that students' diverse learning needs are accommodated appropriately, creating positive attitudes for disabled students. By

providing targeted training opportunities for school faculty members, schools can effectively promote inclusive educational practices within the classroom and better meet the diverse needs of their student populations.

## **5.2 Supports for inclusion of learners with SEN**

The finding that some teachers struggle to include students with SEN due to a lack of formal support structures is consistent with research in other settings. For example, Engelbrecht et al. (2003) found that teachers in South Africa faced similar challenges when implementing inclusive education. Additionally, Walton (2014) notes that teachers in the UK may not have the necessary support and training to effectively include students with SEN in their classrooms.

However, as noted in the finding, there is still a shortage of personnel to adequately support inclusive education practices in Kolfe Keranio sub city primary school. This highlights the need for continued investment in resources and personnel to support inclusive education practices.

The challenges of a lack of resources and inadequate support for implementing inclusive education practices are not unique. A study conducted in South Africa found that teachers faced similar challenges, with significant shortages in human resources and inadequate infrastructure, negatively impacting the delivery of inclusive education (Chireshe et al., 2019). Another study in Uganda found that shortages in resources, including learning materials and assistive technology, led to negative attitudes towards inclusive education among teachers (Bwire & Ninsiima, 2020).

In some countries, there have been successful initiatives to address the lack of resources, such as the provision of funding for assistive technology devices for learners with disabilities in Ghana (Adaame et al., 2021). In Ethiopia, the Ministry of Education has launched several initiatives aimed at improving the inclusivity of education, such as the establishment of a National Special Needs Education Directorate to oversee the implementation of policies and programs for learners with special needs (UNESCO, 2016). However, more needs to be done in terms of providing adequate resources and support to teachers.

### **5.3 Challenges influencing teachers Understanding of inclusive education**

Training and professional development opportunities for teachers are essential in supporting the successful implementation of inclusive education practices. Findings from previous studies suggest that teachers who have received training on inclusive education reported feeling more confident about working with learners with special needs and better equipped to meet their diverse needs (Koffi & Atiim, 2018; O'Connell et al., 2020).

In Ethiopia, previous initiatives aimed at improving teacher training for inclusive education practices have been documented. For example, the Ministry of Education has been providing regular training for primary school teachers on how to deliver inclusive education practices through its Teacher Education Institutes (UNESCO, 2016). However, there is a need for more structured and sustained training programs that develop teachers' competencies and skills in delivering inclusive education. A study conducted in Ethiopia also highlighted the need for more attention to be paid to the development of teachers' attitudes towards learners with special needs (Mehretu, 2020).

Promoting the visibility of successful inclusive practices could also be an effective strategy to encourage more teachers to adopt inclusive practices. A study conducted in Rwanda found that a peer mentoring program was an effective strategy for promoting inclusive education practices and providing support for teachers (Ngabonziza et al., 2019).

Workshops, conferences, and advocacy events could also be avenues for sharing successful inclusive education practices and providing support for teachers to address specific needs. Several organizations in Ethiopia have been working to promote inclusive education practices, such as the Ethiopian Education Foundation, which aims to ensure the inclusion of marginalized and disadvantaged children into the education system (EEF). Engaging such organizations and networks in advocating for inclusive education practices would also be beneficial.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 6.1 Summary

The overall objective of the study was to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of teachers in implementing inclusive education practices in Kolfe Keranio sub city primary schools.

The following research questions were formulated at the onset of the study

1. How do primary school teachers understand and conceptualize inclusive education in their teaching practices?
2. What are the challenges that primary school teachers face in implementing inclusive education practices in primary school?
3. What are the resources and trainings that the teachers needed to implement inclusive education in primary school?

Qualitative research methods were utilized to answer the stated questions; the data needed for the study was collected by using two different data-gathering techniques (interview and FGD). The qualitative data obtained from in-depth interview and FGDs were analyzed using thematic method of analysis. From the overall analysis of the data obtained from different sources and the discussion made so far, the following major findings have been found.

- ✓ Primary school teachers have different levels of awareness and understanding when it comes to inclusive education.
- ✓ There are gaps in teachers related to accommodating diverse learning needs and collaborating effectively with support services.
- ✓ Teachers accommodate students with special needs despite the fact that some of them do not have qualifications/training in SEN.

- ✓ There is a shortage of government consistent follow up and personnel to adequately support inclusive education practices in primary school.
- ✓ Teachers experienced varied challenges in implementing the inclusive education for students with special needs.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

Based on the preceding major findings and discussion of the results made above, the researcher draws the following conclusions.

The research's findings, which were in line with the study's main concept, provided some initial data or information about how well teachers in primary schools understood inclusive education.

The objective of the study was to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of teachers in implementing inclusive education practices in Kolfe Keranio sub city primary schools.

The findings from this study suggest that primary school teachers have varying degrees of understanding in inclusive education. Additionally, there were gaps in knowledge related to accommodating diverse learning needs and collaborating effectively with support services. These findings have implications for teacher training and professional development in order to promote more effective implementation of inclusive education practices.

According to finding, some teachers find it difficult to include students with special educational needs (SEN), and one of the reasons for this is the lack of formal support structures. This highlights the need for ongoing teacher training and development of skills to help create a supportive learning environment. However, the study also found that although teachers receive support from the government office, there is still a shortage of personnel to adequately support inclusive education practices.

Finally Through the analysis, it became apparent that the two main challenges faced by primary school teachers on implementing inclusive education practices arise from the lack of resources and support and inadequate training and professional development opportunities. To overcome these challenges, it is essential to provide adequate resources such as materials, assistive technology, and personnel, like SEN support staff. Teachers need regular training to develop their skills and competencies in delivering inclusive education; these programs should be

ongoing to allow for the continuous application of new ideas and techniques. Additionally, strategies to increase the visibility of successful inclusive practices should be promoted through workshops, conferences, and advocacy events.

## **6.2. Recommendation**

Taking into account the major findings of the study, the following suggestions are offered that will be useful in enhancing practice of inclusive education and its practices in primary schools. To improve the quality of the suggested recommendations, it is thought that the research's findings will help professionals and researchers alike identify their research gaps and pursue additional research on the subject.

- ✓ Teachers should be regularly attend training and professional development opportunities to learn about inclusive teaching practices and strategies for meeting the needs of all learners.
- ✓ School administration should provide regular training sessions for primary school teachers to enhance their awareness and understanding of inclusive education practices.
- ✓ The primary school should fulfill resources to assist teachers in accommodating diverse learning needs and collaborating effectively with support services.
- ✓ Teacher training institutions should provide specialized training and certification for teachers who will be working with students with special needs to ensure they have the necessary qualifications.
- ✓ It should be establish support systems for teachers who experience challenges in implementing inclusive education for students with special needs, such as designated mentorship programs.
- ✓ Schools should be responsible for conducting workshops and conferences to promote the sharing of best practices and ideas, as well as opportunities for collaboration.
- ✓ Schools should be responsible for facilitating partnerships between schools and community organizations to provide additional resources and support services for students.

- ✓ Teachers should be work for addressing personal biases towards disability among themselves and their communities through awareness campaigns and training.
- ✓ Government agencies responsible for education funding should ensure that there are adequate resources available for special education programs in primary schools.

### **6.3 Future research**

This study has provided a snapshot view of the inclusive education experiences of primary school teachers in Kolfe Keranio sub-city primary schools. This may suggest that not every primary school is experiencing the same issues. For this reason, further studies are needed. In addition, future research is also needed to examine the views and beliefs of school Principals and school inspectors as well as policy makers to uncover the issues they face regarding implementing the inclusive education policy.

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**Addis Ababa University**

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**Department of Special needs and Inclusive Education**

APPENDIX I

**Interview Guide for Participant Teachers**

Interview Guide Participant Consent

My name is Tizazu Abebe. I am a graduate student of special needs and inclusive education department in College of Education and Behavioral Studies at Addis Ababa University. Currently, I am conducting research on teacher understanding and the practice of inclusive education situated in kolfe keranio subcity woreda 1 primary schools for the partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in Special Needs and Inclusive Education.

I respectfully ask that you are willing to answer a few questions since I need to gather data from a few teachers for this purpose. You may not immediately gain anything from participating in this research, which is entirely voluntary. Your answers to each question are crucial to the study's objectives, though. If you agree, I will interview you and get in touch with you at a convenient location. A maximum of one hour will be allotted for the interview session. If necessary, I will record the talk using an IC or recorder, and the recording will be destroyed once the study is finished. Your name and personal information won't be disclosed in this way; it stays private.

According to its ethics review and approval processes, Addis Ababa University has given this research. Anyone considering or consenting to participate in this study is free to ask the researcher any questions or express any concerns at any time. Additionally, anyone dissatisfied with the researcher's response or follow-up inquiries may raise ethical questions or concerns or lodge any complaints regarding this research with the Addis Ababa University, College of Education and Behavioral Studies.

**Profiles of the Interviewees**

Sex .....

Age .....

Qualification .....

Year of experience in teaching .....

The subject you teach .....

Grade level you teach .....

Name of your school .....

### Questions

1. How would you define inclusive education in the context of your primary school classroom?
2. Can you describe a time when you successfully implemented an inclusive education practice in your classroom?
3. In what ways do you differentiate your instruction to meet the diverse needs of your students?
4. How do you collaborate with parents and other professionals to support your implementation of inclusive education practices?
5. Can you think of a specific student or group of students who have benefited from inclusive education practices in your classroom?
6. In what ways do you employ Universal Design for learning principles in your teaching practices to support all learners?
7. What barriers have you encountered in your attempts to implement inclusive education practices, and how have you overcome them?
8. How do you ensure that all students feel included and valued in the classroom, regardless of their abilities?
9. What strategies do you use to address any negative attitudes or stigma surrounding students with disabilities or diverse needs?

10. How do you regularly assess and reflect upon the effectiveness of your inclusive education practices?
11. In what ways can technology be used to support the implementation of inclusive education practices in the classroom?
12. Can you describe a time when you struggled with implementing inclusive education practices and what you learned from that experience?
13. How does your school administration support the implementation of inclusive education practices?
14. In what ways do government policies and resources support or hinder the implementation of inclusive education practices in your school or community?
15. What resources or trainings do you believe would be most beneficial in improving your ability to implement inclusive education practices effectively in your primary school classroom?

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#### APPENDIX-II

#### **FGD Guideline for SNE Teachers and Education Experts**

1. What does the concept of "inclusive education" mean to you?
2. In what ways do diverse learners face challenges in primary schools?
3. What factors contribute to success in implementing inclusive education practices in primary schools?
4. What are some strategies that schools and educators can employ to promote more inclusive learning environments for all students?
5. How can teachers and educators better engage families and caregivers of students with diverse needs?
6. What resources - like teacher training or technology - could help close gaps in capacity for implementing inclusive education practices?
7. How could the government support more effective implementation of inclusive education practices in primary schools?
9. What are some common misconceptions about inclusive education and how might they be addressed?
10. Considering where the challenges and gaps are in primary schools when it comes to inclusive education, where do we need to focus our efforts going forward in improving this situation?

## Declaration

I the under signed, declared that this thesis entitled “**Exploring the Experiences of Primary School Teachers in Implementing Inclusive Education: The case of Kolfe Keranio Sub-City**”.is my own work and has not previously been awarded a degree by another university, and that all sources of information utilized to create this thesis have been properly acknowledged.

Name: Tizazu Abebe

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**Exploring the Experiences of Primary School Teachers in Implementing Inclusive Education: The case of Kolfe Keranio Sub-City**” is the original work of Tizazu Abebe, done under my close guidance.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_