

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND BEHAVIOURAL STUDIES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION**

**Contributions and Challenges of Sebeta Special School for the Blind**

**MA Thesis Research**

**By: Gemedà Ifa**

**Advisor: Yirgashewa Bekele (Ph. D)**

**DECEMBER 2020**  
**ADDIS ABABA**

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**CONTRIBUTIONS AND CHALLENGES OF SEBETA SPECIAL SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND**

**BY  
GEMEDA IFA**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES ADDIS ABABA  
UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS IN SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION**

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**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

**DECEMBER 2020**

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND BEHAVIORAL STUDIES  
DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION**

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## **Abstract**

*The main purpose of this study was to find out the contributions and challenges of Sebeta Special School for the students with visual impairments. The research design used was qualitative case study method as this would enable the researcher to make in-depth study of the case from different perspectives. For responding to this main purpose of the study, purposive sampling was used and the subjects of the study were selected by purposive sampling technique as they were taught to have the necessary information for the problem under study. Accordingly, twelve teachers, (six males and six females), ten members of the support staff (five males and five females) and twelve students of grades five to eight (six males and six females) were selected for focus group discussions. Besides, interview was conducted with the director and vice-director of the school and two teachers (a male and a female) and two students of grades five to eight (a male and a female). Relevant documents and observation checklists were also used as data sources. Finally, the data collected were organized, thematically analyzed and presented. Regarding the contributions made, the findings revealed that the school has been serving the students as school to learn in and succeed, home to live in and family to leave with. There were also services being delivered for the students and different resources were also available in the special school. Findings displayed that challenges to the special school as manpower assignment was not need based and there were lack of skills necessary to run activities in the special school as reading and writing braille, inadequate budget and resources like student textbooks transcribed in to braille and wastages in usage of the available resources. Besides, there were conditions that violate the safety of students. The recommendations made included such things as alleviating the challenges the school encountered such as appropriate use of resource, availing the necessary resources as braille textbooks, budget and others.*

## **Acknowledgement**

It is with great pleasure that I acknowledge my indebtedness to my spouse, Adde Sinidu Getachew, for her constant help and sympathetic encouragement towards the completion of my study. My thanks also go to my Organization, Oromia Education Bureau, which created favourable conditions for my completion of this study. My warmest gratitude is also extended to my staff member Ato Misikir Tegene as well as his families for their help in various ways. I would also like to thank my children Jigsa, Ijara and Sena, for they rendered me the spirit of endurance for the completion of the study. Finally, I wish to express my sincere appreciation and deepest gratitude to my thesis advisor, Yirgashewa Bekele (Ph.D.), for her constructive advice for the realization of this research work.

## **Abbreviations/Acronym**

FGD-Focus Group Discussion

MOE- Ministry of Education

OEB-Oromia Education Bureau

SEN-Special Educational Needs

SNESE-Special Needs Education Strategy of Ethiopia

SNE-Special Needs Education

SSBSB-Sebeta Special School for the Blind

UNESCO-United Nations Educational and Cultural Organization

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## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

#### **1. Background of the Study**

According to Hausstatter and Thuen (2014), the history of special needs education is subdivided into different phases or eras. These are the Era of Philanthropy, the Era of Segregation-Protection for Society, and the Era of Segregation-Best Interest of the Child, the Age of Integration Social-Critique and Normalization, and the Age of Inclusion. It is imperative to look at these phases to have a generalized concept on special needs education in general and special education in particular as it is the subject of this study.

The authors displayed that, in the era of the philanthropists (1825-1880), who took the initiative to form organizations in the 1800s, wanted to accomplish their good works without any support from the government or public funds. They were only responsible to God for whatever they might commit on the people with disabilities. Furthermore, in the Era of Segregation: Protection of Society (1880-1950), the authors elaborated the existence of a tendency to make a distinction between private, philanthropic child care and public care by using the terms ‘child rescue’ and ‘child saving’. The difference in concepts is based on the idea that ‘rescue’ (child rescue) derives from a private commitment engrained in civil society. It is the assistance of the individual, the act of rescuing a fellow human in need that is the driving force in this method of child care. The shift to ‘child saving’ takes place when the government interferes in the care by means of laws, making it part of a public commitment. In the Era of Segregation-in the Best Interests of the Child (1950-1975), those same authors extended their narration that the period subsequent to the Second World War was dominated by a concrete focus on the development of the welfare state. Under this category, the welfare state model focused on universalism by giving equal benefits and services to all citizens irrespective of the status of the family. The development of a good school system was in this background overbearing, and all children had the right to education.

In the Era of Integration-Social Critique and Normalization, Hausstatter and Thuen (2014), further elaborated that not until the mid-1960s can one perceive the signs of a political shift in the direction of a policy of integration. It was then believed ‘that the objectives of the special schools are in principle the same as for normal general education schools’. The separated children had a ‘need for the same broad general educational, cultural and social development objectives as other children and young people’. Special needs education had to look after ‘the

person behind the hindrances. The separated children must not 'get used to thinking of themselves and their peers as patients, cases or clients' but to the pedagogical needs of each child, accordingly.

The other was the Era of Inclusion, in which the authors, also added that inclusive educational environment shall focus on increasing friendship among students, giving all students the possibility of participation as part of a process of democratization, and on top of this giving all students the necessary support so that they benefit from the education offered. A central reason for this focus was the high emphasis on normalization that led to the changes in the early 1990s.

It is aforementioned that the history of special needs education has passed through the phases of philanthropy, segregation, integration and inclusion. In Ethiopia too, it seems that the history of special needs education has passed through similar phases; yet, shown at policy levels only as of 1994 special education and 2006 mainly focusing on inclusive education. The subject of this study was about special school.

As to Dray (2008), the special education movement can be categorized into three major phases. These are exclusion and isolation, access and inclusion, and accountability and empowerment. Historically, up until the mid-1960s and 1970s, impairment was regarded as an anomaly and these individuals were forced into isolation and exclusion. During the civil rights era through the 1980s, parents and advocates pushed to shift this perspective and gain rights for individuals with disabilities through access and inclusion. From the 1990s to the present, individuals with impairments have become empowered and are working toward redefining their role and identity in society as a cultural phenomenon rather than inferior to able-bodied, able-minded individuals in the dominant mainstream. Additionally, systems such as case law and statutes, public and private programs, and advocacy organizations have been created to make schools accountable for providing equal educational opportunity for all students, including individuals with impairments. This entry reviews the political and social aspects that influenced each of these historical phases in special education.

Yet, Encarta Dictionaries (2009), say that by the end of the eighteenth century, enlightened humanitarians became convinced that it was possible for the blind to adapt themselves to the conditions of normal living. A French government employee, began the innovative work of teaching the blind in the second half of the eighteenth century, establishing the first institution

for the education of blind children in Paris in 1784. He also taught his blind pupils to read, by touch, raised letters embossed on paper. He not only provided school training in formal subjects in his school, but also in music and in several trades.

Special education is a more individualized approach to the specific learning needs of a child with impairments. While segregated schools may be one of the last alternatives for a child, one must keep possibilities open for children with impairments and special schools are one of those options (Sweeny, 2007). As to (UNESCO, 1995), the different kinds of amenity requirements in different countries of the world were not spread equally across the different categories of special needs: a range of preferences was most likely to be available for those with severe learning difficulties, hearing impairment, visual impairment and physical problems. Among the various forms of services or in many different countries by order of rank in number of services in schools starting from the most frequent to the less ones are boarding special schools; day special schools; special classes in regular schools; support teaching in regular classes and resource room in the service deliveries. As could be understood from the service ranks revealed above, boarding special schools as a category was the most frequent one that was in place in different countries of the world as mentioned in the analysis of the documents made among the various types of service deliveries.

According to the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy (1994), it was mentioned that special education and training shall be provided for people with special needs. It also stated that all students, including those with special needs, learn in accordance with their full capabilities and needs. Before the 1994 Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia, no clear direction was available regarding special needs education. Yet, it was only in 2006 that the first special needs education strategy which promotes inclusive education was communicated only to be revised six years later, 2012. Furthermore, the strategy mentioned that the majority of children with impairments and learning difficulties are being served in an inclusive classroom setting, those few number of children with severe physical, autistic, intellectual, deaf-blind, etc. impairments, must also be served in special schools and/or special classes.

As stated in the Inclusive Education Strategies (2006, 2012), and their Implementation Manuals (2006, 2012), the main approach to special needs education in Ethiopia seems inclusive education. Yet, there are special schools or special boarding schools for students with impairments that serve these students for which reason this study dared to focus on. With respect

to this, there are some special schools or special boarding schools in Oromia Regional State Government that render services for students with special needs in special schools particularly for those who are blind. One of these is Sebeta Special School for the Blind.

### **1.3. Statement of the Problem**

There are contradictory ideas regarding the education of students with special needs in special schools. There have also been/are defendants and accusers or pros and cons of education in special schools (Tefera, Admas, and Mulatie, 2015). It has also been a common experience to observe that the many of those who have been/were in favor of special education in special schools were the service recipients themselves and educational experts, school directors and teachers. On the other hand, many of the available international and national literature were mainly found to be pro desegregation yet blamed the practices of inclusive education. These include (Dixon, 2005; Department for International Development [DFID], 2010; Tefera et.al, 2015 and MOE, 2012) which defined that at times when customized education has been a strong character of typical schooling, there is no purpose why prescribed provision has to take place in isolated organizations due to social and human right issues and economic aspects.

As outlined above, the social, economic and human right issues mainly revealed the trends towards desegregation as challengers of special education, although the advantages of special schools as highly armed with necessary supplies and required manpower was mentioned as not worthy and extravagancy which seems to be biased in favor of ending such schooling.

The Special Needs Education Strategy of Ethiopia (SNESE) mentioned that although the majority of children with impairments were being served in an inclusive classroom setting, those few number of children with severe intellectual, physical, autistic, deaf-blind, etc. impairments, would be served in special schools and/or special classes (MOE, 2012).

Among these was special schools or special boarding schools in Oromia Regional State Government that render services for students with special needs, in special schools particularly for those who are blind. One of these was Sebeta special School for the Blind. Thus, as desegregating a special school should not be the first alternative and it is the optional and final modality of education for students with impairments (UNESCO, 1995), research should be made to find out its contributions and challenges, which was the subject of this study.

#### **1.4. The General Objective of the Study**

The general objective of the study was thus to find out the contributions and challenges of Sebeta Special School for the Blind.

#### **1.5. Research Questions**

The following research questions were used to find answers for the research.

1. What were the contributions of the Special school?
2. What were the services being delivered in the special school?
3. What were the teaching materials available in the special school?
4. What were the challenges of Sebeta Special School?

#### **1.6. Conceptual Definition of Terms**

**Boarding Special School:** referred to schools organised according to students' impairment categories, such as schools for the blind or deaf children, for children with learning difficulties, behaviour problems, physical and multiple impairments, (Makewa, 2016) and (NCSE, 2014);

**Special Class:** referred to class room in a school for students with special needs in regular school (MOE, 2012);

**Special Education:** Education given for persons with special needs in special schools (MOE, 2012);

**Resource Centre:** a school in a cluster of schools which serves as resources for students with and without special needs in other nearby schools in the cluster of the schools (MOE, 2012);

**Resource room:** is a class room or class in school in which teaching aid or teaching support materials are furnished for use by students with special needs (MOE,2012);

**Best Practice:** referred to benefits the special schools contribute for students with special needs and the community.

**Challenges:** were the problems that encounter the special schools in the process of serving students.

### **1.7. Delimitations**

The delimitation of this research was that its findings; with regard to the contributions and challenges of the special school for the students with visual impairments, were delimited only to this specific special school of Sebeta for the Blind.

### **1.8. Limitations**

The limitations of this study were the weaknesses that are closely connected with the nature of the chosen research design; that is, qualitative case study, and the purposive sampling which could not be generalized to the population of study.

### **1.9. Significance of the Study**

It was believed that this study was made on the contributions and challenges of Sebeta Special School for the Blind in Oromia Region will help the policy makers, educational planners and experts at all levels for a relevant policy making regarding special schools. It was also believed that the study will serve other interested researchers as a spring board to make further study in the area so that solutions will be forwarded for the schools. It will make the school personnel as teachers, directors, non-governmental organizations and the community at large to focus and work on the challenges of the special school

### **1.10. Organization of the Study**

The study was organized into five chapters. The first chapter consisted of the general background for the research work. It mapped out the overall background, statement of the problem, basic research questions, objective of the study, and significance of the study, delimitation and limitation of the study. The second chapter was devoted to the review of related literature on contributions, services, the available teaching resources and challenges to the special school. The third chapter dealt with research methodology and procedures of the study whereas the fourth one presented analysis and interpretation of the data. Finally, the fifth chapter, provided summary, conclusions and recommendations to the study.

## **Chapter Two**

### **2. Literature Review**

#### **2.1. Boarding Special School**

A study made by Makewa (2016), defined boarding school as a school in which all or most of the pupils live during the part of the year or years that they go to schoolings. Accordingly, the word 'boarding' was used in the sense of "bed and board," i.e., housing and meals. Boarding (also known as residential) schools are schools where pupils stay within throughout the school time or week, sometimes during the weekend or holidays. Daad (2007) also added that boarding schools have lodging spaces and services for eating, studying and entertainment undertakings. Commonly there is lodging for supporting and/ or teaching staff as well.

On the other hand, according to the National Council for Special Education (NCSE, 2014), special schools are schools structured according to impairment classifications, such as schools for the blind or deaf children, for children with learning difficulties, physical impairments or behavioural problems and multiple impairments. Isolated education for children with special needs has resulted in insulated cultures and identities, and separation from their households and societies. 'Specialist' teachers are also disjointed into categories. They have extra trainings, or experience, of Braille, sign language, etc. Further separation occurs in universities, in government bodies, parents' associations and organisation for peoples with special needs.

As could be understood from both definitions given above separately for Boarding School, a school in which most or all of the students live during the whole or part of the year that they go to lesson and special schools, schools organised according to students' impairment categories, such as schools for the blind or deaf children, for children with learning difficulties or mentally challenged, physical impairments, behavioural problems and multiple impairments, there is no complete definition for special boarding school. Combining the aforementioned definitions; therefore, it was worth mentioning that special school could be defined as a school in which all or most of the students live during the whole or part of the year that they go to lesson being structured according to their impairment categories, such as schools for the deaf or blind children, for children with learning difficulties, physical challenges, behavioural problems and multiple impairments.

## **2.1. Contributions and Challenges**

Studies displayed that there were contributions of special boarding schools and/or special schools for students with special needs (Policy and Resource Guide of Ontario [PRGO] (2017). There were also challenges that encountered the special schools in the course of realizing the services these schools render (Public Defender of Georgia [PDG] (2015). Thus, as there were contributions and success stories of special schools on the hand and challenges encountered the special schools on the other hand, the literature review focused on these themes mentioned overhead.

There were contentious debates over the services and programs as well as the continuity of special schools among its opponents, proponents and others. There were those who support and justify the importance of special school to practice special education and narrate its contributions (Weicker, 2012). On the contrary, there were those who narrate its problems and forwarded their justifications for favoring end to special schools (Tefera and et.al, 2015). It was thus important to highlight the contributions and challenges of the special schools

### **2.1.1. Contributions of Special Schools**

According to Dixon (2005), for the last over forty-five years special education has been distinguishing itself, developing analytic procedures and pragmatic skills which have been intended to handle a large group of pupils with impairments. Therefore, individuals in the field own plenty of knowledge and skills which are very indispensable to those with mental, emotional and physical challenges as for those with different needs as the deaf or/and the blind. Associated to this body of knowledge and skills held by special educators, there is also the perception that special education in special schools affords further personalized emphasis for pupils with special needs. Teachers in these special schools are trained and thus own particular knowledge (Dixon, 2005; and DFID, 2010).

The aforementioned authors also suggested that pupils who had special needs have been getting services from a specialist, in a setting which is valuable to small specialist-customer relationships. Among such relations, one was much more likely to own a sense of belongingness and meaning other than being included into classrooms in which someone gain far fewer opportunities to have one's specific needs to be reached at. Besides, special schools possess particular devices and resources for rendering amenities for children with special needs.

Another issue that could be cited as best practice by supporters of special education or simply education in special schools, as mentioned by these authors; was that, students with special needs are not overstrained to catch up with typical pupils. It was stated that compelling students with special needs to associate with students who has so much more capacity to think, to learn and to make choices than the capacity they had is degenerative.

This meant that students with special needs should attend their education in special schools; otherwise, it would be troublesome for the students who could not go at the same pace in their education as those without special needs. It could mean that students with special needs would be marginalized in mainstream classes with typical pupils, if not taught in special schools or classes.

The other issue revealed was the disbursement of special schooling or education of students with special needs in special schools or classes as compared with the practical matters concerning the cost of integrating special needs students. As such, it was shown that sustaining a special education has been cheaper than partaking students with special needs into the regular classrooms (Dixon, 2005; DFID, 2010). Besides, Hocutt (1996) displayed that inclusion is not likely to result in to savings in the costs of education and instruction, no situation, is the key to realization of success as measured by students' results.

From the findings aforementioned, it was displayed that special schooling could cost less than inclusive education and/or mainstreaming education. Yet, what matters seems not more or less cost for special schools and vice versa for others as in mainstreaming, integration or inclusion, allocating appropriate budget for all settings to run the education of students in special schools and others is logically sound. Although implementing a cost effective method is rational to follow, any of the methods deployed should not violate or compromise the right to education of students with special needs based on the cost incurred.

According to (PRGO, 2017), roles of special education boards involved providing, or reaching an agreement with another board or boards to afford special education programs and services for its pupils with special needs; providing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for children identified with special needs; generating, retaining, and revising special education plans, and making reports on special education agendas and amenities as well as employing teachers with the proper trainings.

From this finding, one can deduce that there was a group in a special school that works to tackle problems or challenges the school encountered and contributed for improved service deliveries to

make their students achieve their potential. Here, the finding signifies the importance of a group of professionals as IEP team for working on students with different needs to complement the services necessary as per individual needs.

### **2.1.2. Success Stories in Special Schools**

According to a study made in Cary Grant School, Weicker (2011), pupils need to be unsuccessful in some way to be referred to special schooling and then deterrence continue from there till the right resolution that contributes for the students is found. In these special schools; professionals such as psychiatrists, clinicians, therapists, and psychologists were available that give essential amenities if a student needs support other than learning. Finally, it was found that the Cary Grant School has had many programs in place to affect pupils positively socially and educationally for these intellectually challenged students to deal with their own issues. Accordingly, the new Positive Behavioral System model has been extremely fruitful in this school to deal with emotional needs, but the school cannot did it alone. This meant that the school was pledging for the contribution of families or parents and the areal community in the tasks to be accomplished.

According to this research; Weicker (2011), inadequate of parental support and guidance was one of the major challenges the students confronted and should be present for the child with special needs to wholly benefit, educationally and socially, from these need based ranges of amenities to be given there. If all of the required provisions were done, the pupil would be able to return back to their nearby school locality and reintegrated into the social order with confidence educationally and socially. This could be counted as one of the success stories for special schools.

A research on the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf in Salt, Jordan, (UNESCO, 1991) showed that the organization has been augmented by its contribution in outreach effort as best practice. The outreach program has been a valuable practice for its whole staff, and has profited a large number of children with hearing impairments, and their families and the nearby communities. The purpose of the organization was that other organizations will be motivated and encouraged to develop outreach programs as all institutions have the opportunity to spread out their tasks outside their compound into their surrounding communities. They can support those groups better by becoming involved in Community Based Rehabilitation (Community Based Special Education) activities, working in collaboration with members of those communities who were

with and without special needs to reach many people who are still dispossessed of the chance to develop, to learn and to partake. The experiences of the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf in Salt, Jordan, could also explain a success story for its outreach program for its entire staff, children with hearing impairments and their caregivers or families as well as the communities.

A similar experience to that of the Community Based Special Education in Salt, Jordan was that of Guyana which was displayed in five regions of it as of 1990 to 1992 (UNESCO, 1991). The experiences encompassed the school and the recipient people for the community based rehabilitation or special education for the pupils with special needs. The Community Based Special Education in Salt, Jordan included vocational training of teachers, assistants the office and classrooms. As yet, the Organization had no qualified teachers with hearing impairments, which was a longer-term objective; the deaf people from among the staff have become the mediators of the homegrown deaf culture. As effective young deaf individuals, they were exemplary promising the deaf pupils and their parents and families by revealing that deaf people could do well. The organization's works involved the provision of wheelchairs and supports; aiding improve amenities for physically challenged people; creating special education units for children with learning problems.

Yet, both were community based special education rehabilitation or community outreach works stretched outside their compounds to help the adjoining community based on the needs of children that were sealed behind missing the chances of access to education. Thus, such institutions served as window of opportunities for children with impairments to get education and develop.

A study made by Australian Catholic University, Strathfield, in seven special schools in Sydney Region (Vallance, 2012), found out that they share common methods to occupational commitment and cooperative usefulness, that is, promise to their parts in these special schools. Likewise, the author displayed that combined teacher success or more simply in this review 'combined efficacy', is a more fresh study platform. Combined effectiveness was revealed in the study as the members' observations of their group's experience and/or accumulated ability to effectively complete a timetabled business. It was also revealed that some of these special schools were residential schools like the subject of this study.

Sebeta special school for the blind is also a residential/boarding special school which makes it synonym with this study and thus, the cases in these residential schools might have similarity

with the case in the special school under study in accomplishing their works and challenges they have come across and success stories they have accomplished; hence, relevant to this study as useful sources.

### **2.1.3. Challenges of Special Schools**

As there are several sources that display the contributions in special schools or special education, there are also sources; even the same ones that are disclosing its challenges which are the subject of discussion here. Following are some discussions of the challenges of Special Education in special schools.

As to Terry (2018), the most important condemnation of special schooling is that they sideline students with special needs. Students' impairments become the emphasis of their education; they have been placed in special schools or special classrooms because they have impairments such as autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, blindness, deafness, etc., rather than attending neighborhood schools for they are of school age. This could be counted as one of the difficulties of the education of students with special needs in special schools.

According to (Dixon, 2005; DFID, 2010 and Tefera et al., 2015) pupils with special needs were identified, categorized, and then put into one set of the amenities or others. These amenities take away pupils from the natural environs of childhood to secluded situations, where experts work on their bodies and brains, to the detriment of their hearts and souls. Interventions and treatments to support children reach their full potential, are provided and in due process, the children are tainted, reduced to the malfunctioning body parts and branded more by their labels or signs than their real names. When the thought is focused on pupils' impairments rather than whom they are as persons, the issue is usually on their discrepancies, not on their strengths.

A challenge of education in special schools/classes then, was that not only do the pupils with special needs lose out many of the activities of childhood practiced by typical children; typical students also miss what their colleague school children with impairments have to offer them. Not only did students with impairments render their individual strengths to students in regular classrooms, having miscellaneous students would better prepare all students for life in a dissimilar society (Dixon, 2005). Accordingly, students with and without special needs should attend classes together with typical students for better outcomes for all, thus, blaming special schools as unfriendly learning environment.

The author further added that taking a supporter of special schooling could also support for education in special schools placements, solitary lodging and others for persons with impairments; henceforth, keeping this aspect of the assorted nature of society out of sight. However, the miscellaneous nature of society is part of what it means to be human and the differences as well as commonalities revealed by all members of society should be respected. According to this configuration, special schooling is violating the magnificence of the landscape of diversity and hence against the natural diversity of peoples of different needs, of course including education in the setting.

The debate seems that students with and without special needs should attend classes together with typical students for better outcomes for all, and hence, once again blaming special schools as unpromising learning environs.

Though it has been disclosed that education in special schools is cheaper than integrating students into regular classrooms, Special Needs/ Inclusive Education Strategy (MOE,2012) of Ethiopia mentioned that inclusive education is more economical than the making of special schools all over the nation. Consequently, what has been displayed as benefit is shown as hindrance of special schools, here in terms of cost. Likewise, according to DFID (2010), the cost of providing education for children with special needs education was measured to be seven to nine folds higher when placed in special schools as opposed to providing for their needs in the mainstream education implying higher costs of special schools. As has been discussed overhead, whatever the setting of services for students with special needs might be, there should be enough budget that suffices the necessary costs incurred in due course.

According to a research report of the (PDG, 2015) on the Children's Rights in special schools, a number of imperative themes have been identified with respect to accommodations organized by the Orthodox Church of Georgia and the Muslim Confession. The research's report showed the importance of improving the safety of children as it was a responsibility of the government. Nevertheless, the quality of rendered care varies from one organisation to another as they were not measured by a unified childcare arrangement. This was in discordant with the benefits of a child and made the realization of fundamental rights and freedoms challenging, for example, the right to healthcare, protection against violence, education, etc. The fact that the beneficiaries of these boarding houses were not getting government care created shortcomings for the children with special needs too. Without state involvement, their status could not be determined and

proper medical amenities could not be realized. Likewise, without the cooperation with the Social Amenities Agency the issue of consolidating individual profiles of minors, as well as defining their educational needs was a challenge. With regard to the recipients of lodging houses organized by religious confessions, it is necessary to give the Guardianship and Care Body with the rights and accountabilities of their legal status, which is vital in the course of solving the concerns linked to teens. At the children's lodging houses organized by religious confessions, comparable to teen-agers dwelling in small family like houses, most of the recipients were subject to different kinds of violence, traumatized children in need of a special approach, consistent psychological rehabilitation, and in many cases, in need of psychiatric help. At the same time, full-fledged psychological amenities were not given to these recipients. Likewise, the caregivers were also found to be with no training of child care.

Thus, the challenges that encountered these boarding schools included such factors as not well serving the teens, rights violation, and failure to address individual needs and inadequate of trained care givers for the purpose. This situation might have similarity with the situations and services rendered for the students of Sebeta special school and could help to explain the contributions and challenges there.

Besides, as to Hegazy (2013), a study made on Omar Bin ALKhatab- Institute for the Blind, depicted remodelling this school for the blind and students with visual impairment in the Sultanate of Oman means to bring it to the then international standard which would make these students fully partake in the community and realize their full potential. Students with different impairments have different wants. Good and comprehensive design could offer the targeted school environment to overcome the students' learning problems. Designing a school for Special Educational Need (SEN) students need to be based on understanding the student's needs, parents' point of view, senior teachers' experiences, and decision making bodies. Accordingly, the key issues of the study included materials, accessibility, safety, colours, acoustics system, lighting, outdoor area, furniture, and the classroom environments. These signalled the challenges that encounter and the contributions a special school could have for serving students with needs.

## **Chapter Three**

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research Design**

Qualitative Case study method would be used in this research because this method is an approach to studying a social phenomenon through a thorough and in depth analysis of an individual case. The case may be a person, episode, group, process, community, society or any other unit of social life. Here, Sebeta Special School for the Blind is the targeted case. All data relevant to the case were collected and organized in terms of the case. It provides an opportunity for the intensive analysis of many specific details often overlooked by other methods. This approach rests on the view that the case being studied is representative of cases of certain type; so that, through intensive analysis; generalizations may be made that would be applicable to other cases of the same type(Ranjit, 1996; YIN, 2003 and Ranjit 2011).Therefore, qualitative case study was the most likely method preferred for this research.

#### **3.2. Description of the Study Area**

Sebeta Special School was established in 1952 with forty male students and ten male teachers. It is located in Sebeta Town Administration and is situated west of Addis Ababa. The study was conducted in this special School, which is found in Oromia regional state, in Sebeta Town Administration. The Town Administration of Sebeta is about 25 kilo meters from Addis Ababa. It is on the main road from Addis Ababa to Jimma. The school is located near the main road in the same compound with Sebeta Special Education Teachers College (Chawaka, 2018).

#### **3.3. Study Participants**

The study participants or population covered all peoples of the special boarding special school. This included all grades one to eight students (one hundred forty-nine males and one hundred one females, and a total of two hundred fifty) of Sebeta Special School for the Blind, the support staff (seventeen males and fifty four females, and a total of seventy one) and a director (one male) and a vice director (one female) and teachers (twelve males and twenty females, and a total of thirty two).

### **3.3. Sampling Technique**

The primary deliberation in purposive sampling is the judgment of the researcher as to who can provide the best evidence to achieve the objectives of the study. The researcher only goes to those individuals who in her/his experiences are likely to have the required information and be willing to share it. This type of sampling is very important when you want to construct or develop something about which a little is known (McMillan, 1996; Ranjit, 1996 and Ranjit, 2011). The researcher thus endeavoured to obtain samples that look to him/her to be informative of the population. In purposive sampling technique, the researcher selects certain individuals from the population that will be in-formative about the topic. Based on the researcher's knowledge of the population, a judgment is made about which cases would be selected to provide the best information to address the purpose of the research. For example, to study about a school, it might be most informative to interview key personnel, such as the principal and teachers who have been in the school for many years.

It has also been displayed that purposive sampling technique is a strategy in which specific settings, persons or events are carefully chosen on purpose in order to provide important evidence that cannot be obtained from other choices (Maxwell, 1996). It is where the investigator included cases or participants in the sample because they believed that they permit inclusion. As these scenarios seem to match best with the subject under this study, purposive sampling technique was preferred to other methods and thus was used in this study.

### **3.4. Sample Size**

The sample size were twelve students (six males and six females) from grade five to eight, ten support/administrative staff (five males and five females), twelve teachers (six females and six males), for the focus group discussions and a director and a vice director of the special school, a male teacher and a female teacher and a male student and a female student for interview questions.

The profile of the respondent students who were to participate in the focus group discussion ranged from grades five to eight as it could be judged that these group could respond to the questions forwarded as they were mature and had several experiences in the special school. As far as the support staff and teachers were concerned, having experience of at least two and above academic years in the special school was taken as criteria.

### **3.5. Ethical Considerations**

As to Hammersley and Traianou (2012), ethical issues would be kept as they might relate to research participants and the special school itself. With regard to research participants, the following areas could pose ethical issues if not dealt with properly: collecting information; seeking consent; providing incentives; seeking sensitive information; the possibility of causing harm to participants; and hence maintaining confidentiality would be imperative. It was important to examine these areas thoroughly for any unethical practice. With respect to the researcher, areas of ethical issues included the following: avoiding introducing bias; providing and depriving individuals of treatment; avoiding using unacceptable research methodology; inaccurate reporting; and the inappropriate use of information. Hence, ethical issues were adhered to as the main stay of this study. Data gathering was made after the approval of consent with the research participants and then being abided with ethical issues.

### **3.6. Data Collection Tools**

Focus group discussion guide, key informants' interview guide, and observation checklist were used as tools for data gathering. Besides the aforementioned tools of data gathering, the school's documents and students' portfolios analysis was made. Thus, the data sources used in this study included: people (teachers, director, and vice-director, students, and support staff/administrative) the observation of school's environment itself (buildings, class rooms, sports fields, settings, peoples etc.), support materials (sensorial materials, portfolios, and other documents) and events and happenings that occurred during observation.

#### **3.6.1. Focus Group Discussion**

Focus group discussion was one of the data collecting instruments used in this study. It was held with students' participants. The researcher used focus group discussion as the main tool of data collection). The researcher can shape the form of the focus group discussion based on the answer of the respondents to get relevant information. Based on the answer of the discussants, the researcher can shape the form of focus group discussion which were not prepared before (Ranjit, 1996). The researcher conducted data collection with three groups of twelve teachers, twelve students and ten support staff members.

### **3.6.2. Interview**

As to Ranjit (1996), the researcher can produce or prepare other interview questions which were not prepared before based on answer of the respondents. The researcher used interview as one of the supportive data collecting instruments for triangulating the data collected by the focus group discussion and other tools used in this study. This interview was made with both head and vice directors of the school, two teachers and two students. The interview questions were first prepared in English and then translated into Afan Oromo, the regional instructional media of education.

### **3.6.3. Observation**

According to (Best and Kahn, 2006), observation is the systematic process of recording the behavioral patterns of participants, objects and occurrences without necessarily questioning or communicating with them. It is everyday activity where we use our senses of seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting and as well as our intuition to gather bits of data.

In this study, observation was focused on observing services, resources, buildings, students' mobility and related issues including the school's environment.

### **3.7. Procedures of Data Collection**

The methods of data collection were observation of the services given for the students, the special school's documents and students' portfolios and interviews were made with a director and a vice director of the school and a male and female teachers as well as a male and a female students of the special school., and conduction of focus group discussion was made with twelve teachers (six females and six females), twelve students (six males and six females) from grade five to eight, and ten support staff (five males and five females).

Before data collection with all the participants, permission was obtained from the school directors and support staff administrator as well as finance officer. Afterwards, each respondent and discussants were asked for their permission for participating in providing their responses. Then focus group discussions were made with teachers in the director's office, with the support staff in the administration office and with students in the school's resource room each for about fifty minutes in May and June of 2020. The interviews with the director and vice director were made in their respective offices, with teachers in the resource room and with the students in the

open air under shadow in the school's compound in the aforesaid year and months. Likewise, observation and document analysis were made simultaneously with the focus group discussions and interviews

### **3.8. Data Analysis**

The method used in this research was thematic analysis. As Walliman (2011) said, thematic analysis is aimed at pulling out themes, structures, and dealings. The data to be analysed was gathered by data gathering tools such as semi- structured interviews, participant observation or other methods of data collecting such as focus group discussions. Therefore, thematic analysis was used in this research. Data sources in the form of texts and documents afford a great deal of data about a given society such as population of a school.

## **Chapter Four**

### **4. Presentation and Discussions**

#### **4.1. Respondents' Profile**

Regarding the students' profile or demographic information the students who were the respondents, they were found to be gender sensitive implying their equal participation in explaining the contributions they enjoyed and challenges they encountered. Likewise, looking at their age level from their characteristics could display that they are mature enough to have experienced both benefits or contributions and challenges in the special school. All the respondent students are also blind so that could feel the contributions and challenges.

Like the characteristics of the students, the gender composition of teachers showed that equality witnessed likely participation for males and females. They were also of old aged. This might display that they have been serving elsewhere and could not have the necessary experiences and skills as well as knowledge that might with which to serve the students with visual impairment in the special school. The teachers also had professional education of their subject matter, yet no skills like braille reading and writing but those without visual impairment. The teachers also have had enough services so that they could give experience based responses for the questions. Teachers with visual impairment could read and write braille but those without visual impairment could not read and write braille.

Furthermore, the characteristics of the students and those of teachers and directors, the gender composition of the support staff also showed that equality witnessed likely participation for males and females. However, unlike those of teachers and school's directors, they were of young age. This might display that they had not serving elsewhere and could not have the necessary experiences and skills as well as knowledge that might match the services the students with visual impairment in the special school need. The support or administrative staff also had no training that might help them serve the students. The support staff like the teachers also has had enough services so that they could give experience based responses for the questions.

Regarding the respondents' profiles, there were sixteen teachers with fifteen of them degree holders and a diploma male teacher all of whose services in the special school have been for more than two years. Besides, all the support staff whose educational statuses were six degrees and four female support staff members who were diploma holders. Additionally, there were

fourteen students who participated in the study and who have been living in the special school at least for the last five years. Moreover, all the respondent students were from grades five to eight. In detail, two of them were from grade five, two from grade six, six of them grade seven and the remaining four from grade eight(See Annex III).

**Summary of the respondents' profile was displayed as follows:**

No	Respondents'	Profile
1	Ten support/ administrative staff (five males and five females), for focus group discussion	Six degrees and four diplomas, have served within the school for more than two years.
2	Twelve teachers (six males and six females), for the focus group discussion.	Eleven degree and one diploma who have been serving for more than two years in the school.
3	Twelve students (six males and six females) from grade five to eight, for focus group discussion.	Two from grade five, two from grade six, four from grade seven and four from grade eight, all lived within the school at least for five years.
4	A director and a vice director of the special school, for interview.	Both degree and have served more than two years in the school (Participants 1 and 2 respectively).
5	A male teacher and a female teacher for interview.	Both degree, and have served more than two years in the school (Participants 3 and 4 respectively).
6	A male student and a female student for interviews.	Both grade seven, all lived within the school at least for five years (Participants 5 and 6

## **4.2. Results**

### **4.2.1. The Contributions of the Special School for the Students**

There were contributions that had been practiced in the special school of Sebeta. For questions and discussions made with respect to ‘What contributions has the special school made for you?’ the respondents provided their responses and comments. According to the respondent, the best practice this special school has had for the students had been that if it were not for the presence of the school as special school, these students were not brought to this place for getting such chance of getting education. The respondent displayed that the students with visual impairment that have joined and attending their education in the school could not have joined any other school that might manage their expenses and made them attend their education (Participant 1). Besides, the respondent mentioned that students are very eager to get the services from a team of foreign origin medical experts that come to the school for reconsidering their sight recovery by the services the experts render. On the other hand, the statuses of the blindness of the students was already approved and certified by three doctors in a hospital in Ethiopia, as observed from the individual files of students from documents. The hospitals included Minilik II Hospital, Sat. Paul’s Hospital, Adama Referral Hospital, Carl Hospital, etc. present in all the files of students. Additionally, there were health professionals that serve the students are there to serve as first aid, public health issues and referral services (Participants 1&2). As to the treatment results of the medical services by medical experts of foreign origin, the reply was that “I think a few of the students can mildly see. But could not learn visually as a result of the treatment.” There are some services such as medical diagnosis by foreigners that led to operations for sight recovery of a few students. This helped only a few students for ease of mobility (Participant 2).

With regard to the special educational skills the special school owns, all the participants and all focus group discussions revealed that there were no any special skills the school’s teachers and experts have had and professional services the special school has been rendering for the students. Even though there are no special skill that the school’s personnel have, teachers with visual impairment could help the students read and write braille. Other teachers could not use braille and help the students. No any other special professional is found for this based on the students’ needs but weaving and music arts are in place for this purpose. If these students were not brought to this special school for the blind, they could not join any other school that might manage their

expenses and make them attend their education. “We get our education, living as home and feeding place like our family house. Schooling here is the big chance for us, we take as benefit or contribution. I think students with visual impairment like us would not get education had it not been for this school” (Participant 6). Results of the focus group discussion of teachers showed that the school does contribute for the most marginalized section of the society, students with visual impairment, whose chance to education would not have been unimagined without the roles taken by this school by giving them the chance to get education like their peers with vision who get chance to education being in their home. The focus group discussion added that the contributions of the school for the students is taking the roles of home, family and school. Similarly, focus group discussion from the support staff also displayed that the contributions of the school for the students were serving as home, family and school. Accordingly, it would have been impossible that the students with visual impairment could not have attended and succeed in their education had it not been for the contributions of the school Likewise, results of the focus group discussion of students showed the contributions of the school for the students is serving as home, family and school. The group added that it would have been unimaginable for them to get education with the absence of this school.

#### **4.2.2. The Services Being Delivered in the Special School**

There were services that the special school deliver for the students with visual impairment. For questions and discussions related to the services being delivered, 'What services were being provided in the school?' the respondents and discussions made forwarded the responses and comments. According to the respondents, health professionals are there to serve as first aid workers, public health issues and referral services. There were also some medical services that were being made by from foreign based health professional supporters to check if the students could be operated and restore their sight (Participant 1). The other participants also witnessed that there are some services such as medical diagnosis by foreigners that led to eye operations for sight recovery (Participants 2, 3 &4). The focus group discussion findings from the support staff, teachers and students also indicated the annual arrival of a medical team for eye treatments. But, there are no guidance and counseling professionals in the school (Participant 4).

Educationally, according to (Participant 2), the professions the teachers in the school have are music, an itinerant teacher or special needs education and social sciences, mathematics and

language. There are also slates and styles, white canes provided for us by the school. There are also artisans like weavers and wood workers. No any other profession was there as teacher other than these professions. The school has no guidance and counseling professional in the school (Participant 3). No any other special professional is found for this based on the students' needs except weaving and music arts are in place for this purpose. Moreover, there were no Individual Education Plan team in the special school. Yet, the roles played by wood works and weaving experts were functionally null (Participant 4).

Regarding food and lodging, the respondents disclosed that they get food and clothing from the school (Participant 5). The school served them to render their education, living as home and feeding place like family houses. The female students of grade seven and eight were living outside this school by renting houses in the community. This was a big challenge for them as the money they were paid was only four hundred Birr which was not enough for all the necessary expenses. But now, they get housing services, food and uniform clothing from the school. The focus group discussion also displayed that as a boarding school, our students are using dormitory and feeding services. For this, there are caregivers that render the students with sanitation services. The focus group discussions from teachers, support staff and students showed that there are also school uniform supplies for all the students once in a year. There are no special services that we provide our students. As boarding school, our students are using dormitory and feeding services. For this there are caregivers that give the students with sanitation services. We get sanitation services, medical services, food and uniforms. The caregivers also wash the clothes for the students (Participants 6).

#### **4.2.3. The Teaching Resources Available to Address the Needs of the Students**

The special school had resources that could be used by students of the special school. For Questions and discussions related to 'What teaching materials are available?' the respondents forwarded their comments and responses. According to respondents, observation results and available documents, there are different support books in the library, there are also computers loaded with JAWS, audio videos with accessories like headphones. Besides, the other participant also responded that there are different support books in the library, there are computers loaded with JAWS, audio videos and headphones. The available books are non-braille ones, in hardcopy format that could not serve the students (Participant 6). The focus group discussion results also

found that computers loaded with JAWS, audio videos and headphones among the available resources. There was also embosser machine, Montessori materials, audiometric and picks and others. Additionally, there are some slates and styles made available for the students though not suffice for the beneficiaries as all the focus group discussion results indicated.

#### **4.2.4. The Challenges of Sebeta Special School**

There were challenges that encountered the special school. For questions and discussions related to ‘What challenges have encountered you in the school?’ there were responses forwarded by respondents and discussants. These included assaults made by some teachers and students on the students. There are also sexual practices are very common in the special school. There are also mobility problems in the school compound. Additionally, as the compound is use by Sebeta College of Teacher education, collisions with college of teacher education students and these students are common as they are using one entrance and exit outdoor and use the same road from and to the school and the college. There are also occasional thefts on the learning materials of the students with visual impairment (Participant 1). There were also negative practices that are committed by teachers, students of the special school and other students with visual impairment that come to the school. The school community such as the students, support workers, school management and other stakeholders such Children’s and Women’s Affairs and teachers of the school has been conducting awareness creation discussions on negative practices in general and on those that are being experienced in the school in particular as insults and sexual practices among the students. HIV cases from among the students are also made to take ART drugs and condom use is openly discussed as an option to control disease transmission and protect pregnancy (Participant 1&2).

The respondents mentioned that if these students were not brought to this special boarding school, they could not join any other school that might manage their expenses and make them attend their education. On the other hand, it was disclosed that students of this school are suspicious about other people other than their friends in the school and take others as if they are against them and have troubled relations with people outside the school (Participants 2&3).

The other challenges displayed were that students were exposed to tensions for reconsidering their sight recovery. But there was no successful total recover as far as the respondent knew;

there were a few with partial sight restoration. There has been no clear communication between these service providers and the school staff (Participant 4). Further challenges were that there are students that do not have family. These students have no clothes and shoes to wear other than the school uniforms provided by the school. There are also teachers who could not help them because they cannot use braille in reading and writing (Participant 5). Further problems were that there were students who did not have white cane, braille paper and braille text books. Housing facilities are not okay; shower rooms need maintenance and inadequate water (Participant 5).

The other challenges were the issue of female students, who were living outside the main school, in a new building constructed by foreign support for female students of grade seven and eight. Yet, this building has no necessary and support buildings such as feeding hall and they use these in the main school. It has become a challenge for them to move to and from the main school early in the morning and evening for daily use of the necessary supplies. The female students also mentioned that they do not have white cane, braille paper and braille text books. There are also friends of them who do not have these materials (Participant 6). The students do not have braille textbooks, all of them from grades one to eight. Housing facilities are not okay, shower rooms need maintenance and inadequate water. There is no enough computers and computer rooms in the school, to use. There are no students that could read textbooks for us (Participant 6). The respondent added that what the students need were all the services to be here in the separate living house for the female students of grade seven and eight or we have to live in the main school with other students of the school.

All focus group discussion results and participant responses displayed that manpower assignment for the special school was one the challenges that encountered the school. There is problem in assignment of manpower, particularly, teachers. This is not based on the need of the school. For example, too many teachers in Afan Oromo and no in civic and ethical education teacher. No guidance and counseling expert and management is assigned in place of psychology. Some of the assigned caregivers are too young, twenty years of old that have no sense of motherhood. The other problems of the school are inadequate of budget and manpower. This is mainly due to the return of students to dormitory life from living by renting houses outside the school in the town. The relationship between students of Sebeta College of Teacher Education and the students in

the Special School are not good. There are disagreements on some resources as the school was the prosperity of the special school. The College was established in the Special School.

All focus group discussion results revealed that there are service provisions with gaps or limitations such as failure to supply braille textbooks, housing facilities as water and shower are poor; and others as medical supplies. The music rooms are with no enough musical instruments but only some pianos. The weaving and other handcraft works are not properly functioning. The braille printing machine has run out of use. There is no pre-braille program for beginners. Mobility and orientation programs are not well defined and has no known program. There is embosser machine but not functioning. There is no any sort of training for the caregivers. They are simply assigned as caregivers based on the experiences they have in the school. There is inadequate of support to the school from the town education office and the Regional Education Bureau on different issues as manpower assignments, as there are wrong placements that are not based on the school's needs. For example, a graduate of management is assigned in place of a psychologist, yet, the school had no guidance and counseling expert. Teachers that are assigned in to the school could not read and write braille by themselves, let alone helping the students in this respect. As a result of this, there are students that complete from the special school but could not read and write braille. These are simply auditory learners. There are also students who stayed for many years in the school but still below grade four. Thus, school repetition could be mentioned as challenges to the school.

There are several challenges that encounter this school. The serious ones include inadequate of budget and manpower. This is mainly due to the return of students to dormitory life from living by renting houses outside the school in the town. There are also additional challenges such as inadequate of educational materials like braille paper, slate and styles and student seats. There are no updated student textbooks for all grade levels. The relationship between students of Sebeta College of Teacher Education and the students in the Special School are not good. There are disagreements on some resources as the school was the prosperity of the special school. There was also inadequate of coordination among teachers as well as the school community for common planning to achieve desired results as focus group discussion results from teachers and support staff disclosed. The school management team is requesting budget from partner

organizations like the town's administration and requesting Oromia Education Bureau to reconsider budget as it is directly allotted from here.

There are challenges such as inadequate of educational materials like braille paper, slate and styles, and students' textbooks transcribed into braille writing for all grade levels. There were students that move without white cane as they mentioned its inadequate. There are also not enough seats in the classroom and the available ones are old and not suitable for the students to use. Many teachers in our school could not read and write braille. They could not help us in using slate and styles, so cannot read and correct the students' writings, exercise and any way they write. The other problem the students have is there are students that do not have family. These students have no clothes and shoes to wear other than the school uniform provided once in a year by the school. We ask anyone if they could provide clothing and shoes for such students as group discussions from students depicted.

#### **4.2.5. Findings from Documents**

Findings from documents showed that students' placement to this special school criteria included people whose visual impairment has been approved by three doctors from a hospital, ages from seven to twelve, who has caregiver or parent, can join the school with shoes and blanket. Besides, there are hospital approval signed by three doctors that declares the undersigned student is blind. Additionally, there were no handicrafts in the school's timetable allotment. Furthermore, the school library including bookstore had no contemporary or student textbooks currently in use and printed in braille. According to a good practice document from the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2017) found in the special school, it was displayed that an itinerant teacher was assigned to the special school to serve students with visual impairment and to serve other satellite schools within its reach outside its door.

### **4.3. Discussion**

#### **4.3.1. The Contributions of the Special School for the Students**

Though the Special school was operating under scarcity, it has made several contributions that could be best practice for its students in the education. If these students were not brought to this special school for the blind, they could not have joined any other school that might cover their

expenses and made them attend their education. Thus, it has been serving the students with visual impairment as home, family, school for learning in and succeeds. According to (PRGO, 2017), roles of special education boards involved providing, or reaching an agreement with another board or boards to afford special education programs and services for its pupils with special needs; providing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for children identified with special needs; generating, retaining, and revising special education plans, and making reports on special education agendas and amenities as well as employing teachers with the proper trainings. the good practice document from the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2017) found in the special school, it was displayed that an itinerant teacher was assigned to the special school to serve students with visual impairment and to serve other satellite schools within its reach outside its door. This could one of the contributions the special school has implemented and was found to be in conformity with this study.

#### **4.3.2. The Services Being Delivered in the Special School**

The findings from interviews, focus group discussions and observation checklists disclosed that the services the special school rendered the students with visual impairment included some medical provisions that have been made by foreign based health professional supporters to check if the students could get eye operation to restore their sight. There were some services such as medical diagnosis that led them to operations which resulted in partial sight recovery for a few students. On the other hand as there were benefits to their sight recovery, the students have been exposed to tensions for reconsidering their sight recovery. But there was no anyone with known successful total remedy as far as the respondents and the school's documentation revealed, there were a few with partial sight restoration. Compatible with this findings of this study were the research findings like (Dixon, 2005; DFID, 2010 and Tefera et al., 2015) that disclosed children with special needs are identified, labeled, and then put into one set of services or another. These services remove students from the natural environments of childhood to isolated settings, where experts work on their bodies to correct them, the act which dehumanizes the service receivers. Besides, the female students of the special school under study were living outside the main school, in a new building constructed by foreign support for female students of grade seven and eight. Yet, this building has no necessary facilities such as library, feeding hall in its vicinity as the female students use this in the main school as well as the required safety when they move

from the new building to the main special school for need of the facilities. They responded that it had become a challenge for them to move to and from the main school early in the morning and evening for daily use of the necessary supplies. There were students who did not have white cane, braille paper and braille textbooks. There were also friends of this respondent who did not have these materials. With regard to boarding schools, Daad (2007) said that boarding schools have dormitory accommodations and facilities for eating, studying and recreational activities, unlike the inadequate facilities in Sebeta Special Boarding school. This finding did not mention about inadequate of services or supplies like Sebeta special school. There was also accommodation for supporting and/ or teaching staff as well as Daad (2007) displayed regarding boarding schools. Here, Sebeta Special School also had residential buildings for some staff for immediate service delivery.

The services the students get included sanitation services, medical services, rendering food and uniforms supplies. The caregivers wash the clothes of the students and serve in providing them meal. There were also slates and styles, white canes provided by the school, although there were many students that did not have white canes. There have been medical referral services when students get illness. Formerly, before 2012 E.C. the female students of grades seven and eight were living outside this school by renting houses in the community. This was a big challenge for them as the money they were paid was only four hundred Birr which is not enough for all the necessary expenses. But now, the students get housing services, food and uniform clothing from the school, yet remained a challenge for the cost did not afford the necessary expenses for feeding the students.

Here, the findings showed that the Special school has been operating under scarcity of facilities and budget. The service provisions gaps or limitations has included issues like failure to supply braille textbooks, housing facilities as water and shower are poor; and others as medical supplies. The music rooms were with no enough musical instruments but only some pianos. The weaving and other handworks are not properly functioning. The braille printing machine has run out of use. There was no pre-braille program for beginner students. Mobility and orientation programs were not well defined and have had no known program. There was embosser machine but not functioning. The service provision gaps were that as there was no enough budgets, the school has had limitations in all the services it provided for the students. These findings from focal group

discussions, interviews, observations and documents revealed that the school has been operating below capacity as well as in using the already available resources such as embosser machine and braille printing machine that did not function. However, research findings made by Australian Catholic University, Strathfield, in seven special schools in Sydney Region (Vallance, 2012) found out that they share common methods to occupational commitment and collective efficacy, that is, commitment to their roles in these special schools. This is not in line with the findings in Sebeta Special School for students with the visual impairment.

#### **4.3.3. The Available Teaching Resources**

The special school had several resources for the students to learn with or get training. These included handcraft rooms with the necessary facilities, wood work rooms with important tools food wood working, weaving apparatuses and music hall with stages and pianos for the students to entertain themselves and learn as well. Although inadequate, there were learning materials like slate and styles, and white canes. Besides, there were resources like braille printing machine, embosser machine, computers loaded with JAWS, audio-videos and headphones are available in computer classes. The special school's resources like braille printing machines was used for printing braille materials. The braille printing machine has been used for printing braille materials for use by the special school students and even for dispatching braille print materials to some East African countries like Kenya and Rwanda. Yet, it has ceased functioning and its doors were closed. The embosser machine was new and brought to the school some six years ago and has never been in use, even its presence was known and was found in the storehouse of the special school.

The available resource room was filled with different learning facilities as full package montessori materials in the special school. The montessori materials include Practical life materials, Mathematical Materials, Sensorial act materials, Geographic materials and Language materials. These materials are adapted to local context and manufactured locally. Besides, there were many resources for use by students with visual impairment. This was in conformity with the finding of the Community Based Special Education of Guyana which was displayed in its five regions as of 1990 to 1992 (UNESCO, 1991). As the school had no qualified teachers with hearing impairments, the deaf people from among the staff have become the mediators of the homegrown deaf culture. As effective young deaf individuals, they were exemplary promising

the deaf pupils and their parents and families by revealing that deaf people could do well. The organization's works involved the provision of wheelchairs and supports; aiding improve amenities for physically challenged people; creating special education units for children with learning problems. Therefore, the special school of Sebeta like that of Guyana had resources indispensable for supporting students with visual impairment.

#### **4.3.4. The Challenges of Sebeta Special School**

According to focus group discussion, interview and document analysis, the human power assigned in the Special school of Sebeta for students with visual impairment has been made without considering the needs of the students. There were teachers with professions taught as subjects in the primary school like English, Amharic, Afan Oromo, Social Studies, Natural Sciences and Mathematics. There were also two special needs education professionals and a music teacher. Besides, there were health professionals, a nurse and public health professional with first degree. Weaving and handcraft workers were there as trainers for the students. Yet, the working rooms or workshops for handcrafting and weaving are not functional as observation and interview results witness. Moreover, the manpower assignment made to this school by the concerned body is mainly not need based. For example, assigning too many teachers in Afan Oromo subject, and assigning none in Civic and Ethical Education subject. No guidance and counseling expert whereas a management graduate has been assigned in place of psychology. Some of the assigned caregivers are too young, twenty years of age that have no sense of motherhood. Contrary to the case in Sebeta Special school for the Visually Impaired students, the findings displayed by Dixon (2005) and DFID (2010), said that for the past over forty-five years special education has been differentiating itself, developing analytical performances and practical skills which have been intended to handle a large group of pupils with impairments. Therefore, people in the professional work should possess much knowledge and skills to give individualize attention which are very essential to those with mental, emotional and physical challenges as for others with different needs as the deaf or/and the blind. Therefore, it was found that the school under study found to be in discordant in this respect as manpower placement in not need based inadequate skills necessary to address the special needs of the students.

Regarding the unwelcoming practices, findings from respondents showed that there were unnecessary practices as insults and intimidations that have happened in the special school made

by some teachers and students on the students. Sexual practices were also very common in the special school. As the compound has been in use by Sebeta College of Teacher education, collisions with college of teacher education students and the students of the special school have been common as they were using one entrance and exit outdoor and use the same road from and to the school and the college. This created uneasy mobility for the students in the school compound. There were also occasional thefts on the learning materials of the visually impaired students. The negative practices such as insults and intimidation are committed by some teachers focusing on particular students. Even, they intend to dismiss the students from the school. Students of the special school and other blind students that come to the school also commit negative practices. Supervision, monitoring and control by the school management could not halt but only minimize such acts/ the negative practices.

A research report made by Public Defender of Georgia (2015) on the Children's Rights in special schools, was found to be in conformity with the case of the unnecessary or negative practices found in Sebeta Special school in that at the children's boarding houses run by religious confessions to teens living in small family type houses, a majority of the beneficiaries are victims of various types of violence and were traumatized children in need of a special approach, consistent psychological rehabilitation, and in a number of cases, in need of psychiatric help. At the same time, full-fledged psychological services were not provided to these beneficiaries. A similar violence and not having even a psychologist in the school made the case in Sebeta Special School similar with the findings of the Public Defender of Georgia. Therefore, they students here too inadequate special support programs that serve them for psychological rehabilitations in case of violent situation that might disrupt the comfort and education of the students.

## **Chapter Five**

### **5. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations**

This chapter is concerned with the summary, conclusions and recommendations made to the study consecutively.

#### **5.1. Summary**

The purpose of this study was to find out the contributions and challenges of Sebeta Special School for the Blind for students with visual impairment. Qualitative case study method and purposive sampling technique was employed in the study. To respond to this purpose, semi-structured interviews were made with a director and a vice director of the school and a male and female teachers as well as a male and a female students of the special school. Besides, focus group discussions were conducted with twelve teachers(six males and six females), ten support staff members( five males and five females) and twelve students from grade five to grade eight (six males and six females). The data were coded, organized, and thematically analyzed. Besides, document analysis and observation checklists were completed, thematic analysis was used and the results were displayed.

To achieve the objective of the study, the following basic questions were raised. The basic questions were:

- What were the contributions of the Special school?
- What were the services being delivered in the special school?
- What were the teaching materials available in the special school?
- What were the challenges of Sebeta Special School?

The data analysis and interpretation displayed the following main findings.

#### **Contributions:**

- The Special School was operating under scarcity as there was inadequate of budget. Yet, it has made several exemplary practice for its students in education. If these students were not brought to this special school for the blind, they could not have joined any other school that might cover their expenses and made them attend their education. Thus, it has been serving the students with visual impairment as home, family, school for learning in and succeeds.

- Although there was absence of learning materials like student textbooks written in braille, and inadequate of learning materials like slate and styles, and white canes, there were resources like braille printing and embosser machines, weaving and woodwork facilities, music facilities, computers loaded with JAWS, audio-videos and headphones are available in computer classes.
- The available resource room was filled with different learning facilities such as full package montessori materials in the special boarding school.

**Challenges:**

Regarding the challenges faced Sebeta Special Boarding School, findings from focus group discussions; interviews and document analysis displayed that:

- Human power assignment such teachers and other personnel were not made as per the need of the school. Besides, there were inadequate of the necessary skills to address the special needs of the students such as braille reading and writing.
- Service delivery facilities such as weaving and handcrafts did not function well, braille printing machine and pre-braille service was paused, and the new embosser machine was locked in storehouse and did not function.
- There were no student textbooks written in braille in all the grade levels from grades one to grade eight in all the subject matters taught at this level. Besides, there were inadequate learning materials like slate and styles and braille paper, and white cane. There were service provisions gaps or limitations that included issues like failure to supply housing facilities as water and shower; particularly, for female students who lived outside the school compound in the school's new compound and others as medical supplies.
- Students of the special school for the visually impaired were exposed to unnecessary practices. These included insults and intimidations that have happened in the special school made by some teachers and some students on the students. Sexual practices are also very common in the special school among the students.
- The school has been a meeting place for community outside the special school such as former adult students of the school and other people with visual impairment, students of the college of teacher education, which have created uneasy mobility for students of the school.

- Besides, students of the special school has encountered the problem of being suspicious about other people outside the school but their friends in the school and thought as if others were against them.

## **5.2. Conclusions**

The general objective of this study was to find out the contributions and challenges of Sebeta Special School for the Blind. The basic questions to respond to this objective were what contributions, services, teaching materials were found and what challenges encountered the school. Based on the thematic analysis and interpretations, conclusions were made for the study. Accordingly, as its contributions Sebeta special school for the blind was performing outreach programs for some nearby satellite schools, had important teaching resources like braille printing and embosser machines as well as full montessori package, music stage and pianos, weaving facilities, handcrafts and woodwork rooms and computers with Jaws as well as some medical services. Besides, it had the special school had been serving its students as home to live in, family to live with and school to learn in to succeed. On the other hand, there were challenges to the special school that could obstruct the contributions. These included inadequate budget to run its activities, and shortage some resources like slate and styles, and braille for students, assignment of manpower without the necessary skills, practices such intimidation and sexual activities among the students as well as less socialization of the students with people with vision. There were no braille textbooks in all the subjects for all students. Furthermore, handcrafts and weaving rooms, braille printing and embosser machines did not function. Likewise pre-braille services were paused and Individual Education Programs and team was not available. Besides, many peoples' crowding in the school created uneasy mobility on the students. There were also inadequate housing facilities, particularly for female students living in the school's new buildings outside its compound.

## **5.3. Recommendations**

The purpose of this study was to find out the contributions and challenges of Sebeta Special School for the Blind. Based on the data analysis and interpretations that tagged along, the following recommendations were made for the study. Accordingly:

- The assignments of manpower to the special school were not found to be need based. Besides, the assigned manpower lacked the necessary skills to address students' needs in the special school such as braille reading and writing. Therefore, it would be imperative that manpower assignment should be need based and should have the necessary training
- The available handcrafts and weaving rooms and tools should be functional and has had regular timetable in the school's program. Additionally, braille printing and embosser machines should be operational and serve in producing braille print teaching and learning materials. Likewise, the paused pre-braille service program should be revitalized.
- As student textbooks transcribed into braille were not present for all grade levels from grades one to eight in all subjects taught at these levels; inadequate of learning materials such as slate and styles and braille paper, as well as white cane for the students; service provisions gaps or limitations that included issues like failure to supply housing facilities as water and shower; and others as medical supplies; concerned bodies as the school's management team, Sebeta Town Education Office, Oromia Education Bureau and other stakeholders should work on alleviating these hurdles.
- There were insults and intimidation, sexual practices among students, unreasonable people's gathering in the special school's compound, particularly previous students of the school that became discomfort in cases as hampering the stress-free mobility of the students. Therefore, the school directors, teachers, supporting staff and students should discuss on safety issues of the school community in general and strict school discipline should be in place.
- As students of the special school has encountered the problem of being suspicious about other people except their friends in the school and thought that others were not believable them, socialization programs and psychosocial consultation should be made by team of experts.
- The students who had /have been attending their education here could not have joined any other school that might cover their expenses and made them attend their education and has been serving the students with visual impairment as home, family, school for learning in and succeed. Therefore, concerned bodies should consider the continuity of the special school and halt the rumors that it would become inclusive school, abandoning being special school.
- The special school had many resources like braille printing and embossing machines that could help in printing braille materials. It also had several resources like montessori materials

and other educational resources like computers with loaded with JAWS, audio-videos and accessories like headphones and others. It was also displayed that the special school had resource room filled with educational materials. Therefore, it would be important that the special school makes maximum use of the available resources and aspire for more for benefiting the students and the community at large.

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Annex I

**A. Interview Guide Questions for Teachers, Director and Vice Director**

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Educational Status \_\_\_\_\_

Experience in the School \_\_\_\_\_

1. What professions do these teachers have to serve the students in the school?
2. What special professions do these teachers have?
3. What professions do your teachers have for your school is special school as per your students' needs?
4. What other professionals other than teachers are there who serve the students as per their professions? What services do they deliver for the students?
5. What negative practices are there on your students for they are blind/visually impaired?
6. If there are negative practices that have happened on the students, who are the perpetrators or the responsible persons for committing such acts?
7. How can you eliminate or reduce these negative practices from causing hurt to the students?
8. For your students are blind:
  - 8.1. What services are made for the students?
  - 8.2. What contributions do the services have on the students/ the school?
  - 8.3. What challenges do these services have on the students/ the school?
9. What professions do the service providers have?
10. What benefits gained and challenges do your students encountered for their learning in the special school with no presence of non-blind/students?

**B. Focus group discussion questions for groups of teachers, directors and support staff separately.**

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Educational Status \_\_\_\_\_ Experience in the School \_\_\_\_\_

1. Please give any comments you have about the school.

2. What related trainings do the caregivers have?
3. What materials are available for the students of the school?
4. What service provision gaps are there in the school?
5. What contributions does the special school have for the students?
6. What services are being provided for the students of the school and others?
7. How can these challenges be eliminated or reduced?
8. What challenges have encountered your school?

**C. Focus group discussion guide questions and interview questions for students.**

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

1. What challenges have encountered you in the school?
2. What services are being provided for you in the school?
3. What contributions has the special school made for you?
4. What service provision gaps are there in the school?
5. What materials are available for as students of the school?
6. Please give any comments you have about the school.

**D. Observation checklist**

No	Observed	Observation Results
1.	Clinic	
2.	School auditorium	
3.	School Cafeteria	
4.	Classes and Admin Building	
5.	Handcraft room	
6.	Dorms	
7.	New Female Dormitory	
8.	Store rooms	
9.	Gymnasium	
10.	Library	
11.	Music room	
12.	Resource room	
13.	Braille Room	
14.	Latrine rooms	
15.	Sport field	
16.	The School's Location	
17.	The Special School compound	

## Annex II:

Table showing number of students, teachers and support staff in Sebeta Special School

No	Students in Sebeta Special Boarding School			
	Grade Level	Gender		
		Male	Female	Total
1	Grade 1	14	18	32
2	Grade 2	21	16	37
3	Grade 3	19	9	28
4	Grade 4	8	12	20
5	Grade 5	31	13	44
6	Grade 6	19	5	24
7	Grade 7	22	20	42
8	Grade 8	15	8	23
9	Total	149	101	250
Teachers and Supporting Staff in Sebeta Special Boarding School				
No	Teachers & Support staff	Gender		
		Male	Female	Total
1	Teachers	12	20	32
2	Secretary		2	2
3	Directors	1	1	2
4	Counselor	1		1
5	Liberian		2	2
6	Health Workers		2	2
7	ICT Worker		1	1
8	Braille Expert	1		1
9	Human Resource Management		2	2
10	Recorder		1	1
11	Tailor	1	2	3
12	Music Expert	1		1
13	Weavers	2		2
14	Cleaners		4	4
15	Gardener	1		1
16	Maintenance Workers	3		3
17	Care Givers		11	11
18	Cookers		5	5
19	Bakers		4	4
20	Feeders		5	5
21	Washers	2	4	6
22	Guards	4	1	5
23	Logistics and Financing	1	8	9
24	Directors and Support Staff	18	55	73
25	Total	30	70	100

### Annex III (a): Demographic Information of Respondent Students

<b>No</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Remark</b>
1	Sex	7	7	14	Gender Equality is kept
2	Age (in Years)				
	10-14	1	2	3	
	15-18	4	4	8	The students are mature enough
	>18	2	1	3	
	Total	7	7	14	
3	Grade				
	5	1	1	2	
	6	1	1	2	Have lived minimum of four years
	7	3	3	6	
	8	2	2	4	
	Total	7	7	14	
4	Impairment				
	Blind	7	7	14	Blind to feel the challenges
	Partial	-	-	-	
	Total	7	7	14	

**Annex III (b): Demographic Information of Respondent Teachers and the School's Directors**

<b>No</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Remark</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Sex</b>	8	8	16	Gender Equality is kept
<b>2</b>	<b>Age (in Years)</b>				
	20-25	-	-	-	
	26-30	2	1	3	
	>30	6	7	13	The teacher are aged enough.
	Total	8	8	16	
<b>3</b>	<b>Education Level</b>				
	Special Training				
	Diploma	1	-	1	
	BA/BSc.	7	8	15	BA/BSc dominant
	MA	-	-	'	
	Total	8	8	16	
<b>4</b>	<b>Impairment</b>				
	Blind	1	1	2	Can read and write braille
	Partial	1	-	1	Can read and write braille
	Non-blind	6	7	16	Cannot read and write brail
	Total	8	8	16	
<b>5</b>	<b>Service in years in the school</b>				
	< 2 years	-	-	-	
	>2 years	8	8	16	All have served > 2 years.
	Total	8	8	16	

### Annex III©: Demographic Information of Support Staff

<b>No</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Remark</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Sex</b>	5	5	10	Gender Equality is kept
<b>2</b>	<b>Age (in Years)</b>				
	20-25	3	3	6	
	26-30	1	2	3	
	>30	1	-	1	The support staff are young enough.
	Total	5	5	10	
<b>3</b>	<b>Education Level</b>				
	Special Training	-	-	-	
	Diploma	1	3	4	
	BA/BSc.	4	2	6	BA/BSc dominantly visible
	MA	-	-	-	
	Total	5	5	10	
	Total	8	8	16	
<b>1</b>	<b>Service in years in the school</b>				
	< 2 years	-	-	-	
	>2 years	5	5	10	All have served > 2 years.
	Total	5	5	10	

## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name: Gemedá Ifa

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_