

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND BEHAVIORAL STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

**GOOD PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES OF SPECIAL NEEDS
EDUCATION ITINERANT TEACHERS IN ADDIS ABABA SPECIAL
AND MAINSTREAM PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

BY

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**Good Practices and Challenges of Special Needs Education
Itinerant Teachers in Addis Ababa Special and Mainstream
Schools**

By

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Acronyms /Abbreviations

AACAEB-Addis Ababa City Administration Education bureau

EBD- Emotional Behavioral Disorder

ESDP- Education Sector Development Program

ETP-Education and Training Policies

IEP- Individual Educational Plan

KG- Kindergarten

MDGs-Millennium Development Goals

MoE- Ministry of Education

MoH- Ministry of Health

NCSE-National Council for Special Education

NGOs- Non Governmental Organizations

PWD- Person With Disability

SNE- Special Needs Education

UN- United Nations

UNCRPD- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

UNESCO- United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organizations

UNICEF- United Nations Children's Fund

UPE- Universal Primary Education

Abstract

This study was conducted to assess the good practices and challenges of itinerant teachers in the mainstream primary schools with Special Need Education Resource Centers in Addis Ababa city. This descriptive research design used both quantitative and qualitative analysis methods. Data were collected through structured questionnaire distributed to 34 purposively selected respondents. Additionally, 15 key informant interviews were conducted with the itinerant teachers, school principals and Special Needs Education experts, and also secondary data were collected from various sources. The technique used to analyze the quantitative data was frequency and percentage using SPSS version 20. The major findings indicated that the itinerant teachers program in Ethiopia particularly in Addis Ababa city has good practices as well as challenges. The good practices identified in this study are; there is the support system established at selected special and primary mainstream schools with resource centers. Thus, children with disabilities are benefiting from the support of itinerant teachers and the Resource Centers (RCs). On the contrary, there are challenges that itinerant teachers are facing in the course of their work. Among them, lack of boundaries between the job descriptions of the itinerant teacher and other support specialists, absence of standard screening, assessment and identification tools are the majors. Due to these and other reasons many children remain unsupported from the school support systems. The study also revealed that there is not only shortage of services, materials and necessary equipment in these resource centers but also the available materials in the RCs are not being used by the class teachers due to lack of coordination awareness and other factors.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Education is a universally recognized fundamental human right that should be accessible to all citizens. Education enables individuals and society to make all-rounded participation in the development process by acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes. It plays a pivotal role in eradicating poverty and promoting socio-economic development in any society. According to the Department for International Development, UK Aid (2011) education can also reduce discrimination against children with disabilities. Education, particularly inclusive education, is able to reduce discrimination by empowering children with and without disabilities to access common education, to help them create interaction with their peers, develop positive attitudes towards each other and build understanding of differences among individuals, sharing and cooperating with each other and grow up together. Moreover, Education gives children with disabilities the skills to enable themselves to become positive role models in the society and join the employment market, thereby helping to prevent poverty.

Accordingly, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has been committed to provide quality education to all its citizens, including children with Special Educational Needs (SENs) (Ministry of Education, 2012). In particular, the constitution of the country sets out the state's responsibility for the provision of necessary rehabilitation and support service for persons with disabilities (art.41). The Ethiopian Government has also displayed its commitment to the education of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) by

ratifying various International Conventions, Declarations and Statements of relevance to inclusive education. Particularly, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2006) in which article 24 emphasizes inclusive education.

The establishment of the Education and Training policy (ETP, 1994) has also opened the path for establishing Special Needs Education program (SNE) strategy in 2006 which has an overall objective; to build an inclusive system which will provide quality, relevant and equitable education and training to all children, youth and adults with Special Educational Needs (SENs) and ultimately enable them to fully participate in the socio-economic development of the country (MoE, 2012:14). The strategy also aimed at organizing schools and preparing teachers to be responsible in implementing inclusive education. That means the strategy is directed to create awareness among school principals and teachers about the need to provide support, avail appropriate materials, equipment and facilities to creating conducive environment for children with learning barriers.

Though Special Needs Education or inclusive education is a recent trend in Ethiopia, regions are working on opening more special unites and classes with in the mainstream schools (world vision, 2007). That means the education system is already on the ground and schools, colleges and institutions are trying to implement the program based on the country's education policies and strategies (Ethiopian Special Needs Education Association journal, Sept. 2016). However, as it is mentioned by the strategy as well as other international studies that in Ethiopia there is a wide gap that needs tangible and practical contribution of schools, experts, educators and concerned bodies in addressing and improving education for children with disabilities.

According to World Health Organization and World Bank (2011), globally 93 million children are estimated to have moderate and severe disabilities and 80% of these children live in developing countries. A report from the Handicap International stated that only 3% of Ethiopia's estimated 2.4 to 4.8 million children with disabilities go to school. But the absence of appropriate database system is mentioned to be a limitation for the lack of sufficient data concerning Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN) in general and those with disabilities in particular (MoE, 2015).

The MoE (2012) strategy also mentioned that education has been inaccessible for most children with disabilities. For instance, the National average gross enrollment rate at primary level was 96.4% in 2010/11, while that of children with disabilities was merely around 3.2%. This signifies that nearly 96.8% of children with disabilities are not being served by the education system and are still out of school (ibid). Moreover, the quality of education received by children with disabilities has remained to be very low. This is mainly attributed to the inadequate training of teachers in Special needs education, unfavorable school facilities, stigma among parents and educators, inaccessibility, rigid teaching practices, poorly trained teachers and the lack of adapted learning resources.

In a 2013 study of inclusive education and children with disabilities in Ethiopia Brittany Franck argues that...achieving education for all, most specifically children with disabilities, involves much more than establishing policies and placing students in classrooms... She further noted that achieving true inclusion in Ethiopia will require action that is rooted in the conviction that inclusive education is not merely about access, but about changes in society and systems (Frank, 2013).

Studies indicate that in Ethiopia teachers do not always have the support they need to make inclusive education successful. For example, several schools that are teaching children with special educational needs in many places do not have sufficient special needs education teachers, support specialists and appropriate material and equipment etc. Due to these, the support to Children with Special Educational Needs in the mainstream schools lacks quality and effectiveness. In order to minimize these problems and increase the quality and support of special needs education, resource centers are established for cluster schools and itinerant teachers are appointed to the resource centers to support children with SEN and disabilities, teachers of children with SEN and their parents. Therefore, this study is aimed at seeing the good practices and challenges of these itinerant teachers in the mainstream resource schools.

In the schools' support system, SNE Resource Centers are tasked with providing appropriate assistive devices, educational materials and aids, etc. They are also centers to carryout assessment, training and specialized supports, as well as providing supports to local mainstream schools (referred to as satellite schools in Ethiopia) to ensure inclusive education for learners with SENs (MOE, 2015). Accordingly, the ministry of education in collaboration with the Finnish Government started a two year pilot project on establishing special needs resource/ support centers and SNE itinerant teachers' service in the mainstream schools. The project aimed to promote special needs/ inclusive education in Ethiopia through the provision of different supports to children with Special Educational Needs.

Therefore, in 2011/2012 nine pilot resource centers were established at the national level; in six mainstream schools and three special schools in the country (MoE, 2012).

According to current data of Special needs Education itinerant teachers, Addis Ababa city Education bureau and MoE “the number of SNE resource centers has increased to 16 in the country” (W.Tamirat personal communication 27 April, 2016). Among the 16, 6 of the resource centers are established in Addis Ababa city and the other ten are in Benishangul-Gumuz, Oromiya and Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR) (MoE, 2015). So as to run and control the resource centers ten SNE itinerant teachers were recruited, trained and assigned to the resource centers by the Ministry of Education.

Accordingly, the Addis Ababa city administration educational bureau, which is considered as one of the country’s regional administration bureau, in collaboration with the federal ministry of education have supported the development of special classes and units, opened Braille libraries, and appointed special needs experts. The Bureau has been working on educating children with severe intellectual impairments in regular schools (with special classes/units). The special unit/classes, however, are still a long way from accommodating all of Ethiopia’s disabled children. In order to alleviate these problems, recently the bureau has established six special needs education resource/ support centers in the mainstream and special schools to provide comprehensive education in the city. Of the six schools that have resource centers, one is a special primary school for deaf and the rest are regular primary and pre-primary education schools for grades including pre-primary and 1 to grade 8. Resource room teachers or itinerant teachers who are assigned to the resource centers are responsible for different tasks in the centers. According to the Resource center guideline (2015), they provide one-on-one help to children in the

classroom (such as teaching numeracy skills using an abacus) and provide practical advice to regular teachers on educational inclusion (Lewis & Bagree, 2013).

In practicing itinerant services itinerant teachers face many challenges. For example Sight savers' research in Uganda has demonstrated that itinerant teachers are not able to visit all children in their caseload as often as they would like. In part this is because they have various responsibilities and must divide their time between community-focused work (e.g. identifying new cases) and child-focused work (e.g. teaching a child Braille). In addition, itinerant teachers experience other challenges, for example time-consuming travel and obtaining permission to be released from their regular teaching commitments. All of this suggests that there is a need for greater investment to increase the 'pool' of itinerant teachers (Lewis & Bagree, 2013). According to the MoE (2012), the case of Ethiopian itinerant teachers is not different from this.

Therefore, Before adapting itinerant teachers programs in Ethiopia, primary needs should be taken in to account which includes accessible infrastructure, teacher training, flexible curriculum, positive attitudes, resources, materials directly available [in schools], additional support from special schools, a good management system in school, school['s] collaborat[ion] with Special Schools and individual Inclusion Plan. Therefore, the Itinerant teachers programs are focus[ing] on specialized teachers training at regular schools on how to teach and include children with disabilities. Itinerant teachers program is adaptable in a situation where there must be specialized teachers available to train regular teachers and teachers of regular schools have positive attitudes towards the trainings given by the specialized teacher. (Dark and Light Blind Care, 2008, cited in Tirussew, (n. d.) p.38).

Thus, the researcher wanted to see the good practices and the challenges of itinerant teacher in Addis Ababa city mainstream schools.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The Special Needs Education RCs are part of the ministry of Education under the support of the Finish project operates itinerant service for children with special educational needs in selected pilot schools of different regions in the country. Trained teachers who took special Needs education courses provide the service. Thus, itinerant teachers aim to be a support to the class teachers, the parents or guardians and the child. They provide services to children with different disabilities in cluster schools that are mainstream schools, special schools, special units and neighboring schools that are called satellite schools in Ethiopian context.

In Ethiopia the roles of itinerant teacher and the resource center teacher doesn't have definite boundary as a result both names are used interchangeably. The duties of an itinerant teachers are varied but will include, for example working with teachers and children at school; working with pre-school children at home; identification of children with disabilities, assessment and referral; practical support and advocacy; and within some contexts 'sensitizing' communities about the importance of sending children with disabilities to school (Lynch & McCall, 2007). Moreover, these professionals provide individual instructions and materials supports to students and consultation services to regular class teachers and other school personals (Olmstead, 1991; Stephens & Birch, 1996).

Itinerant teacher program is fairly a recent concept in Ethiopia context. It can be said that it is at its infancy stage, at ongoing process, in a few mainstream and special schools in the country. Even though, the schools have the support system established, there are

challenges that itinerant teachers are facing in the implementation of special needs or inclusive education in the school setting. Some of them include absence of screening and assessment tools; there are no screening and assessment tools for early identification of learning problems of (attention deficit, hyperactivity, learning disability as well as gifted and talented) learners (MoE, 2012). As a result, teachers found it difficult to accommodate learners with special educational needs. Limited capacity; there is acute shortage of professionals and support staff in SNE at all levels: like lack of educational psychologists, speech therapists, occupational and physiotherapists, school nurses, interpreters, orientation and mobility trainers as well as Braille trainers etc. Limited awareness; the effort made to create awareness on disability issues was so scant that widespread misconceptions are still prevalent at all educational levels among stakeholders and the society at large. Limited budget and funding for LSEN, lack of data, limited provision of educational services, inaccessible facility and unsafe school environment, insufficient teaching learning materials, stationeries and assistive devices. Moreover, there is lack of support for staff in special needs/inclusive education at all levels in the country (Ministry of Education, 2012b). The MoE strategy (2012b) indicated that itinerant teachers that are one of the support professionals were ten in number in the country level in the year 2012. This indicates that there is the shortage of support staff to the education of children with Special educational needs in the mainstream schools in the country. The strategy plan further informs that the existing special needs education/inclusive courses in teachers' education institutes as well as higher education institutes are too much dependent on theory and rely heavily on medical model perspectives of disability. Thus, graduates lack practical skills to be effective in providing

the SNE support at school level (MoE, 2012). It implies that the services being provided by the itinerant teachers in classrooms and in the SNE resource centers lack the fulfilments to meet the standards and adequacy.

However, there are various problems which negatively affect the implementation of itinerant teachers' supports to children with SENs; the government is trying to alleviate these problems using different mechanisms. Such as, establishing and equipping the Resource Centers in the mainstream schools, providing support and assigning special need teachers and itinerant teachers, establishing core teams and assigning focal special needs teachers in the mainstream schools etc.

International studies indicated that SNE itinerant teachers program in the mainstream schools has shown development and is playing a vital role in supporting the development of inclusive or special needs education and in supporting the learning of children with disabilities. Nowadays this model is being used in the SNE program in the Ethiopian Education system. Thus the researcher tried to see if studies were conducted on this particular topic or not. But the researcher couldn't get any evidence that reveals the existence of similar research in this area. Because of this very reason, it is not known whether the program is being implemented as planned or there are setbacks in the process.

Therefore, in order to fill this gap the researcher decided to take this opportunity to assess the existing progress and challenges of itinerant teachers on the ground in Addis Ababa mainstream schools that are currently implementing special needs education resource centers.

Hence, the following research questions were formulated based on the objectives stated below, that the study should answer:

1.3 Research questions

- ✓ What are the educational qualification and skills of itinerant teachers in Addis Ababa mainstream schools?
- ✓ What services do itinerant teachers provide for class teachers?
- ✓ What supports are there for the itinerant teachers?
- ✓ What do itinerant teachers regard as good practices in supporting regular class teachers SNE teachers and learners with special educational needs in the mainstream school?
- ✓ What do itinerant teachers regard as challenges in supporting regular class teachers, SNE teachers and learners with special educational needs in the mainstream school?
- ✓ What services and resources are available in the Special Needs Education Resource Centers?

1.4 Objectives of the study

1.4.1 General Objective

The primary aim of this research is to investigate the good practices and challenges of special needs education itinerant teachers, in Addis Ababa schools.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

The researcher applied utmost exertion in order to address the following specific objectives of the study:

- To identify itinerant teachers' qualifications and skills.
- To find out the types and adequacy of services being delivered by itinerant teachers.
- To find out the type of supports given to the itinerant teachers.
- To identify the good practices in the course of the work.
- To find out the challenges faced in the course of the work.
- To pinpoint the accessibility of materials available in the special needs education resource centers.

1.5 Significance of the study

Though itinerant teachers practice is a valuable area that needs serious study to improve the quality of the service being provided in the mainstream schools, little attention has been given by local researchers to identify the good practices and challenges of special needs education itinerant teachers in the country. Moreover, even though itinerant teachers and different stakeholders complain about its constraints, this particular investigation has not been done before in Addis Ababa in particular and in Ethiopia in general. It is therefore, very important to find out the good practices and challenges of itinerant teachers in Addis Ababa mainstream and cluster schools.

As a result this study will have the following significances.

- ✓ To provide relevant information on the practices of itinerant teachers to the community so that they can help their children get better support in education.
- ✓ To give an insight to inclusive schools, resource centers and organizations that work on the area so they can employ it as an option to practice and initiate itinerant teaching.
- ✓ It helps to find out the constraints in providing the service and to suggest the possible solution to improve the school support system.
- ✓ It could also serve as a spring board to others who want to study more in the same area.

1.6 Scope of the study

This study is limited to six itinerant teachers. The researcher believes that it would be very important and more valuable if the study could be conducted in the country level as a whole because the number of itinerant teachers in the country is very limited. However, due to the vast geographical location of the country and the financial limitation, the study is delimited only in Addis Ababa mainstream schools.

1.7 Organization of the study

The study consists of five chapters. The first chapter includes background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, definitions of operational terms. The second chapter deals with the review of related literature. The third chapter embraces research methodology and procedures. The

fourth chapter is presentation and analysis of the findings. Finally, summary, conclusions and recommendations are presented in the last chapter.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

Itinerant teacher (IT): Itinerant teacher is a teacher who is trained in Special Needs Education and moves from school to school where children with special needs are included. The role of itinerant teacher is to advise the regular teacher and give technical support where need arises. This teacher is assigned to assist particular learners with SEN. Sometimes, s/he teaches regular classes in the school s/he is posted to.

Regular teachers: are teachers who teach or are responsible for a particular group of students (both with and without disabilities) in special or mainstream schools.

Inclusive education: refers to the philosophy of ensuring that schools, centers of learning and educational systems are open to all children. This will enable the learners to be included in all aspects of school-life. It also means identifying reducing or removing barriers within and around the school that may hinder learning.

Mainstream school: refers to a school where children with an IEP attending a regular classroom for their social and academic benefit. These students are expected to learn the same material as the rest of the class but with modifications in the course and adjustments in the assessment.

Cluster schools: Cluster schools are schools that become inclusive due to being sensitized and developed by their neighboring pilot schools to accommodate learners with special educational needs including those with disabilities and meet their needs in the same practices and approaches as the ones used in pilot schools.

Resource center: is a pedagogical center in a regular or special school that is equipped with resources as well as professionals for enriching learning and providing support to learners with SNE, teachers and neighboring schools.

Challenge: refers to the situations that are difficult and non-stimulating to the itinerant teachers in providing support to class teachers, student's parents and the school community in implementing inclusive education in the school setting.

Good Practice: effective supports that itinerant teachers provide to their learners with special needs and their teachers in the schools and their parents/ caregiver in the community to address children's educational and life-long needs.

Project: a project that was established and run by the ministry of education and the Finnish project.

Satellite School: A school that is member of the SNE cluster schools. A cluster school consists of 3-5 (In Ethiopia) schools within the catchment of 5-8 kilometers (MoE, 2003).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Special Needs Education itinerant teachers

Itinerant teachers are usually special needs education teachers who have had some formal training in the education of children with special educational needs preferably at bachelor degree level (MoE, 2015). They travel from school to school, providing individual instruction and special materials to students with SENs and offering consultation services to regular classroom teachers, other school personnel and parents of children with special educational needs (Olmstead, 1991; Stephens & Birch, 1969 as cited in Correa-Torres & Howell, 2004). They support regular class teachers in 5, up to 7 local mainstream schools or satellite schools in Ethiopian context (MoE, 2012b). These teachers are used as resource center personnel. According to Reynolds & Fletcher-Janzen, (2007) the role of itinerant teacher may include providing instruction in the hospital or home to recuperating and chronically ill children by establishing a curriculum and offering teaching services in addition to serving schools.

Itinerant teachers provide supports to narrow the gap between the child's potential and the curriculum in the overall learning or in daily life of the child (Benton, 1984 cited in Lynch and McCall, 2007). The use of itinerant teachers has developed particularly in the field of speech and hearing impairments, where only small group or individual instruction will work. In the past few years, itinerant teachers have been employed to serve learning-disabled, emotionally disturbed, and gifted students (Britton, 2001).

Recently, itinerant teacher programs are being established in several low and middle income countries (including Kenya, Uganda and Malawi and recently Ethiopia) in partnership with local ministries of education, and often with the support of non-governmental organizations (Lynch and McCall, 2007). But internationally the Itinerant teacher models of educating students who are with different disabilities have been employed for many years.

According to the Summary of UNICEF (2013), Ingrid Lewis and Sunit Bagree mentioned that the roles of trained teachers in the school are enormous because, teachers specially trained to work with children with disabilities can contribute a lot to the inclusion process in the classroom. Particularly, itinerant teachers who are experienced in supporting children with disability perform a range of duties. According to many international literature reviews, these teachers may be tasked with different roles based on the country's education system (UNICEF, 2013). That means they may be given a single area of work with some type of disabilities; for example, itinerant teachers of children with visual impairments, itinerant teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing and children with autism etc. But in some developing countries like Ethiopia, the role of these teachers may not be specified to a single specialist area because they are trained as a general support teacher and additionally the itinerant teachers service practice is not fully developed yet and there is still a gap in understanding the role of itinerant teachers both by the class teachers who are supposed to get the services of itinerant teachers and the school administrators as well. Therefore, the following tasks that are described in different guides and literatures but they are not limited to this are mentioned as roles of itinerant teachers.

2.2. Roles of itinerant teachers

Itinerant teachers are expected to find children with disabilities who are not in school and work with their parents and the wider community to ensure that the children find a place in school. If a child with disabilities does not feel confident to go to school, itinerant teachers can visit the child at home to help prepare him/her for school; this may include helping the child to use a white cane or start teaching him/her Braille, sign language, social skills etc. (MoE, 2015:19). Itinerant teachers also answer any questions that the parent or the child has about school. These specially trained teachers also have a crucial role to play in supporting inclusion in mainstream classrooms. For example, they can provide one-to-one help to children in the classroom (such as teaching numeracy skills using an abacus) and provide practical advice to regular teachers on educational inclusion (ibid). The nature of this advice varies, and can include providing guidance on the best position for a child in the classroom, transcribing tests from Braille and audios into text, teaching social skills and daily living skills, sharing information on basic eye health and ears, teaching with variety of resources to address diverse classes as it relates to particular students (Lewis & Badgeer, 2013). Additionally, based on the MoE guideline for RCs, (2015) and other international literature reviews the researcher has listed out the following activities as the role of itinerant teachers. Therefore, the itinerant teacher as resource center person is involved in different activities both in the resource center and satellite schools. The services he/she provides include:

2.2.1. Educational practices of itinerant teachers

2.2.1.1. Identification and assessment of children with disabilities

Assessment is a process of collecting data for the purpose of making decisions about students or schools (Salvia, Ysseldyke, Bolt, 2010). The importance of assessment in special needs education is undeniable fact. The National Association of Special Education Teachers in America (NASSET) described the use of assessment as follows: “An assessment in special education is the process used to determine a child’s specific learning strengths and needs, and to determine whether or not a child is eligible for special education services.”

In spite of the fact, children who are brought to mainstream schools to get education and support from the nearby schools may not be identified what needs do they have and what adjustments do they need in the school unless they are checked for different disabilities. Early identification is very important to decide whether a child is a subject to early intervention program or not. Many international reviews of the literature on the education of children with special educational needs consistently identify early intervention as essential in their support (Parsons & Guldberg et al, 2009, Marschark & Spencer, 2009, Douglas et al, 2009, Cooper & Jacob, 2010, as cited in NCSE, 2013). Moreover, early intervention and preventative measures can help to ameliorate the difficulties the child experiences before these difficulties become more deeply entrenched and thereby more resistant to intervention (NCSE, 2013). That means if these children are not supported within the right time and appropriately the disability will have much more consequences on the child’s life. In addition to that ensuring that children with SEN receive adequate support begins with the correct identification of their needs, which may in turn lead to a

diagnosis. Research emphasizes the need for effective screening and diagnostic systems to identify developmental disorders at the earliest possible stage, clearly indicating that the chances of overcoming difficulties are significantly enhanced by early identification (European commission, 2013). Thus, it is believed that mainstream schools have to have the system to provide an organized assessment and formal diagnosis of disability and care needs and services in an organized manner to make early identification of children before they are placed to a certain grade or class. As to NCSE (2013), a professional assessment and formal diagnosis of special educational needs is required before allocation of additional teaching resources is sanctioned for a low incidence disability (autism, Emotional Behavioral Disorder (EBD) /severe EBD, moderate and severe/profound general learning disabilities, physical and sensory disabilities, specific speech and language disability and multiple disabilities).

It is also important to include a timelines within which any assessment should occur, the matters that should be addressed in the assessment report and the people considered qualified to carry out such an assessment. These people include a psychologist; medical practitioner; the principal of the school which the child is attending or a teacher of that school nominated by the principal; an appropriately qualified social worker; a therapist who is suitably qualified to provide support services for the child's special educational needs; and a special needs itinerant teacher (ibid). Itinerant teachers assess the child's educational needs in the absence of one of the specialist support staffs. This indicates that the itinerant teacher should be multi-skilled and experienced person because he/ she needs to carryout screening, identification, assessment and referral of children with SENs

in collaboration with the core team and teachers (European Commission, 2013, MoE, 2011).

In the Ethiopian context the screening and assessment process is mainly conducted in the health centers and hospitals with medical personnel. This is due to lack of screening and assessment tools for early identification of learning problems of (attention deficit, hyperactivity, learning disability as well as gifted and talented) learners (MoE, 2012b).

2.2.2. Support in special needs education context

The aim of providing support to children with special educational needs is to improve the learning of children with Special Educational Needs and to help them get equal access to education like their non-disabled peers in the schools (MoE, 2015). Assignment of children to special schools or special classes or sections within a school on a permanent basis should be the exception, to be recommended only in those infrequent cases where it is clearly demonstrated that education in regular classrooms is incapable of meeting a child's educational or social needs or when it is required for the welfare of the child or that of other children (Tirussew, 2006, Dash, 2009).

Itinerant teachers as supporters and resource teacher to the class teachers as well as the special needs education teachers and the school community play various important roles in the mainstream schools. Though they do not have a single role, they mainly provide professional advice of teaching and supporting children with different disabilities in the school settings. In particular, these teachers play great role in helping children with special educational needs. It is estimated that up to 20 per cent of all children will have special educational needs requiring additional support during their school career

(Halliwell, 2013). Nowadays schools are becoming a place where children will be assessed for different disabilities with the objectives of supporting children who may have special educational needs and through the use of a range of approaches are able to meet their needs and to ensure that pupils with special educational needs make progress. However, the task of supporting children with disabilities needs cooperation among many stakeholders, but it looks like as if it is for the schools alone. Moreover, appropriateness and quality in education can be insured by the participation and crucial support of families, mobilization of the community, voluntary governmental and non-governmental organizations and health care sectors, professionals from different fields and the society at large.

The way in which inclusion is conceptualized in different countries has a bearing on the type of support which is offered. Analysis conducted by Winterman and Sapona (2002) shows that across many developed countries support are frequently given to the mainstream class teacher by a specialist teacher, who may be peripatetic or based in the school. In Germany, with large numbers of special schools, the growing demand for mainstream placements has led to a rethink in relation to the role of special school staff (Reiser et al., 2003). Increasingly, special school teachers are spending part of their week in mainstream schools, undertaking consultancy work with class teachers or directly supporting children. In Sweden, special teacher training was replaced in 1990 by special educator training. Mattson and Hansen (2009) used a survey to investigate Stockholm head teachers' views of the new support role and the way in which they deployed special educators in their school. Some head teachers used the special educator to work directly with children, often withdrawing them from the mainstream class for small group of

individual tuition. Other head teachers encouraged the special educator to spend most of his or her time working with teams of teachers to develop inclusive pedagogies. Mattson and Hansen reported that the team support approach was much more likely to lead to inclusive practices than the individual-child focused approach.

Since the advent of inclusive education, there has been a growth in the use of classroom assistants, although their role is controversial. In Iceland, for example, there are arguments that the use of classroom assistants to support pupils with physical disabilities tends to limit the use of the child's strengths and promote dependent relationships (Egilson & Traustadottir, 2009). Stead et al. (2007) express concern at the use of the least qualified personnel in school to work with the most challenging and vulnerable children. Italy has tended to use additional learning support teachers rather than classroom assistants to support children with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms.

An important effect of inclusion is that many classrooms are now likely to contain a range of adults in addition to the class teacher, who used to work in relative isolation. The presence of additional adults clearly has a number of benefits, helping teachers to differentiate learning and manage small group activities. However, there are also additional challenges, particularly the need for the class teacher to be able to manage diverse inputs effectively (Dyson et al., 2002; Groom and Rose, 2005; Hunt and Goetz, 2004). Although additional adult support is viewed as key to the inclusion of pupils with SEN, it has to be provided in ways that do not remove responsibility from the class teacher, or inadvertently block interactions between peers (Wilson, 2004).

2.2.3. Itinerant teacher support students with SEN

The word ‘support’ suggests a “shoring up of something that might be in danger of collapsing and it provides a vague hope that something might be improved upon” (Loebenstein, 2005 as cited in Arendse, 2010). Therefore, support in education can be seen as a response towards someone or something that needs help, mentoring and guidance with the intention to develop.

Provision of support services is of paramount importance for the success of education of children with special Educational needs. In order to make it happen at all levels, additional services should be available to children with special Educational needs.

Halliwell (2003) mentioned in her introduction that no matter whether they have disabilities or not, all children and young people are special. Each one has their own unique make-up and their own needs. If additional support properly delivered, all children benefit from it to help them to learn. Some need more help than others but all can and all do learn. There are some individual differences in the way children learn (ibid). Some have different learning styles; some take longer than others but all benefit from good teachers, their parents or caregivers, relatives, other children, or teachers and professionals in their schools and pre-schools. Halliwell also added that assistants or itinerant teaches are a great source of support in helping children to learn and this is particularly the case with children and young people who have especial educational needs.

According to WHO and World Bank, (2011) globally, 93 million children are estimated to have moderate and severe disabilities and 80% of these children live in developing

countries. On the other hand similar report from the Handicap International stated that only 3% of Ethiopia's estimated 2.4 to 4.8 million children with disabilities go to school. But there are no reliable data on the inclusion or exclusion of disadvantaged groups in education (Tirussew, 2006). The number of children with special educational needs enrolled at the different levels of education (mostly in special schools or special classes in regular schools) has increased only modestly and remains extremely limited. Besides that, these children could not able to get proper education in the schools (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2013). That means they are not being given the chance to become empowered as individuals and support their communities. Especially in rural areas, they are as a consequence provided with no support services whatsoever. Indeed, in many developing countries, it is estimated that less than 1 percent of children with special educational needs are included in existing provision (Dash, 2009).

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Education (2012) strategy mentioned that education has been inaccessible for most children with disabilities. For instance, the National average gross enrollment rate at primary level was 96.4% in 2010/11, while that of children with disabilities was merely around 3.2%. This signifies that nearly 96.8% of children with disabilities are not being served by the education system and are still out of school. Moreover, the quality of education received by children with disabilities has remained to be very low. This is mainly attributed to the inadequate training of teachers in Special needs education, unfavorable school facilities, stigma among parents and educators, inaccessibility, rigid teaching practices, poorly trained teachers and the lack of adapted learning resources. The Addis Ababa mainstream schools that have special needs education resource centers and the focus of this study are

not exception to this. Many literature reviews suggest that to overcome all these challenges, there must be inclusive educational system that can welcome all children in the community. As to Frank (2015), “as the experience in mainstream schools shows, inclusive education is not only about children with disabilities being able to enter mainstream classrooms. Inclusion requires support, both moral and educational, and adequate resources, both human and material. The long-standing barriers integrated into the system affect their access to education and development of life skills to enable them to survive outside the classroom. Most notable is the stigma attached to disabled students in this current system.” This is also emphasized in the Salamanca framework of action as follow:

The fundamental principle of the inclusive school is that all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. Inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities. There should be a continuum of support and services to match the continuum of special needs encountered in every school. (Salamanca Framework for Action, 1994)

On the other hand inclusive education is defined as a philosophy that cuts across all aspects of education – it is not just a separate project for the attention of a few specialists. For this reason it is vital that every teacher, working at any level of the education system, should learn how to make education more inclusive: this means learning how to improve the presence, participation and achievement of all learners, and learning how to support the inclusion of students with disabilities in particular. The development of a human rights culture and the nurturing of critical thinking skills are vital if inclusion is to become a reality (Myers & Bagree, 2011).

Many international reviews of literatures suggest that inclusive schools, serving all of the children in a community, are most successful in eliciting community support and in finding imaginative and innovative ways of using the limited resources that are available (Dash, 2009).

2.2.3.1. Academic support of itinerant teachers

Academic support is the most important support to ensure appropriate education for special needs children. Academic support consists of the following measures: provision of instructional materials for children with special needs; providing specialized help to children with special needs in the resource room; modifying/ adopting the curriculum to suit to the needs of special needs children; rectifying the deficiencies of children with special needs; improving the quality of teaching; taking personal care of special needs children; showing positive attitude towards children with special needs; adopting innovative teaching practices; providing remedial instructions to children with special needs and establishing linkage with special schools and utilizing the expertise and resources of special schools (Dash, 2009).

Teachers should adopt innovative practices while teaching special needs children. Participatory teaching, peer tutoring, cooperative learning, co-teaching or team teachings are some of the practices which are useful for such children. Ways of establishing linkages with special schools are teachers consult and seek the advice of special school teachers; special school teacher visits to school regularly and discuss with teachers about their problems and the solutions; severely handicapped children enrolled in the school are referred to special schools for their preparation; severely handicapped children who have

completed their preparation in special schools are readmitted in the school; instructional materials are borrowed from the special schools.

Children enrolled in special schools who need specialized help may be referred to special schools or that specialist teachers working in special schools may be requested to provide special assistance and services to such children. For this purpose, there should be linkage between special schools and the inclusive schools. When this linkage is not established, the child with special needs loses the game.

Teaching special needs children in inclusive setting is not simple as it may appear.

Teachers may not be able to deal with the situation individually. There is, thus, a necessity of collaboration and consultation among teachers. Lack of collaboration and consultation among teachers is a barrier to provide quality education to children with special needs.

2.2.3.2. Administrative Support

Administrative support is another important measure for implementing children with special needs. This includes visit of supervising officer/ Education Officer to the schools; giving feedback to teachers for increasing their efficiency; financial assistance to schools for implementing education for children with special needs; constructions of resource rooms in schools or in the center schools; maintenance of resource rooms; providing in-service education to teachers and the headmasters; deputing teachers to visit model inclusive schools outside the State/ country and monitoring and evaluation of the program.

For effective implications of education for children with special needs, administrators are expected to be familiar with the concept, objectives and practices of inclusive education. Such familiarity will help the administrator in supervision, monitoring, control and for providing leadership to the headmasters of schools.

It is evident from various literatures that District Education Officers and the Block Level Education Officers rarely visit schools due to some or the other reasons. Even when they visit schools they do not give any specific feedback to the teachers about what they are doing and how they are doing. In such cases, the very purpose of supervision is lost.

Schools expect financial assistance from the Government to meet their contingency expenditure for purchase of aids and equipment, and other instructional materials, removal of architectural barriers and other environmental modifications. When such assistance is not provided by the Government, other agencies such as business houses, industries, NGOs, parent teacher associations and voluntary agencies should come forward to provide assistance in the form of finance or supply of materials to schools.

A resource room is an administrative arrangement for meeting the needs of children with disabilities. Specialized help can only be given to such children in the resource rooms. Thus schools should have resource room facilities. Resource rooms can be constructed either with assistance from the Government or from other agencies. Once the resource has been constructed it must be maintained properly and used for the purpose for which it has been constructed.

2.2.3.3. Community Support

Involvement of the community or social intervention is a necessary condition for the success of education of children with special needs. The community can intervene in the program in the following ways: participating in the decision making process; meeting the expenses of constructing the resource rooms; sending out of school children to school; encouraging disabled children to attend school regularly; providing or helping the teachers trained in special education; providing the salary of the resource teachers; providing aids and equipment to the schools; supervising the work of teachers; and giving feedback to them; helping in dealing with the problems of the handicapped girl child; monitoring the progress of education of special needs children in the locality and transforming the school into a community school.

Local administrators should encourage community participation by giving support to representative associations and inviting them to take part in decision-making. Community involvement should be sought in order to supplement in-school activities, provide help in doing homework and compensate for lack of family support. Mention should be made in this connection of the role of neighborhood associations in making premises available, the role of family associations, youth clubs and movements, and the potential role of elderly people and other volunteers, including persons with disabilities, in both in-school and out-of-school programs.

As voluntary associations and national non-governmental organizations have more freedom to act and can respond more readily to express needs, they should be supported in developing new ideas and pioneering innovative delivery methods. They can play the

roles of innovator and catalyst and extend the range of programs available to the community.

2.2.4. Itinerant teachers support parents

According to the RC guideline one of the specialist support personnel, the SNE itinerant teacher is responsible for helping parents of children with SEN to get supports in referral of their children to schools for placement and to local clinics and hospitals for medical assessment and supports. Parents of children with disabilities or with SEN may not have adequate knowledge or information about the needs of their children. Therefore, professional support personnel like itinerant teachers can provide help to these parents to get the information of their children's supports and sites as well as medical or educational placements before every decision has made to their children (MoE, 2015).

On the other hand parents of children themselves may have different problems related to their child's disability. This time they themselves may fall under stress and become subjects of support to the itinerant teacher. That means the itinerant teacher has to discuss and decide on the referral and placement of the child with disability. During this time the parents' consent and signature is mandatory. If the child's parents can't decide and shown carelessness, they may be given counseling and advice by the itinerant teacher because the wellbeing of the child with SEN is more or less depends on the wellbeing of the child's parents.

Studies assured that raising a child with a disability has a pressure on parents of the child with disability. Parents of children with special needs often report feelings of isolation and high levels of stress, with several studies pointing to an increase in depression

(Barnett, Clements, Kaplan-Estrin, and Fialka, 2003 as cited in European commission, 2013). The stress of having a child with SEN can challenge family functioning through exerting pressure on parental well-being, the well-being of siblings and other relatives, spousal relationships, extra-spousal support, and negative effects on parenting behavior (Barnett et al., 2003). In such situations itinerant teachers can play a great role in advising parents to get psychological counseling and supports from professionals and they provide advice to parents to take courses or training related to their children's disability that they could help their children in the area of things that can be developed or adjusted. Because, most parents may not know or have the knowledge how to help their child get developed in different aspects of his or her life. This situation gets worse in the developing countries like Ethiopia that people have low attitude towards disability (Tirussew, 2006). The way parents care for and treat their children will contribute a lot in the development of children's holistic life. It is necessary for children with SEN to develop secure attachments, yet these are liable to be compromised by the stress exerted on some parents. In addition to this, the time-intensive nature of the care required by many children with SEN also presents an inherent risk of parental burn-out. Involvement of parents of children with SEN is a vital factor in promoting inclusive schooling (NESS, 2012). This is not easily done in practice, with parents often struggling for fulfilling the basic needs of their child. Disability in Ethiopia is often perceived as connected with a person's immorality or curse. Disabled children and parents of disabled children are often stigmatized (Lewis, 2009). A crucial barrier to effective education for special needs children is non-involvement of parents in the process of educating children with special needs. In most cases parents send their children to school but they are not involved in any

aspect of inclusion such as assessment, decision making and education of their children. They are alienated from the school. Moreover, a lot depends on community participation. Non- involvement of parents may act as a barrier for successful education of special needs children. Community awareness program and parent contact program will motivate parents and community for their involvement in the process education for children with special needs.

Involvement and cooperation of the parents in the education of special needs children is very important. They should discuss timely with the teachers and seek their guidance and the most important thing is the interest of the parents. Until and unless if parents are not interested in the education of their special needs children, the school cannot alone transform their dreams into reality. They should show positives hopes for the future of their special needs children by providing them required instructional materials. Their encouragement and help and involvement in the education of their special needs children are very necessary.

The education of children with special educational needs is a shared task of parents and professionals. A positive attitude on the part of parents favors school and social integration. Parents are privileged partners as regards the special educational needs of their child, and to the extent possible should be accorded the choice in the type of education provision they desire for their child.

A co-operative, supportive partnership between school administrators, teachers and parents should be developed and parents regarded as active partners in decision-making. Parents should be encouraged to participate in educational activities at home and at school, as well as in the supervision and support of their children's learning.

Governments should take a lead in promoting parental partnership, through both statements of policy and legislation concerning parental rights. The development of parents' associations should be promoted and their representatives involved in the design and implementation of programs intended to enhance the education of their children.

2.2.5. Support for the class teachers

Itinerant teachers search for information to understand and support children's needs, and support teachers in their teaching; they share information with teachers, discuss with teachers how to support learners with special needs. It is also their duty to prepare a sample portfolio of learners with SNEs and support teachers to use it. Moreover, they collaborate with the satellite and neighboring school directors and teachers, that means they organize training for resource center and satellite school teachers on the use of resource center, inclusive education and the like. Besides itinerants visit and support satellite school teachers and learners once or twice a week.

It is also their task to coordinate the child's educational goals with other stakeholders and therapists, and participate in the core team activities among others: support the core team while designing an individual education program (IEP) of the child, liaise with other care providers such as health officers whenever necessary, support schools in planning to mainstream SNE issues in their strategic and annual plan, report to school director and core team on overall progress.

Itinerant teachers provide guidance and counseling services to the child, the parent and the teachers. They liaise with parents to identify children's needs. On the other hand, they aware resource center and satellite school teachers to keep records of each child with

SENs and they make sure that the room where resources are housed is well kept, safe and equipped for all teachers who need to borrow teaching learning materials or equipment. They also organize awareness raising program among the community in collaboration with Woreda, school and other stakeholders.

In collaboration with the core team, they make the resource center as skills development center in areas such as: Braille writing and reading skills development, sign language, creating favorable conditions for physical accessibility in the school compound, providing facilities and training on orientation and mobility to learners with visual impairment, facilitate networking with other schools, NGOs and individuals, building the capacity of the parents through community meetings as well as encouraging parents to visit the center, providing school based workshops to teachers and parents and establishing parents support groups and child to child support groups (Ministry of Education, 2015).

As stated in the ministry of education guideline (2015), for the resource center the following are the challenges of itinerant teachers.

2.2.6. The challenges of itinerant teachers

New itinerant teachers usually have to establish their own structure. Sometimes the only information they receive is a list of students who may range in ability from multiple disability to gifted and talented vary in age from birth to 21, and be located in several sites that may or may not be in close geographic proximity.

New itinerant teachers gather information from school administrator to set up a schedule in which the best time to work with students in their classrooms or in separate rooms, as

needed, are coordinated with the times that appropriate rooms are available for their use; move materials and equipment in to each school; and determine which needs of the students they will address if the needs are not already delineated in current IEPs.

Lynch, P et al (2011), has demonstrated that itinerant teachers are not able to visit all children in their caseload as often as they would like. In part this is because they have various responsibilities (as noted above), and must divide their time between community-focused work (e.g. identifying new cases) and child-focused work (e.g. teaching a child Braille). In addition, itinerant teachers experience other challenges, for example time-consuming travel and obtaining permission to be released from their regular teaching commitments. All of this suggests that there is a need for greater investment to increase the 'pool' of itinerant teachers (Summary of UNICEF, 2013).

Itinerant teachers normally work under the direction of a full-time coordinator and may be given responsibility for a cluster of mainstream schools and homes in a given district (often 8–12 schools, depending on their geographical distribution) (Lynch and McCall, 2007).

As researches revealed, whilst providing the above mentioned services itinerant teachers face many challenges such as working among many schools, supporting many children and teachers, shortage of time, absence of screening and assessment tools are just a few among many.

Itinerant teachers should be certified special needs education teachers preferably at BA level. In addition to what is listed in their duties and responsibilities these teachers are expected to visit satellite schools once or twice a week which magnifies that their task is

highly demanding. Therefore, it is expected that they will be free of periodic allotment and are treated equally as regular teachers with regard to the benefit packages such as carrier structure, salary increment, etc. with an organized incentive system (MOE, 2015:19).

2.2.7. The Itinerant Teachers Program in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, the primary school enrollment (grade 1-8) is about 16,718,111. From those about 3, 5% are children with disabilities (Belay, 2012). He further added that only 49% of the enrolled children complete grade 8.

Interviews with the SNE experts revealed that itinerant teachers' practice is a new trend in Ethiopia. It was started by the Special Needs Education Project in the year 2010/2011. According to MoE (2012b), the reason for the beginning of itinerant teachers program in Ethiopia was to support inclusion of children with disabilities and to minimize and avoid the barriers of SNE students and to create better learning environment in their schools. Thus, the growing trends in the Special Needs Education/ inclusive education come up with the introduction and usage of Resource Centers (RC) in the cluster mainstream schools. The establishments of the Resource Centers also open the path for the allocation of experienced SNE (itinerant) teachers in the RCs with the objective of delivering support and advice to students with educational barriers and teachers of children with SEN and disabilities in the mainstream schools. As a result, the system is already established and Resource Centers are practicing Special needs education supports, in the mainstream schools of some selected regions including Addis Ababa City and other regions of the country. At the same time, special needs education support personnel called itinerant teachers were allocated to the RCs.

As to the SNE experts from Addis Ababa City Education Bureau (AACCB) and the Ministry of Education (MoE), based on the 1994 education policy and the 2006 and the revised 2012 SNE strategy, the SNE Itinerant teachers' program was organized and run by a SNE project that was established by the Ministry of Education with the support of the Finnish government. The first phase of the project had run for 2 years. That was started in 2010/11 and finished in 2012. The project had been working as a pilot project in selected mainstream primary schools, in four regions, and in Addis Ababa city for two years. SNE experts pointed out that the main objective of the project was to support inclusive education program in Ethiopia. During the two year period of its support, nine SNE resource centers were opened in selected cluster schools in different regions of the country and ten special needs education graduate teachers were recruited and allocated to those cluster mainstream schools as SNE resource room teachers or itinerant teachers (MoE, 2012b). According to experts, the SNE itinerant program has been operating under the technical support and supervision of a pilot project called Special Needs Education Project run by the MoE and the Finnish government.

CHAPTER THREE

This section deals with the kind of research method that is applied in this specific research. It discusses the rationale for selecting mixed research method. In addition the reason for choosing the research method is explained. Moreover, it also describes sources of data, data collection procedures, sampling technique, data analysis and ethical issues follow steps and the research.

3.1. Description of the study site

The study was conducted in Addis Ababa city; six cluster schools that have Special Needs Education resource centers and itinerant teachers' services. Of the six, one is special school for deaf students and the other five are mainstream schools. These schools are selected and fulfilled by a pilot project run by the Ministry of Education and the support of the Finnish government. They are located in different sub-cities of Addis Ababa city. Kokebe Tsebeha primary school in Yeka sub-city, Alpha Primary special school for deaf children in Bole sub-city, Tesfa Kokeb Primary school in Lideta sub-city, Dagmawi Birhan Primary school in Addis Ketema sub-city, Hamle 19/64 primary school in Gulele sub-city and Atse Fasil primary school in Arada sub-city.

3.2. Research design

The research design employed was descriptive design and intended to the good practices and challenges of itinerant teachers in Addis Ababa special and mainstream schools. In order to accomplish the target of the study, the researcher employed mixed research method which combines qualitative and quantitative approaches.

According to Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2004), in Mixed Research Method, both quantitative and qualitative researches are important and useful to draw from the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of using only a single research method. In this study, the quantitative approach was used to examine availability of resources, materials and services, skills that itinerant teachers and class teachers have and the availability of professionals in the practices of inclusive education, and attitude of the school community towards special needs teachers. Qualitative research method was also employed to collect qualitative data for the study to gain a better picture of the reality of the issue on the research questions and its objectives in a natural way (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). The method used to collect quantitative data was questionnaires and qualitative data was interview. After collecting data using questionnaire, the semi-structured interview was employed to get detail responses from itinerant teachers, school principals, and SNE expert respondents.

3.2.1. Source of data

Primary source of data was used in order to undertake this study. Itinerant teachers, school principals, class teachers and SNE higher experts were the primary sources. The data were collected through structured questionnaire, in-depth-interview and informal observation. The structured questionnaire was designed in order to get information about facilities and services in the SNE resource centers, available professionals, skills that SNE teachers have and demographic information. The questionnaires were completed by class teachers. In the in-depth-interview that includes supports and challenges in relation to SNE itinerant teachers' services data was gathered and in the informal observation services and facilities available were observed

3.3. Population and Sampling

Sampling is the act, process, or technique of selecting a suitable sample, or a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population (Webster, 1985).

The total numbers of participants for the study were fifty-seven (57). Of the fifty-seven (57) participants, six (6) were itinerant teachers in Addis Ababa city mainstream schools, six (6) were the schools principals who the itinerant teachers are working with, three (3) were special needs education higher experts and forty two (42) were special needs education teachers and pre-school (kindergarten) class teachers. All of these teachers including SNE teachers were assigned to different grades to teach different subjects to both children (with and without special educational needs) in primary schools where itinerant teachers were available. Of the fifty-seven (57), fifteen (15) were participated in the interviews. And those forty-two (42) class teachers were given questionnaire and took part in the study. However, among the 42 questionnaires 34 of them were properly filled out and collected but the rest 8 were not filled because of lack of time and load of work on the teachers.

Table 1: background information of participants of the study

	Name of the schools / offices	Participants			
		SNE experts	School principals	Itinerant teachers	SNE & Class teacher
1.	MOE,SNE higher expert office	1			
2.	AACEB,SNE expert office	2			
3	Alfa primary special school for the deaf Ss.		1	1	8
4.	Atse-fasil primary school		1	1	5
5	Dagmawi Birhan primary school		1	1	7
6	Hamle 19/67 primary school		1	1	6
7	Kokeb- Tsibeha primary school		1	1	8
8	TesfaKokob Primary school		1	1	8
	Total	3	6	6	42
	Grand total			57	

F= Frequency

(%) percentage

3.4. Sampling Techniques

Purposive sampling is viewed as a particular case that is chosen because it illustrates some features or process that is of interest for a particular study (Silverman, 2000). The MoE (2012b), in its evaluation of the implementation of the 2006 SNE program strategy pointed out that nine pilot resource centers have been established at national level in selected six cluster schools and three special schools in the country to serve learners with special educational needs in the neighboring and satellite schools; ten itinerant teachers have been assigned to serve in these resource centers. However, these ten model itinerant

teachers are spread over the four regions: Southern Nation Nationalities and people, Benishangul-Gumuz, Oromiya and Addis Ababa regions. As a result, the researcher selected participants from Addis Ababa city cluster schools. Addis Ababa was chosen for its availability of the target schools to conduct the research. The data from MoE (2015) showed that the number of schools that has SNE resource centers in Addis Ababa city has increased from 3 to 6 and they are actively operating the itinerant teachers program. Therefore, the researcher has chosen the Addis Ababa city mainstream schools where many of these itinerant teachers found in the nearby primary schools and gathered the needed data in a better way than going to different regions that are far to address in a short period and with the limited financial cost to the researcher.

3.5. Data gathering instrument

In order to gather data from the target population, questionnaires, interview and observation were employed respectively and the data obtained from these are triangulated to ascertain the validity of data findings.

3.5.1. Questionnaire

One of the data collecting methods used in this research was questionnaire which is used to get sufficient data from large number of population. Therefore, questionnaire was developed by the researcher for the class teachers and it was translated into Amharic then it was seen and corrected by the experts and finally approval was made by the advisor.

3.5.2. Interview

Semi- structured guiding questions for the in-depth interviews were developed by the researcher. It was designed to gather detail data from the six itinerant teachers, school

principals and SNE experts. First the questions were developed and written in English and then translated into Amharic. Therefore, the interview was conducted in Amharic because the respondents' mother tongue is Amharic it will help to avoid communication barrier and to get the necessary information from the interviewees. In addition to this, the participants were friendly with the interviewer and they were given detailed clarifications on matters that needed explanation.

3.5.3. Observation

To identify the good practices and existing problems of itinerant teachers in the mainstream resource schools, structured observations were used to collect data at the Resource Centers and classrooms while itinerant teachers and Special Needs Education teachers were on their work that was used to gather live information about their actual work and the availability of supporting materials and resources in the RCs as well as in the school environment. The supporting process of the whole schools regarding children with special educational needs was also observed by the researcher.

3.6. Data collection procedure

The six school principals were formally requested by a letter from AAU Special Needs Education department some times before data collection was made to get the schools' consent and to get their responses to the questions related to the good practices and challenges of itinerant teachers. Then the researcher contacted itinerant teachers in each school and got their permission to be interviewed and they made a plan and adjustments. Then the researcher gathered information about the number of SNE teachers and other subject teachers who were teaching in the inclusive classrooms. According to the

collected data questionnaires were distributed to those special needs education teachers who were assigned to the regular classes to teach different subjects and to other subject teachers who were teaching different subjects to children with and without SENs in regular primary and kindergarten classes.

3.7. Data analysis procedure

Data was collected using the questioner and interview. And then data entry and analysis was done using Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS version 20). Simple descriptive statistics in the form of frequency counts and percentage distributions were utilized for analyzing quantitative data. In addition, the data obtained from open ended questions and interviews were analyzed by thematically; a summary of the overall responses made to similar issues as well. Furthermore, rating scales such as (agree, neutral, disagree, etc.) were used in order to measure the frequency of responses.

3.8. Ethical consideration

According to Kreuger and Neuman (2006) researchers should respect participant's right to privacy and take responsible steps to ensure that these records are not available to others who are not authorized to have access, and handle carefully sensitive topics or issues. It can cause emotional distress of participants. In order to minimize these problems the researcher clarified about what is going on the study before the data collection took place.

Research participants were assured that all information they provided would be kept confidential and the objectives of the study were explained. Permission and informed

consents were obtained without putting pressure on the participants and they also knew that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

To ensure the issue of confidentiality of the participants' response of in-depth interviews, the researcher used pseudo names at the time of transcript the voice record not used their real names in any written material or document and kept interview materials in a safe place free from disclosure. After the researcher accomplished the study, the researcher safely destroyed the audio records of the respondents. Finally, the researcher will submit the final version of this study to SNE resource Centers after completing the defense.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the interpretations of the data gathered from SNE experts, school principals, itinerant teachers and class teachers through interviews, questionnaire and observation. The results were organized and analyzed in relation to the major research questions. In analyzing the data both techniques, qualitative and quantitative methods were employed. The data collected through interviews and observation were entirely analyzed and interpreted qualitatively and the quantitative data gathered through questionnaires are presented in tables and percentages. Following each table interpretations of data are presented in detail.

4.1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents

The respondents of this study were Special Needs Education experts from the Ministry of Education and from Addis Ababa City Education Bureau, special and mainstream schools principals, itinerant teachers and regular class teachers. Both special and mainstream school principals and itinerant teachers were selected from schools where Special Needs Education Resource Centers are available. These special and mainstream schools are located in different sub-cities of Addis Ababa City. They are; Alpha Primary special school for deaf children is located in Bole sub-city, Atse Fasil primary school is located in Arada sub-city, Dagmawi Birhan Primary school is located in Addis Ketema sub-city, Hamle 19/64 primary school is located in Gulele sub-city, Kokebe Tsebeha primary school is located in Yeka sub-city and Tesfa Kokeb Primary school is located in Lideta sub-city in Addis Ababa City.

In the interviews, fifteen participants were interviewed. Out of the fifteen respondents, six special needs education itinerant teachers and six school principals totally twelve respondents were selected from the six mainstream/ resource center schools, the rest three respondents were higher experts at Special Needs Education; one was from the Ministry of Education and two of them were from Addis Ababa City Education Bureau. One of the two from the Addis Ababa City Education Bureau was a professional advisor for the Resource Centers and itinerant teachers at Addis Ababa city (regional level). From the total respondents, six were females and the rest nine were males. Regarding the age of the participants they were ranged from twenty eight to sixty. Educational level of the participants, Five of the itinerant teachers and one of the school principals were graduates of Special Needs Education and one of the itinerant teachers was Diploma in Special Needs Education and two of the special needs experts were also post graduates of Special Needs Education and one of them was post graduate student by the time the interview was conducted. Talking about the length of service year that the itinerant teachers stayed in the special and mainstream schools resource centers, it ranged to four years. However, except the two, who were assigned directly from the universities, the other four itinerant teachers were class teachers in the schools where they have been serving since the interview has conducted. On the other hand the experts who took part in this study have as long as up to 33 years of work experience in the field of Special Needs Education.

On the other hand, in filling out the questionnaires, 34 class teachers including SNE teachers took part. On the basis of the responses obtained from the questionnaires regarding personality characteristics of the respondents including sex, age, and

educational background by training, service year, qualifications and period allotment were summarized in the table and interpreted in paragraphs respectively.

Table 2: summary of questionnaire participant's background information

No	Items	Respondent Class teachers	
		No.	(%)
1.	Sex		
	Male	22	64.7
	Female	12	35.3
	Total	34	100
2.	Age		
	21-25	5	14.7
	26-30	15	44
	31-35	11	32.3
	36-40	2	6
	>41	1	3
	Total	34	100
3.	Educational background by training		
	Special needs education	16	47
	other field +special needs education	4	12
	other field without SNE	14	41
	Total	34	100
4.	Total years of service		
	1-5	11	32.3
	6-10	17	49.7
	11-15	4	12
	16 and above	2	6
	Total	34	100
5.	Qualification		
	Certificate	12	35.3
	Diploma	6	17.6
	Degree	16	47
	MA in SNE	3	8.8
	If any other	---	---
	Total	34	100
6.	teaching periods per week		
	>21	10	29.4
	11-20	15	44.1
	<10	9	26.5
7.	Free of class	---	---
	Total	34	100

As table 2 indicates, 22(64.7%) and 12(35.3%) of the class teacher respondents were males and females respectively. This indicates that the number of male Special Needs Education teachers including class teachers in the mainstream schools were greater than their counterparts. This means female teachers' participation in the Special Needs Education is lower than male teachers in the mainstream schools. When one sees this from the point of view of age category, the same table shows that 15(44%) of class teachers of respondents found in the age group between 26 and 30 while 11(32.3%) of them lay in age category between 31 and 35. The remaining age group among the respondents was 5(14.7%) who were found in age group between 21 and 25 and they were the youngest group of all the respondents. From the respondents 3(9%) were ranged in the age group 36 and above. From this one can understand that majority of the class that means about 44% teachers in this study were relatively at their young age and they have less work experiences compared to the 3(9%) of class teachers in the group. This implies that though majority of the class teachers are young and are keen to help students in their classes, they need different supports and advice from their experienced coworkers and the itinerant teachers in their course of work. The data gathered through interviews from the itinerant teachers and the school principals also strengthened this finding. As indicated in the above table, in the educational background category, 16(47%) of respondents' educational background was from the Special Needs Education and 4(12%) of the class teachers were also from other fields but has taken SNE courses during their study. But the remaining 14(41%) of the respondents' background was from other fields of teaching and they didn't take the SNE courses. According to the data in table 2, 15(44.1%) and 9(26.5%) of the regular class teachers work load per week lay under 20

hours per week which can be measured good according to different schools guides of 19-22 hours per week. The remaining 10(29.4%) class teacher respondents work load lay 21 hours per week and above. According to the above data, there were no SNE teachers and class teachers who were free of classes in those cluster schools.

4.2. Data gathered through interviews

4.2.1. Qualifications, training and allocation of itinerant teachers

According to the SNE experts from the MoE, in Ethiopia the main thing that is considered as a criterion to be an itinerant teacher is, the SNE teacher has to be certified in Special Needs Education either in first degree or in diploma programs. The other criterion is that itinerant teachers have to have the experience of working with children with Special Educational Needs. These experts explained the reason for this is that itinerant teachers have to have the potential to provide different services including advice and support to newly employed teachers of children with disabilities and SEN as well as none special needs education graduates. Additionally, they stated that they have to have the interest and commitment to work in different satellite schools traveling twice or three times a week. Additionally, the SNE advisor mentioned the Resource Centers guideline as a reference of the itinerant teachers' responsibilities and the qualifications they should fulfill to be itinerant teachers. The criterion that is implemented in Ethiopian special and mainstream schools is similar with other countries Special Needs Educational systems so that it is described in the SNE Resource Rooms guideline as well as other international literatures (INTO, 2003, MoE, 2015).

Regarding on job and short term training, all the SNE itinerant teachers mentioned that they have taken many important training related to SNE support services; like screening and assessment, material usage, teaching methodology etc. Most of them explained that they attended the same training together as a group of itinerant teachers gathered by the SNE pilot project (Finland) and Ministry of Education. All of them agreed that the on job training were very useful to their career even though they believed that they were too short and insufficient to fulfill the gaps of skills and knowledge the SNE teachers have to reach the standard of itinerant teachers' profession that was set by the Ministry of Education Guideline of 2015. As a result, itinerant teachers as well as the SNE experts stressed that most of the itinerant teachers in Addis Ababa mainstream / Resource center schools lack proficiency in the most important skills and knowledge in basic supporting areas of their profession. Due to the abovementioned reasons and lack of practicality they admitted that they are not supporting their students in some areas. They also believe that they are not responsible to be skillful in all skills. Thus, they mentioned that schools have to employ different professionals in different areas of the school support systems. But SNE itinerant teachers have admitted that acquiring those support skills is necessary for their duties.

One of the itinerant teachers responded:

We, SNE teachers are trained to be experts on supporting the Special Needs Education/inclusive education program. We mainly support and advise teachers and we sometimes teach children who can't learn in the regular classrooms. We are not trained to be a teacher of sign language or Braille skills but we are expected to do so.

From this one can understand that some of the itinerant teachers believe that they are not responsible to teaching skills related lessons to the children with disabilities. But on the contrary another itinerant teacher said:

Me, as an experienced teacher, I have at least the necessary skills in the SNE area; for example, I can use sign language so that I can communicate with deaf and hard of hearing students and teachers who can use sign language, I can also write and read Braille, I have behavioral management skills, counseling and guidance and other skills too. But those new teachers unlike us, the experienced teachers, lack these skills. As a result they face challenges when they meet children with SEN in their classes or they have to use others persons to support them.

The special needs education advisor at Addis Ababa City Administration Education Bureau said:

Itinerant teachers are expected to provide support not only to the class teachers but also the special needs education and the class teachers in the mainstream schools as well as satellite schools in their cluster schools. Though these itinerant teachers are graduates in SNE, they don't have much knowledge and practical skills on itinerant teachers' services. Most of them lack the necessary skills to support children with special needs and their class teachers. As an expert, I could still observe gaps in their skills and career on providing support to children with SENs, training to the class teachers, advice to families etc. even after they took many training. In my opinion, the problem happened because of lack of competency in the skills of itinerant teachers or resource center teachers. They were not assigned regarding their teaching profiles but they were assigned because they were the only SNE teacher in the school or they were selected by the school's principal where the resource center is located. As a result, most of them lack the skills and experience to be itinerant teachers.

From the findings one can understand that some of the newly assigned itinerant teachers have lack of skills related to sign language and Braille writing and reading which are very mandatory to support children with visual impairment and deaf and hearing impairment in their schools. On the other hand, experienced teachers are skilled in sign language, Braille reading and writing, behavioral management and other skills too. However, all of them believe that mastering different skills in their area of responsibility is undeniably

mandatory because almost all of the mainstream schools do not have sign language and Braille teachers or translators. Due to these reasons, some of the SNE teachers are facing difficulties in supporting children with SEN in their schools. Therefore, they mentioned that having the skills will enable them to provide better support to the class teachers, students with SENs and the school community in general. Thus, to alleviate these problems, itinerant teachers of the mainstream schools need to get practical skills based training in their profession. Regarding this the study by Correa-Torres & Howell (2004), suggested more hands-on experiences in training programs for the success of their work.

4.2.2. Allocation of itinerant teachers

Interview findings from The SNE experts indicated that those itinerant teachers who worked in the mainstream Resource centers during the first phase of the project were employed by the Finland pilot project to work for the cluster mainstream schools. Therefore, SNE graduates were invited and competed for the job and better experienced teachers were selected and hired for the itinerant services. However, according to the Experts from the MoE and old itinerant teachers, by the time the project had finished its program, the itinerant teachers also stopped working in the schools. The reason mentioned was that itinerant teachers' salary and other supports were financed by the project. As a result, after the project terminated, those cluster schools were unable to get the itinerant teachers support programs for about a year. According to some of the mainstream or RCs schools principals, some of the mainstream resource schools had tried to run the resource rooms by assigning Special Needs Education teachers of their own. After a year, the second phase of the project was started in 2013 again and an agreement

was signed by the MoE and the Finnish project to work in collaboration for four years from 2013-2016. During the second phase of the project, one of the major changes made was that the responsibility for employing itinerant teachers was shifted from the SNE project to the regionals education bureaus (the government). That means, the Ethiopian government already allocated its own budget for the itinerant teachers program with the technical support from the Finnish government and the regional education bureaus were given the mandate to hire SNE teachers to the cluster mainstream schools. As a result, the responsibility to administer the itinerant teachers program shifted from the SNE project to the wereda education bureaus and the schools themselves. In the second phase of the project, graduate special needs education teachers who have been working in the cluster schools were assigned to be itinerant teachers regardless of their experience. This indicated that the assignment process of the itinerant teachers could have been better done like the first phase of the project. Because, experienced teachers could have competed and better SNE teachers would have been assigned to the itinerant teachers' positions; because, lack of experience is believed as a major source of the gaps in the practice of itinerant teachers program. According to the experts, the reason was that mainstream schools were given the responsibility to assign senior graduate SNE teachers among their own SNE teachers. Experts mentioned that they were also given the right to run and administer the itinerant teachers program as better as they can do flexibly and actively based on the country's education system. However, the finding revealed that itinerant teachers who haven't had work experience in the schools face challenges in supporting class teachers because, they only had theoretical knowledge of SNE. Furthermore, principals of the mainstream schools reported that the assignment of

itinerant teachers to the cluster schools was done based on the rule that says itinerant teachers should be at least graduates in degree program. But they claimed that it didn't consider the experience of SNE teachers for the itinerant service position.

Responses of Principals and itinerant teachers revealed that in collaboration with the woreda education bureaus, the school principals nominated senior SNE teachers (if there are more than one in the school or the available one) from their schools and assigned teachers' names were sent to the Addis Ababa City education bureau for approval. After that, they were named itinerant teachers and given different short term training by experts from the Special Needs Education and other fields of studies like psychology and health. The training include, basic computer, Braille writing and reading, the use of different resources in the RCs etc.

One of the itinerant teachers explained about his assignment as follows:

Three years ago, when the Finnish project came to my school to support inclusive education and to reestablish the SNE resource room program, I had been working in the school as a resource room person assigned by the school principal. Then the project requested the school to assign an itinerant teacher to the resource room in our school. I was the only graduate teacher in special needs education department in the school and I fitted the criteria set to be an itinerant teacher. As a result, I got the chance to be an itinerant teacher to the cluster schools I am assigned to now.

Another participant added that:

During the pilot project period, the project was working in the school where I work and I was assigned to be an itinerant teacher because I was the only graduate teacher in special needs education in my school. I was the department head by the time I myself requested to work as itinerant teacher. The project coordinator or advisor accepted my question and I was assigned an itinerant teacher to the cluster schools in our sub city.

As indicated in the findings itinerant teachers are diploma or degree graduates but some of the newly assigned teachers are not experienced in teaching children with special

Educational needs and they lack the skills to share advices to other subject teachers of children at the cluster mainstream schools.

4.2.3. Work experience of itinerant teachers

Of the six itinerant teachers, two of them were new graduates of Special Needs Education by the time they were assigned to be itinerant teachers. They mentioned that they had no experience of working as a teacher with children with disabilities and special needs education program at all. They also added that during the beginning of their work as teachers they faced many difficulties due to lack of experience in helping children with different disabilities. Both of them mentioned that lack of assessment and screening tools, absence of experienced SNE staff and lack of budget and support in the schools made their work difficult. One of them mentioned that he has observed many children come to school underfeeding and unable to attend their education properly. He explained that he was simply sorry for that because there was nothing he could do about it. On the other hand these itinerant teachers revealed that they don't provide any curricula support to the class teachers of children with disabilities because they believed that they have lack of experience of accommodating the curriculum. As a result, they couldn't try it yet. Most of the itinerant teachers shared the idea and they said that they have been working based on the training they had from the project. They claimed that they have been to many training though the training they had in a few days been not adequate to do such complicated things or to provide training to experienced staff members. Out of the six itinerant teachers two of them were assigned as soon as they graduated by the sub-city education bureaus and four of them were special needs education teachers in the schools where they were working. Regarding this the Ministry of Education strategy mentioned it

as one of its constraints in implementing the SNE support to children with disabilities (MoE, 2012).

4.2.4. Skills of itinerant teachers

According to the data from in-depth interview with itinerant teachers, all of them have attended SNE courses in colleges and universities in the regular and summer (in-service) courses. Based on the school development programs, school teachers who had diploma in different subjects including special needs education were given the opportunity for scholarship based on their service years and their efficiency by their schools principals to attend special needs education. As a result, among the six itinerant teachers three of them attended their degree in the SNE program in the summer courses and one of them has attended diploma. Of the six itinerant teachers only two of them were directly assigned to be itinerant teachers without any teaching experience. According to the experts and principals, previously SNE teachers were encouraged and supported by the schools to upgrade their education through summer courses. Teachers from other fields were also encouraged and allowed to join SNE department to be SNE teachers. This is due to solve the shortage of experienced special needs education teachers in the schools.

According to McCarthy's survey study on the roles of the resource teachers for special needs (2001), cited in the Irish National Teachers Organization (2003), and other international literatures, itinerant teachers are better to be experienced in teaching or working with various children with different disabilities. According to McCarthy's survey study though most the Resource teachers felt they had the necessary support skills, they indicated that they would welcome professional development and training in the following areas: information on materials; information on learning disabilities; support

with Individualized Education Plans; curriculum ideas; interpersonal skills and behavior management. Because these teachers work with a range of regular class teachers of inclusive classrooms and the Special Needs Education teachers or other subject teachers working in cluster schools or single schools.

4.2.5. Support of itinerant teachers in mainstream schools

Itinerant teachers' supports in the mainstream or resource center schools are described vital by the school community. Different international literature reviews indicate that the itinerant support service was mainly used to support children with visual impairment and deaf and hard of hearing children (Luckner & Miller, 1994, Lynch & McCall, 2007). Itinerant teachers travel from school to school, providing instruction to deaf and hard of hearing students, as well as consulting with families and school personnel (Luckner & Miller, 1994). However, in some developing countries particularly in Ethiopia where the trend of inclusive education is recent, the itinerant service is being introduced in some selected schools of some regions in as a pilot project (Dagnew, 2013).

4.2.6. Roles of itinerant teacher in the mainstream and special schools

Regarding the duties and responsibilities of the itinerant teachers Participants mentioned that the SNE itinerant teachers' main roles are to support students with and without disabilities who are experiencing barriers in their learning as well as to help out of school children particularly children with disabilities get education in the nearby schools without any barriers to their learning. On the other hand, they claimed that they provide supports to the class teachers, parents and other support staff who are working on the learning of children with Special Educational Needs.

They reported that they also provide advice and professional supports to the class teachers of the cluster schools including (the satellite schools teachers) in their cluster. Additionally, they give training on the inclusive education/ SNE; like awareness rising, material usage in the resource centers, identification and assessment for those easily identifiable disabilities of children with different disabilities and find supports to the needs of learners from nongovernmental and governmental organizations and concerned bodies.

Regarding their responsibilities one of the itinerant teachers said:

My role in the schools includes examining students hearing ability using audiometer and provide hearing aid to hearing impaired children, observing and referring of reported visual problems for the medical checkup and find supports for their expenses. Additionally, I visit satellite schools twice or three times a week.

Another respondent from the other RC said:

I work as the resource center teacher. I allow teachers to borrow materials from the resource center to their classroom uses. There are also students who need special support in their academics. For example, we have mental retardation and autistic children in our school. So, I and my assistant teach them here in the resource center. Because they can't learn in the regular class room so we provide them educational supports using the Montessori kits in here.

Another itinerant teacher said:

The main responsibility of the itinerant teacher is facilitator. For example, right from September (enrolment time) we identify children with SENs. We did the identification in the neighboring or satellite schools too. We are expected to give training to the class teachers, we work with NGOs to fulfill the resource centers, visiting the satellite schools at least twice a week etc. the other thing is counseling; it could be to the parents, students or teachers.

Another itinerant teacher reported:

We have a core team at the resource center level. I am the vice chairman in the core team. The core team has a meeting always once a month. So, I collect

reports from the satellite schools' focal persons, discuss on the setbacks and the successes of our works. We also plan activities for the next month etc.

Regarding other supports their responses are presented and discussed in to the following themes.

4.2.6.1. Assessing the child's educational needs

Itinerant teachers were asked if they do screening, assessment and identification in the mainstream resource centers and the neighboring or satellite schools in the cluster schools they are allocated to. Most of them replied that they do not do standard assessments. That means the assessment tools that are being used in all the mainstream schools were underdeveloped. However, they said that at the beginning of the school year, a special needs education expert (official) from the woreda and the itinerant teacher find children with disability left at home. Additionally, one of the itinerant teachers said “during the school enrollment time, the Special Needs Education specialist team (I and the SNE expert from the woreda) will gather information from the community and ask parents of a child if their child/children has/have any type of disability that is identified by medical centers”. This way and through observations during learning in the classroom, children will be identified mostly by the class teachers if they have any disability that can be considered as any significant for their learning. On the other hand, if parents suspected any type of disability within their child or children, itinerant teachers will advise and support them to take the child or children to the medical centers for further assessment and identification. Then, the child will be placed in the school system either in a special unit or in the inclusive class.

Despite all these constraints schools are open to accommodate all children with different disabilities and itinerant teachers are providing the support to the extent they can to help children stay at the school setting and benefit from education.

4.2.6.2. practice of supporting parents in their children's referral

Itinerant teachers were asked if they do practice supporting parents in their children's referral to relevant stakeholders to: like supporting referral of children to schools for placement and supporting referral of children to local clinics and hospitals for medical assessment and support. All of them reported that their main support in identifying disabilities like, Autism learning disability, mental retardation and most other mental delays, are from hospitals. That means referral is common to hospitals and better equipped schools that have special materials to assess and identify the child's disability like Alpha special school for assessment of deaf and hard of hearing children. But as to most of the SNE itinerant teachers and the researcher's observation there is still a wide gap in finding, assessing and identifying mild and moderate disabilities in the school support system.

4.2.6.3. Itinerant teachers discussion with the class teachers

Regarding discussions with class teachers on how to support learners with special educational needs, itinerant teachers were asked questions and they responded that they do discussions with the class teachers and with the school principals regularly. They explained that the SNE core team has monthly meeting. Therefore, during that time discussions will be held among the core team members, itinerant teacher, and school principals; sometimes the SNE advisor from Addis Ababa City Education bureau will be

there and attend their meeting and forward suggestions and recommendations on what they did and what should be done in the future. They also mentioned that they discuss with class teachers about the needs of support that children have in their academics. But class teachers and principals reported that the meeting doesn't have any significant constancy and that is not well planned and scheduled. As a result, the school administrators complained about the lack of uniformity in the itinerant teachers work.

Some of the itinerant teachers also find donor and agencies and get support for their children. In such times, itinerant teachers with the school teachers decide on who need to get the support first. Generally, itinerant teachers have more discussion than the paper work about the cases of their children with the class teachers. Therefore, there are no limitations mentioned by itinerant teachers or class teachers regarding discussions on any support that is provided by the itinerant teachers.

4.2.6.4. Itinerant teacher keep records of children with disabilities

According to studies, one of the major problems in the field of special needs/ inclusive education is lack of appropriate data on children with disabilities in the school as well as in the national level. Regarding this, class teachers in collaboration with itinerant teachers and the school administration should have records on children's profiles. Accordingly, itinerant teachers were asked if they use to help class teachers to keep records of children with disabilities in their class or not. Itinerant teachers responded that they do help class teachers prepare a sample portfolio of learners with SENs and support teachers to use it. The researcher has also observed the effort that some of the class teachers are having the portfolios of some children with disabilities. But still schools have lack of well-organized records of children with disabilities. As a result, some of the school principals, class

teachers and itinerant teachers failed to show the exact number of children who are being supported and in need of supports in their schools. Thus, itinerant teachers should support teachers to prepare records of each child in the cluster schools they are supposed to support.

4.2.6.5. Itinerant teacher collaborate with the satellite school directors

The other question forwarded was whether the itinerant teacher collaborates with the satellite and neighboring school directors and teachers or not. The response towards this question was positive and they replied that they have a core team meeting in the Resource Center once a month. Thus, the satellite school principals attend the meeting and participate in the core team on the inclusion problems and achievements encountered by the school core team. But according to some itinerant teachers they do not go to the satellite schools often because there is lack of resources to provide to the schools that are asked by the satellite teachers. So it is difficult for the itinerant teachers to going back to the satellite schools bare hand to their questions. Due to this the visit to the satellite schools is very limited and discussions with satellite class teachers are infrequent.

4.2.6.6. Organizing training for class teachers in the cluster schools

The other type of support from the itinerant teachers to class teacher is organizing training for resource centers and satellite school teachers on the use of resource center, inclusive education, curriculum adaptation, Braille writing and reading, using sign language and the like. All of itinerant teachers were asked about their role in organizing training to the school teachers to help them develop their skills. They said that they do organize training on awareness raising, sign language and Braille reading and writing etc.

in collaboration with the SNE project. But due to the absence of continuity in the training most teachers who are not using it forget the skills. However, those of teachers in Alpha special primary school for the deaf/ HH children and yekatit special primary schools for the deaf/HH (satellite school under the Dagmawi Birhan RCs School) teachers are very good in sign language and getting in service training. On the contrary the remaining mainstream schools teachers lack some of the abovementioned skills. This means some of the class teachers including itinerant teachers have limitations to provide inclusive support to diverse children.

4.2.6.7. Opinion of school principals towards itinerant teachers services

Class teachers are one of the main objectives of itinerant teachers support in the mainstream schools. In most mainstream schools teachers of children with SEN are vulnerable to others support. Itinerant teachers support is one among many. Regarding the services school principals were interviewed on their opinion and the findings presented as follow.

The six mainstream or RCs school principals were asked if they were happy about the practice of itinerant teachers program in their school and four of the cluster schools principals admitted that the establishment of itinerant teachers program in the schools brought about better enrolment of children with different disabilities in the mainstream schools compared to the previous academic years and children with SENs are better supported by the class teachers and itinerant teachers as a result of the presence of itinerant teacher's support and practices in the schools. The school principals mentioned that during the beginning of new academic year, before schools start enrollments of students, itinerant teachers in collaboration with the Woreda education bureau experts,

SNE teachers and other school staffs find children left at home and bring them to schools to be enrolled. Sometimes, families of some children with severe disabilities may refuse to send their child/children to the schools. In such conditions, itinerant teachers play a great role in persuading the family of the child with disability. Besides, they also arrange supports to the families of the child/children with SENs to create conducive environment for the child with SENs. Itinerant teachers also help regular class teachers by visiting and sharing their experiences, helping children and class teachers develop necessary skills like sign languages, Braille reading and writing, mobility and orientation training for blind children, walking and speaking skills for children with mental retardation etc. During observation in two mainstream schools, the researcher could also observe itinerant teachers supporting the class teachers learn and practice basic sign language skills during their lunch time. The researched asked the itinerant teachers about their program and found out that it was a temporary support for those teachers who were learning sign language skills in Addis Ababa University at the weekends. Additionally, the itinerant teachers help the schools find NGOs that could support children with disabilities in the schools. They mentioned that they do requesting, coordinating, monitoring and guiding the fulfillments of facilities in the school to children with disabilities and the school environment in general.

One of the school principal said:

The presence of itinerant teacher program in the school helps us broadening and betterment of services that are being provided in the resource center. This helps our school to develop inclusive education and the learning of children with disabilities. For example the program of itinerant teacher is playing an important role in identifying, assessing as well as referring children with suspected disabilities to health centers and other concerned bodies to identify what exact

disability type does a child have and in helping the community around the school in order to help children.

One of these school principals said:

I do not oppose the itinerant teachers program as a program. Because, it is very good and supportive to children with special educational needs. But when we come to its implementation, first, it doesn't have formally organized structure and implementation procedures. For example, the itinerant teacher in our school is free of teaching regular classes. We freed her to be flexible in her job and to visit satellite schools under our cluster. But we don't have itinerant teacher's evaluation criteria to evaluate his or her efficiency. As a result, we have to let them teach classes and just forget their duties. Second, the itinerant teacher in the school doesn't prepare lesson plan or another form of schedule that shows their next action. Therefore, it is impossible to comment or monitor their work. This creates a gap between the itinerant teacher and the administrators.

Generally the finding from the school principals suggests that the itinerant teachers program is a very good to the inclusive education as well as to the marginalized and excluded children at school as well as at home. After the allocation of itinerant teachers the number of children with disabilities in the schools showed progress and the attitude of teachers' children without disability and the school community in general is changing. Besides the project structural issues and some internal management improvement, the project had a positive impact on children's education. The consultations on school support and itinerant program, being given by the special needs education advisor are going in the right direction. However, efforts still need to be done on the school management system to support and monitor the school support system in general and itinerant teachers program in particular.

4.3. Good practices of SNE itinerant teachers

4.3.1. Availability of the itinerant service

As to the participants, the establishment of the SNE resource centers and the beginning of the itinerant service in the mainstream cluster schools is so important that children with disabilities are getting support in their learning and in their life skills too. This is the main satisfaction for the itinerant teachers. All of the itinerant teachers stated that they don't feel as if they are at work when they are supporting their students rather they feel as if they are at home doing something necessary to their children or other family members; because, they are so close to each other. They said that the relationship with their students go beyond a teacher and a student approach. They explained that they are more of family.

One of the itinerant teachers said:

When you are a SNE teacher you are not only a teacher but you are also a mother or a father to the children. You feel what they feel. That becomes your habit and part of your behavior too. Whenever you see any person with disability, you feel that you are the closest person to him or to her.

Another itinerant also said:

As a special need education teacher I always feel happy when I see children growing, changing in their learning and doing something by themselves. So at the end of each day, I fell that I am not only working for the sake of teaching but also for the satisfaction of my soul.

The other thing they considered as a success in their course of work was almost all of the itinerant teachers have at least three and above children to support in their cases; it could be a pullout session to children who are not benefiting from the regular class or teaching

skills in the resource room etc. For example, one of the itinerant teachers was observed providing continuous regular support in the resource center. The itinerant teacher was asked if she has other itinerant services to do or not and she replied that she is assigned only to the selected students who couldn't be included in the regular classes. Therefore, she was unable to visit other teachers in the satellite schools. But she explained that she was doing something good to these selected children with different disabilities.

4.3.2. Itinerant teachers teach regular classes

There is no system or framework established to evaluate and record the efficiency of itinerant teachers' services in the school for these professionals rather they have to teach regular classes to be evaluated and to get promotion and benefit packages like the other regular teachers. Thus, itinerant teachers have to have one or two regular classes per day. Though they lack time to carry out their professional tasks, they do teaching in addition to their itinerant services.

4.3.3. Creating links with NGOs and donors

Regarding the effort that is made by itinerant teachers to create a link between donors and NGOs with the Mainstream resource centers some of the itinerant teachers reported that they have made good progress in creating connections with some non-governmental organizations that showed interest to provide some support to children with SEN. They said that because there is a limitation on awareness, it is tiresome to get organizations and donors that could understand the problem and get interested in supporting special needs education programs. According to the itinerant teachers some of the local non-governmental organizations believe that the school has to fulfill everything to its

students. On the contrary there are also some national and international NGOs and donors that are doing their best.

One of the itinerant teachers said

I was working with my school administration to find donors and NGOs to get support to my students and I found one that was interested to work with us and to support our some children with learning materials like exercise books, pens, pencils and bags. Thus, we could give it to very poor children with SEN in our schools.

The other itinerant teacher also commented:

We are working with the Finnish project to support children who have visual problems and are in need of glasses. We could support very few children with visual impairment. Now also we were asked to select students who are highly vulnerable to it. Accordingly, we could select them and they were diagnosed and got the prescriptions... But we couldn't buy them the glasses due to a shortage of financial budget.

According to the finding itinerant teachers are trying their best to create links and connections with donors and NGOs to find additional support to their students. However, they need to work in coordination with the school administrators and other support personnel from their schools. Moreover, they complained that the school administrators should understand their activities and provide budget for transportation fuel and other expenses too.

4.3.4. Academic based activities

According to itinerant teachers most class teachers are aware of the importance of including students in the inclusive classroom. Particularly, class teachers of preschool

children teach diverse students in inclusive classes. The researcher could observe that class teachers help students to work in groups and to support each other in their learning.

In most preschool classes there were two teachers working in pair one assisting the other while teaching and supporting children. According to Halliwell (2003), a book written on supporting children in SNE, assistants fulfill many roles in providing support. Halliwell added that some work primarily with individual pupils, some with small groups, and some with the whole class in partnership with the teacher. They work with variety of ways and with children of all ages and abilities. Thus the experience being practiced in these classes has to be encouraged and supported by concerned bodies.

4.4. Challenges of SNE itinerant teachers

Participants were requested to describe the challenges they experienced in supporting children with SENs experiencing difficulties in their learning, class teachers supporting their students, and families assisting their child's learning. The challenges that are described by the itinerant teachers presented in following sub sections.

4.4.1. Confusion on the role and responsibility of itinerant teachers

The SNE itinerant teachers in the mainstreams schools believe that they are playing great roles in supporting the learning of children with SENs. They reported that they are working as regular class teachers and resource room person in addition to their major responsibility of helping regular class teachers, students and parents. They reported that being itinerant teachers they are working in more than three different schools, with many teachers under different principals. Most of the time principals of schools with the resource centers, where itinerant teachers are assigned to, they do not understand the

demanding nature of the itinerant teacher's job. This lack of common understanding created a range of confusions and uncertainties between the itinerant teachers and the school administrations. The school principals consider itinerant teacher's visits to the satellite schools are a 'waste of time' and a means to escape from other school duties. One among the reasons for the confusions cited was that not all of them received a job description. Due to the lack of an official job description itinerant teachers were following the general schools' teachers' job descriptions and their own work schedules. As a result, there are always misunderstanding between the school principals and the itinerant teacher. Moreover, often the general teachers' job descriptions became overwhelming and it opened up possibilities of itinerant teachers being exploited by schools, principals and mainstream class teachers. As a result, itinerant teachers were forced to have regular classes and teaching based evaluation for their efficiency, which is a criterion to get job promotion and other benefits from the school and education bureaus. All these imply that many principals and staff members were not aware of the role of the itinerant teachers. On the other hand, when principals and staff know the itinerant teachers job descriptions, it made it somewhat easier for them to understand the role of the itinerant teacher.

In terms of the different expectations from the principals and staff members, the itinerant teachers felt that the expectations were too demanding. As a consequence, itinerant teachers having different roles at each schools and this resulted in challenges for the itinerant teachers in relation to function and perform efficiently.

Additionally, itinerant teachers are expected to be fully skilled in communication methods like sign language and Braille reading and writing, counseling, therapies etc. to

fit in with all tasks of support specialists in the schools. This also creates confusion between the itinerant teacher, the school administrators and parents too.

Though it seems that there is a job description of the itinerant teachers, the responsibilities of the itinerant teachers are quite vague and cover a large scope of activities. For example, there is no clear statement about what kind of consultation and support should they give to the teachers and to which extend should they support each child needed precisions and occasioned confusion in the project implementation. This resulted in conflict with the school principals and misunderstanding of the responsibilities of itinerant teachers in the schools.

4.4.2. Limited understanding of the Inclusive Education paradigm

According to the response of itinerant teachers, most of them have identified their role because they have been briefed about their responsibilities in different training. However, the findings revealed that itinerant teachers were not all working depending on the training and information that they are given and within the same paradigm. One of the reasons mentioned was that some of the itinerant teachers have limited knowledge of inclusive education as well as itinerant teaching. Thus, itinerant teachers tend to use the medical approach to support children with SEN. That means they assess learners and then attempted to fix the ‘problem’ i.e. operating in the medical paradigm. The findings suggest that these itinerant teachers merely aimed to fix the problem within the learner rather than through different social support approach. But some of those experienced itinerant teachers claimed that they use to support children with disabilities using a holistic approach where barriers to learning and development are located within the entire

system. Hence, they claimed to collaborate with mainstream teachers, parents and the education department official in supporting learners.

As a result, the findings suggest an inconsistency with regard to the nature of support provided by itinerant teachers. This inconsistency has implications for the effective functioning of itinerant teachers. This is of great concern because it implies that learners experiencing barriers to learning and development are not being supported holistically. Further, this could imply that not all the learning barriers are considered for intervention. As a result, there might be a lack of optimal learning support for children with SEN experiencing barriers to learning.

The findings therefore suggest that itinerant teachers have a limited understanding of the Inclusive Education paradigm and this poses implications for the effective functioning of itinerant teachers and the learners. This finding was also supported by the Ministry of Education (2012b) strategy report.

4.4.3. Lack of support for Itinerant teachers

The findings reveal that majority of the itinerant teachers did not get the necessary support from the woreda and regional education bureaus. Especially, in terms of financial support and other necessary materials to fulfill the resource centers there is no budget from the school or the government. They claimed that they are only supported by the SEN project that is worth of little money for the transportation and mobile card to talk to the satellite school teachers. But they complained that it is used for the motorcycle fuel consumption and it does not cover more than a single trip fuel. In addition to that the itinerant teachers and school principals claimed that the Resource Centers in their schools

were only equipped with the Montessori kits and some other materials by the support of the Finnish government. But the school system doesn't support the resource center and it is isolated as if it is not part of the school. As a result, schools do not provide the necessary emphasis to the RCs as well as to the itinerant teachers.

Consequently, itinerant teachers in this study felt very less-confident to visit other schools teachers because they don't have much support to provide and there are no immediate answers to the needs of children with disabilities. As a result, they will not be interested to go bare hand and without any solution to children's needs.

The findings further reveal that the majority of the itinerant teachers were newly assigned to mainstream schools. Therefore, experienced teachers may ask them questions that are beyond their knowledge and their personal needs only. Hence they lacked adequate training in Inclusive Education theory and pedagogy. The findings therefore further suggest that itinerant teachers felt that they were thrown at the deep end and simply have to find their own way in terms of planning. Each itinerant teacher planned on his/her own. Itinerant teachers claimed this to be difficult because they are only able to develop plan for the learners in conjunction with the regular students' lesson plan.

The findings suggest that itinerant teachers were not getting sufficient support from the department of education in order to provide the effective support to our most needy learners as expected. This could result in itinerant teachers not providing optimal or sufficient support to learners experiencing barriers to learning and development.

In essence one can therefore argue that itinerant teachers cannot be expected to meet the needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning and development if they did not get appropriate support from schools and the department of education.

4.4.4. Structural issue and sustainability

The itinerant teachers support service is running by the support of the Finnish project and it is at its final year of financial support. As a result, there is a frustration to the itinerant teachers that there will be a challenging time coming to the service and the professionals that there will not be any support from the government unless there is immediate solution from the Regional Educational Administration Bureau (AACEB). Local authorities need support to lobby at Provincial and National level of relevant government authorities in order to obtain the formalization of itinerant teachers' status. SNE experts also recommended engaging also with non-formal department in order to increase IT role to access for out of school children.

4.5. Suggested solution from itinerant teachers on the improvement of their services in the cluster schools

By interview questions, itinerant teachers were asked what needs do they have to make itinerant teachers program effective. First, all of them said itinerant teacher program/resource centers must have its own budget. In addition to this, all of them agreed that the salary scale of itinerant teachers is not enough when compared with the activities expected from them. Not only these but also, it was noted from the interview made with them, itinerant teachers respond as they need to get enough learning chances for the purpose of improving their academic status, extra payment for transportation, additional

man power such as school psychologists, resource room teachers who support them in the resource center, continuous follow and support from woreda and sub-city education offices, and their salary scale to be made balanced at least parallel to that of satellite schools principals. School principals also respond as they repeatedly heard when itinerant teachers ask to get annual budget for their resource centers and to their motorcycle for Woreda and Sub-City education offices during different meetings. Similarly, Woreda education office heads and Sub-City education office process council members said cluster supervisors presented repeated questions for our office and finance and economy development office to have their own annual budget.

4.6. Availability of supports and resources in the Special Needs Education /inclusive education Resource Centers

Table 3: Class teacher's activities in the inclusive classroom

No.	Items	Class teacher Respondents		
		Yes	NO	Total
		F(%)	F(%)	F(%)
1.	Do you have students with special needs in your classroom/s?	34(100)	-(-)	34(100)
2.	Do students with different disabilities learn with their non-disabled peers in the same classroom in your school?	31(91.2)	3(8.8)	34(100)
3.	Do you have any assessment tool/s to identify children with different disabilities in your school?	9(26.5)	25(73.5)	34(100)
4.	While group activities, do you allow students with special needs to involve with non-disabled students?	33(97)	1(3)	34(100)
5.	Do you ask non-disabled students to support children with disabilities in your classroom?	32(94)	2(6)	34(100)
6.	Have you received any training in the area of special needs education?	33(97)	1(3)	34(100)
7.	Do you borrow materials and equipment from the resource center?	29(85.3)	5(14.7)	34(100)
8.	Do you get the necessary teaching learning supports and materials from the school?	20(58.8)	14(41.2)	34(100)
9.	Do you provide support to preschool children at home?	3(8.8)	31(91.2)	34(100)
10	Do you get advice on how to meet children's needs from the itinerant teacher?	27(79.4)	7(20.6)	34(100)

As can be seen in table 2, the questionnaire conducted in six cluster primary schools of Addis Ababa city revealed many results. The above table shows that all respondents of class teachers, 34 (100%), mentioned that regardless of their number they have students with SENs in their classrooms. This indicates that children with different disabilities are enrolled and are attending regular education in the nearby mainstream schools with their non-disabled peers in the mainstream school unless their health status or disability prevents them from joining the regular classes. However, it doesn't necessarily mean that they all were learning in the inclusive classrooms. Because, some schools teach children in the inclusive classes but some of the schools have special units for the better education and care of children with some types of disability. For example, in Kokebe Tsibah primary school there are special units for children with Mental Retardation and for Autistic children and some other schools are special schools. According to the observation made by the researcher and informal conversation with their caretaker and teachers, they said that "children who are Autistic are placed in special unit because they need special care and special education. The itinerant teacher also added that if they were placed in the regular classes they would have harmed other students and also they don't give attention to their learning if they are not given one to one education or special attention and follow up. As a result, they are placed in the special units for their better learning and advantages. The researcher could observe similar conditions in other schools too. For example, in Dagmawi Birhan primary school itinerant teachers with assistant teacher teach children with mental retardation and Autistic children were given special education in the resource center. Alpha special school and Yekatit 23 primary school for the deaf are also examples of special units and schools.

Regarding the availability of screening and assessment tools to identify children with suspected disabilities in the cluster schools, 26(73.5%) of the class teachers mentioned that they do not have any screening and assessment tools however they use traditional methods of screening and assessment for some visible or severe disabilities. This result is confirmed by the Ministry of Education (2012:8) as there are no screening and assessment tools for early identification of learning problems of (attention deficit hyperactivity, learning disability as well as gifted and talented) learners. But 9(26.5%) class teachers replied that they have few screening and assessment tools to identify very common disabilities. In order to have clear data the researcher triangulated the information from interviews observations as well as from the review of related literature and he found out that there are some assessment tools to identify disabilities like mathematics, hearing and blindness but there are still no standardized assessment tools in the country to identify children with other mild and profound disabilities. As a result, teachers and other supporting staff found it difficult to accommodate and provide the right support to learners with Special educational needs.

“We do not have screening and assessment tools from the schools or the MoE. This becomes an obstacle right now. For example, since we, SNE teachers, are trained and learned the characteristics of different disabilities we use our knowledge/concept as the first step of assessment tool. However, this also works for those easily identified and severe disabilities. Let’s say for example if a child is deaf you can see him/her ask him/her questions and if he/she is unable to respond to our questions or can’t respond to the sounds we made to assess him/her, we can say he/she is deaf and send him/her to hospitals for further assessments and identification process. The other way is, if the child

himself/herself or his/her parents come and report about their child's problems, we will try to assess his/ her disability. Otherwise, we do not have the other assessment tools but sometimes we personally use adopted tools form the courses we have taken in colleges and universities then we refer the suspected child to hospitals for further assessment and identification. The other thing is that we are also open to enroll children identified by hospitals who have certificates of identified disabilities. But this is not uniform in different schools and it may not work to mild disability types.”

Table 4: Availability of children with disabilities in the classrooms

no	Items	Class teacher respondents		
		Yes F(%)	No F(%)	Total F(%)
1.	hearing impairment (including deafness)	16(47)	18(53)	34(100)
2.	visual impairment (including blindness)	10(29)	24(71)	34(100)
3.	orthopedic impairment	20(59)	14(41)	34(100)
4.	deaf-blindness	8(23.5)	26(76.5)	34(100)
5.	multiple disabilities	20(59)	14(41)	34(100)
6.	speech or language impairment	24(71)	10(29)	34(100)
7.	Intellectual disability	19(56)	15(44)	34(100)
8.	Autism	11(32)	23(68)	34(100)
9.	specific learning disability	27(79)	7(21)	34(100)

Questionnaire questions about the availability of children with different types of disabilities in the mainstream schools were constructed. Then class teachers were requested to give their responses and to write the number of children with disabilities and children with SEN that are learning in their classes on the questionnaires. Consequently, class teachers could respond to the question whether there are children in their classrooms or not but regarding the number of children with different disabilities in the

schools, still there is lack information on reliable data. However, the response of school teachers towards the availability of children with different types of disability is presented in the above table and analyzed as follows.

Table 3 item 1, class teachers were asked a question regarding the availability of children with hearing impairment in their classrooms. The finding indicates that 18(53%) of the class teachers claimed that there are no children with hearing impairment including the deaf in their classes but 16(47%) of class teacher respondents agreed that they have hearing impaired and deaf students in their classes. This indicates that the number of children with hearing impairment including the deaf doesn't exist in many classes. As we can see from the above mentioned table that the availability of visual impaired students including blindness in most classes was confirmed by as low as 10(29%) and 24(71%) of the class teachers respondents who said that they do not have visually impaired including deafness in their classes. On the contrary, the presence of orthopedics disability type in the cluster schools was reported by as high as 20(59%) of the class teacher respondents and about 14(41%) of the respondents mentioned the non-existence of the orthopedics disability. 8(23.5%) of class teachers reported the availability of deaf-blind children in their classes. Whereas, 26(76.5%) of the class teacher respondents stood to the contrary. But during observation the researcher could observe only a few number of this type of disability in the cluster schools. In this table, the presence of Multiple disabilities in the cluster schools was asked to the class teachers and 20(59%) of them replied as it exists in the cluster schools and on the other side, 14(41%) of them do not agree on its presence.

Many respondents agreed on the availability of speech and language impairment in the cluster schools. Therefore, 24(71%) of the class teachers reported the availability of it

and 10(29%) of the class teachers said that it was not seen in their classes or in their schools. The other question was posed to find out if intellectual disability appeared in the cluster schools; and the result from the table revealed that 19(56%) of the class teacher responded its presence and 15(44%) of them claimed to the contrary. On the other hand, the occurrence of Autism in the cluster school was reported as low as 11(32%) by the class teacher and 23(68%) of them responded that Autistic children do not found in their classes or schools.

Regarding specific learning disability, 27(79%) of the class teachers reported that it exists in their classes but only 7(21%) of the class teachers disagreed on the presence of specific learning disability in their cluster schools. The last question for this table was questioned class teachers to report the availability of emotionally disturbed students in their classes or cluster schools and about one third 12(35%) of them responded that it happened in their classes and two third 22(65%) of them said that they didn't encounter children with emotional disturbance in their classes or in the mainstream schools.

Based on the data, we can deduce that there is the existence of children with different types of disabilities and children with Special Educational Needs in the cluster mainstream schools and in their neighboring (satellite) schools. However, schools have great homework of improving the quality of SNE/inclusive education systems, teachers' skills, materials in the resource centers and the support of the itinerant teachers to children with SENs, Special Needs Education teachers, parents and the school community in general.

Table 5: availability of support staff in the mainstream school

No	Items	Class teacher respondents		
		Yes	No	Total
		F(%)	F(%)	F(%)
1.	personal assistance	12(35.3)	22(64.7)	34(100)
2.	Educational psychologist	6(17.6)	28(82.4)	34(100)
3.	Special Needs education teachers	33(97.1)	1(2.9)	34(100)
4.	The social worker	8(23.5)	24(70.6)	32(94.1)
5.	Itinerant teacher	27(79.4)	7(20.6)	34(100)
6.	Library assistants	28(82.4)	6(17.6)	34(100)
7.	Laboratory technician	25(73.5)	9(26.5)	34(100)
8.	The speech pathologist	7(20.6)	27(79.4)	34(100)
9.	Occupational therapists	2(5.9)	32(94.1)	34(100)
10.	Resource room teacher	11(32.4)	15(44.1)	34(100)
11.	School nurses	2(5.9)	32(94.1)	34(100)
12.	Sign language interpreter	5(14.7)	23(67.6)	34(100)
13.	Braille trainer	5(14.7)	29(85.3)	34(100)
14.	Orientation and mobility trainer	19(55.9)	29(85.3)	34(100)

Questions in table 4 were constructed to gather information about the availability of SNE/inclusive education support staff and their services in the cluster mainstream schools. Thus, findings of the questions are analyzed as follow.

As we can see in table 4(item 1), class teachers were asked if the school has personal assistants to support the SNE students as well as class teachers. 22(65%) of the respondent class teachers revealed that there are no personal assistants in the cluster schools. whereas, 12(35%) of the class teachers replied that there are personal assistants in the cluster schools. In order to triangulate the abovementioned finding, interview

findings, from the school principals and itinerant teachers were used. As a result, the data confirmed that there are personal assistants in some preschool classes and special units; however, there are no personal assistants in the regular primary schools. Another question was forwarded to the same groups of class teachers about the presence of school psychologist, 28(82.4%) of these respondents responded that the schools that they are working in doesn't have school psychologist. On the contrary, only 6(17.6%) of the respondents responded as their school has school psychologist.

As it is clearly seen in the above table, almost the entire cluster schools class teachers 33(97.1%) responded that they have SNE teachers in their schools teaching as well as supporting children with Special Educational Needs and their teachers. But, only 1(2.9%) of the class teachers responded the opposite to the other teachers in the group. Regarding social workers, 24(70.6%) of the respondents claimed that there are no social workers in their schools but 8(23.5%) of the respondents replied that there are social workers in their schools. This group of teachers were requested to answer another question about the presence of itinerant teachers in the cluster mainstream schools and 27(79.4%) of the respondents replied yes there are itinerant teachers working in the mainstream schools and 7(20.6%) of them said there are no itinerant teachers who are working in the schools. In answering a question about the library assistants, 28(82.4%) the participants reported that there are library assistants who serve in the schools but 6(17.6%) of them responded that no library assistants working in the schools. 25(73.5%) the respondents reported that laboratory technicians are available in the mainstream schools but 9(26.5%) of respondents disagreed with their counterparts. Regarding the presence of Occupational therapists and their services in the schools, 27(79.4%) of the class teachers said that there

aren't any occupational therapists in the mainstream schools. But, 7(20.6%) of the class teachers reported as there are occupational therapists in their schools. Similar groups of teachers were asked a question about the availability of the speech pathologists in the schools where they are working and 32(94.1%) of them responded that there aren't any speech pathologist in their schools and only 2(5.9%) of them replied yes there are speech pathologist working in their schools. School nurses 32(94.1%) and 2(5.9%), Sign language interpreter 23(67.6%) and 11(32.4%), Braille trainer 29 (85.3%) and 5(14.7%), and Orientation and mobility trainer 29(85.3%) and 5(14.7%) of the respondents with high number or percentage are (not available in the schools) responses and low number or percentage are (yes they are available) responses respectively. Regarding "the availability of school support personnel" school principals were interviewed and they replied as follows. One of the school principals said:

We don't have these specialist support personnel; the only person who is supporting the children with SENs in our school is the itinerant teacher.

The other respondent said

No we don't have any of these specialists. Sometimes, we use our teachers as interpreters for free. Sometimes, the itinerant teacher serves as a psychologist or as a speech pathologist or an interpreter.

Similar responses were gathered from all the cluster schools principals. They reported that except the SNE itinerant teachers and focal SNE teachers of the satellite schools, there are no other specialist support personnel in their schools.

From both sources of information, the above-mentioned table and the interviews findings, one can deduce that all the cluster mainstream schools do not have any specialist support personnel services. Most of the Special Need Education/ Inclusive Education supports are not available for children who are in need of them.

Table 6: Services available to students with SEN in the mainstream schools

No		Class teacher respondents		
		Yes	No	Total
		F(%)	F(%)	F(%)
1.	Free enrollment and registration	27(79.4)	5(14.7)	32(94.1)
2.	Food and nutrition services	30(88.2)	3(8.8)	33(97.1)
3.	Transportation for students with special needs	1(2.9)	32(94.1)	33(97.1)
4.	Health services in the school	5(14.7)	27(79.4)	32(94.1)
5.	Home and hospital educational services	1(2.9)	33(97.1)	34(100)
6.	Accommodated bathroom with grab bars	16(47.1)	18(52.9)	34(100)
7.	Modified accessible toilets	24(70.6)	10(29.4)	34(100)
8.	Accessible classrooms and compound	27(79.4)	7(20.6)	34(100)
9.	Accessible play ground	19(55.9)	15(44.1)	34(100)
10.	Space for wheelchairs	17(50.0)	17(50.0)	34(100)
11.	Unique seating arrangements	19(55.9)	15(44.1)	34(100)
12.	Sign posts for places and directions	19(55.9)	15(44.1)	34(100)
13.	Well secured store	21(61.8)	13(38.2)	34(100)
14.	Clean bright room	23(67.6)	11(32.4)	34(100)

As table 6 indicates, the availability of free enrolment service in the mainstream schools is assured by 27(79.4%) of the class teachers. The same question was responded by 5(14.7) of the class teachers that there isn't free enrolment in the mainstream schools. Another question on the provision of free food and nutrition services was asked to the class teachers and almost all of them 30(88.2%)replied that there is food and nutrition service to children with and without disabilities in the schools. only 3(8.8%) of the class teachers replied that there is no free food and nutrition service in the schools. but during observation the researcher could observe that all of the mainstream schools that have pre-

school class students and some primary class students, they provide food and nutrition. Regarding the availability of school transportation service for students with SEN only 1(2.9%) of the school teachers said yes there is school transportation for children with SEN but the rest of group members that is 32(94.1%) of them concluded that there is no school transportation for students with disabilities in the mainstream schools.

School health service is one of the school specialist support services for students with SEN or with disabilities. Therefore, question was posed to know whether the services are available in the mainstream schools or not, and many of the respondents that is 27(79.4%) said that there are no health services in the mainstream school. However, 5(14.7%) of them stood against their counterparts. The other issue that class teachers were asked to respond was about home and hospital educational services. Almost all of the class teacher respondents 33(97.1%) replied that there is no home and hospital educational service provided by the mainstream schools. only 1(2.9%) respondent agreed on the availability of home and hospital educational service in the mainstream schools.

Students spend much time of a day in the schools; so, during this time they will need to go to the toilets and bathrooms at least once or twice in a day. Thus, students, particularly children with disabilities want to have accommodated toilets and bathroom with grab bars. As a result, the researcher wants to see how far these needs are fulfilled. More than half 18(52.9%) of the class teachers replied that the bathrooms in the mainstream schools are not accommodated but 16(47.1%) disagree about the availability of accommodated school bathrooms for children with disabilities. On the other side the response of school teachers regarding the availability of modified toilets was positive 24(70.6%) of them assured that there are modified toilets in the mainstream schools. 10(29.4%) of these

teachers evidenced that the toilets in the mainstream schools are not modified and comfortable to children with disabilities.

As can be seen from table 5, the question asked whether the classrooms and the school compounds of the mainstream schools are easy to move in and around, many participants 27(79.4%) of the class teachers reported that the classrooms and the school compounds in the mainstream schools are accessible to children with and without disabilities but 7(20.6%) of the group members opposed the report on the accessibility of the classrooms and the schools' compounds. More than half of the respondent class teachers 19(55.9%) responded "yes, there are." to the availability of these three school facilities. On the contrary 15(44.1%) of the respondent class teachers disagreed on the accessibility of playground, the availability of sign posts for places and directions and the unique seating arrangements. Whereas, respondent class teachers responses were equally divided in to two while answering the question that was asked about the availability of Spaces for wheelchairs in the mainstream classrooms and inside the schools' compounds 17(50%) of the respondents responses was "Yes" and the other half was "No".

Regarding well secured school stores 21(61.8%) of the class teachers replied there are good and secured stores to keep the resources of the school facilities. But 13(38.2%) of the respondents stood against their group members ideas and they stand on the side of there aren't good and secured stores to keep the schools resources.

According to table 7 (see Appendix) questions regarding the availability of resources like special materials and equipment and SNE services in resource rooms, in the mainstream schools were asked to the class teachers. Based on the data gathered through the questionnaire, the researcher has done summary analysis on selected special materials, equipment and SNE services.

According to the class teachers, only few of these, table 7(see Appendix) special materials, equipment and SNE services are reported available in the resource rooms. They responded that these are; Adaptive computer technologies with Jaws, Stylus, different kinds of toys, pictures and music play kits(Montessori), TV and DVD, Text books, Photocopy materials and Stationeries (pen, exercise book, pencil etc.) . But, majority of the special materials and some equipment like Canes, Reader, Note taker, Braille slate, Perkins (Adaptive six key Braille), Braille Embosser machine, Brailier or Braille Writer, Braille Ruler, Braille Watch, Talking Watch, Reference in Braille text books and materials, Braille Dictionary, large print, audio or e-text, Sound/ Beep Ball, Mathematics kit (like Taylor Frame), talking calculators, tape recorder, Optical Devices hearing aid (head phone), Cochlear implants, Sign Language Dictionary, Sign Language chart, FM systems, Audiometer, Otoscopy and Otoscopy picks, Hearing impaired telephones, Lifts or ramps, Crutches, Wheelchairs, Walker, Rails in corridors and toilets, lowered tables, special chairs, hip straps, foot boxes (to keep hips bent at 90 degree angle), writing material, keyboards, switches, Reference materials on adaptive behavioral skills, Vocational and technical training materials, Picture exchange communication system (PECS), Speech training kits for children with speech difficulties, Video Camera, Soft boards where information is well displayed, Charts, Overhead projector, Videos,

Laptop for the itinerant teacher, Comics, Globs, Carpet and First aid kits are reported that they are not available in the resource rooms.

However, according to the itinerant teachers and observations of the researcher in the RCs, there are materials and some equipment like reference Braille books, wheelchair, the slate and stylus, abacus and Braille paper in the resource rooms but students do not have the chance to use these materials in the classrooms because teachers of the mainstream schools do not have adequate skills to manipulate these materials. On the other hand, in some of these mainstream schools or resource centers as well as the satellite schools there aren't students with disabilities that are in need of these equipment and materials. But regarding the conduciveness of the physical environment, the school principals reported that the school compounds are not suitable enough for students who use wheelchairs and it can be a barrier to physically disabled children. Thus, it can affect the teaching learning process to some extent.

Table: 8 Academics and skills training services and teaching aids in the school

No	Items	Respondents		
		Yes	No	Total
		N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
1.	Academic intervention	13(38.2)	15(44.1)	28(82.4)
2.	Lesson format	30(88.2)	3(8.8)	33(97.1)
3.	Modification of instructional materials	27(79.4)	6(17.6)	34(100)
4.	Teaching strategies	28(82.4)	5(14.7)	33(97.1)
5.	Instructional groupings or arrangements	28(82.4)	6(17.6)	34(100)
6.	Adaptations to the method for responding	31(91.2)	3(8.8)	34(100)
7.	Curricular goals and learning outcomes	29(85.3)	5(14.7)	34(100)
8.	Simplified tasks	31(91.2)	2(5.9)	33(97.1)
9.	An alternative activity	26(76.5)	6(17.6)	32(94.1)
10.	extra time to learn and practice new skills	23(67.6)	10(29.4)	33(97.1)
11.	Examination modifications	29(85.3)	4(11.8)	33(97.1)
12.	Social interaction skills	25(73.5)	12(35.3)	34(100)
13.	Recreation and leisure skills	22(64.7)	9(26.5)	28(82.4)
14.	School counseling services	27(79.4)	7(20.6)	34(100)
15.	Psychological services	9(26.5)	25(73.5)	34(100)
16.	Before and after care	14(41.2)	20(58.8)	34(100)
17.	Career education	16(47.1)	18(52.9)	34(100)
18.	auditory training	13(38.2)	21(61.8)	34(100)
19.	speech (or lip) reading	18(52.9)	16(47.1)	34(100)
20.	Teaching Reading and writing	26(76.5)	8(23.5)	34(100)
21.	Sign language training	20(58.8)	14(41.2)	34(100)
22.	Physical education for VIC	25(73.5)	9(26.5)	34(100)
23.	Communication modes	19(55.9)	15(44.1)	34(100)
24.	Daily Living skills	19(55.9)	15(44.1)	34(100)
25.	Orientation and mobility	17(50.0)	17(50.0)	34(100)
26.	Abacus	29(85.3)	5(14.7)	34(100)
27.	Models	28(82.4)	6(17.6)	33(97.1)
28.	tactile maps	20(58.8)	14(41.2)	34(100)

As table 8 indicates, regarding the availability of academic intervention in the mainstream schools out of 34 class teachers, only 28(82.4%) participants could give their answers on the questionnaire sheets. Among them 15(44.1%)of the class teachers, more than half of them responded that there is no academic intervention in the mainstream schools. On the other hand, less than half of them or 13(38.2%)of the class teachers assured that there is academic intervention in the mainstream schools. Therefore, the researcher tried to triangulate and get the fact about the availability of educational intervention in the mainstream schools. As a result, data gathered through interviews with itinerant teachers, revealed that though it is not adequate, there is academic intervention program provided by class teachers as well as itinerant teachers in the mainstream schools. School principals also assured that children get additional supports in their weakness from the itinerant teachers in the resource rooms and class teachers in the tutorial sessions.

Here in the above table, we can see and understand that almost all of the class teachers responded positively about the availability of the following list of services. These group of class teachers said that there are Lesson formats, modification of instructional materials, teaching strategies, instructional groupings or arrangements, adaptations to the method for responding, curricular goals and learning outcomes, simplified tasks, an alternative activities, extra time to learn and practice new skills, examination modifications, social interaction skills, recreation and leisure skills and School counseling services etc. Moreover, regarding these services, the researcher could informally observe itinerants and SNE teachers providing speech (or lip) reading, teaching Reading and Writing, Sign language training, using Abacus and Models materials, and tactile maps in

the resource rooms in different mainstream schools. This finding supports the result in the questionnaire too.

Table 9: teacher's different skills

No. T	Items	Regular class teacher respondents			
		Poor	good	Very good	total
		N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
1	To what extent do you use sign language in teaching students with hearing impairment?	15(44.1)	13(38.2)	6(17.6)	34(100)
2	To what extent do you teach students on how to read and write Braille?	26(76.5)	4(11.8)	3(8.8)	33(97.1)
3	How do you rate your behavioral disorder management skills in helping students with special needs?	2(5.9)	8(23.5)	23(67.6)	33(97.1)
4	To what extent do you teach students with special needs social interaction skills?	0(00)	13(38.2)	21(61.8)	34(100)
5	To what extent do you teach students recreation and leisure skills?	5(14.7)	8(23.5)	21(61.8)	34(100)
6	To what extent do you use assistive technologies in teaching students with special needs?	11(32.4)	12(35.3)	11(32.4)	34(100)
7	To what extent do you help your students develop their self-determination skills?	5(14.7)	9(26.5)	19(55.9)	33(97.1)
8	To what extent do you help your students develop their visual efficiency skills?	4(11.8)	10(29.4)	20(58.8)	34(100)
9	To what extent do you help your students develop their computer software skills?	19(55.9)	9(26.5)	5(14.7)	33(97.1)

As to table 8, questionnaire questions about the class teachers' different skills they have and use in and outside the classrooms to support and create conducive classroom

atmosphere for the better teaching learning process were constructed. So, the analysis of the data is presented as follows.

According to table 8, most of the class teachers 13(38.2%) and 6(17.6%) of the respondents responded that they can use sign language at a good and very good levels respectively. But, not much less than half 15(44.1%) of the class teacher respondents revealed that they are poor in using sign language. However, class teachers' Braille reading and writing skills are found much poorer than their sign language skills 26(76.5%) class teachers reported they do not have the skills to read and write Braille. Only few of the class teachers responded as only 4(11.8%) of them are good and 3(8.8) of them are very good in reading and writing Braille.

Regarding behavioral disorder management skills almost all the class teachers 8(23.5%) and 23(67.6) totally, 31(90.1%) of the class teachers assured that they have got the skills to correct children with behavior disorders. In this case only 2(5.9%) of the class teachers respondents responded that they do not have the skills how to correct children with behavioral problems. Regarding teaching children to develop the social interaction skills, all of the class teachers responded that they are capable of teaching social interaction skills to children with SEN. In addition to social interaction, class teachers said that 29(85.3%) of them are also skilled in teaching recreation and leisure skills. However, 5(14.7%) of the class teachers pointed out that they are not skillful in teaching recreation and leisure activities to children with disabilities.

Using assistive technology in the inclusive classroom is not a leisure activity rather it one of barrier reduction methods to children with disabilities. Thus, class teachers are expected to use different assistive devices in their classes. Regarding practice of assistive

devices, class teachers were asked if they use assistive devices or not and 12(35.3%) and 11(32.4%) of the class teachers reported that they do use assistive devices in their classes but 11(32.4%) of them responded that they are poor in using assistive devices in their classrooms.

Class teachers respondents were asked questions to what extent do they teach their students to develop their self-determination, visual efficiency and computer software skills, and many of them responded that 9(26.5%) good and 19(55.9%) very good totally 28(82.5%), 10(29.4%) and 20(58.8%) totally 30(88.2%) of the class teachers responded that they can teach their students the skills respectively. Whereas, regarding computer software 19(55.9%) of the class teachers reported that they are poor in teaching the skill. But 9(26.5%) and 5(14.7) totally 14(41.2%) of the class teachers responded that they can use and teach their students the computer software skills.

Table 10. Attitude of teachers

No.	Items	Regular class teacher respondents			
		Like	Dislike	Neutral	Total
		N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
10.1	Do you like teaching in an inclusive classroom/s?	28(82.4)	2(5.9)	4(11.8)	34(100)
10.2	Do you like your students?	29(85.3)	3(8.8)	2(5.9)	34(100)
10.3	Do you like sharing ideas to other teachers about children with disabilities in school?	32(94.1)	2(5.9)	0(00)	34(100)
10.4	Do you like working in the core team?	33(97.1)	0(00)	1(2.9)	34(100)
10.5	Do you like the school you are currently working in?	29(85.3)	3(8.8)	1(2.9)	33(97.1)

Questions in the table 8, were constructed to identify the attitudes of the school community towards special needs education teachers and teachers of children with special educational needs whose background is not from the special needs education. Therefore, the finding is presented as follows.

Class teachers from the SNE background and non-SNE background but who teach both children were questioned if they like teaching in the inclusive classroom and their students or not. Thus, 28(82.4%) and 29(85.3%) of the SNE and class teachers respondents responded that they like their work as well as their students respectively. Only 2(5.9%) and 3(8.8%) of the respondents of the class teachers responded that they don't like their job and their students respectively. The remaining 4(11.8%) and 2(5.9%) of the respondents remained neutral. This indicates that respondent class teachers have positive attitude towards their teaching career. The next question forwarded to the same group of respondents class teachers was that if they like sharing ideas to other teachers about children with disabilities in the schools or not. Regarding this question almost all the class teachers 32(94.1%) of them were positive and they replied that they are interested to share ideas about children with disabilities or SENs in their classes. From this finding one can understand that class teacher's attitudes on sharing ideas about their children's problems are positive and this implies that they are interested to support their students heartily. This finding is also accorded with the finding that was gathered by the interviews with the itinerant teachers.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

According to the results of this study the special needs education itinerant teachers program in Ethiopia has not more than two decades of age and it is a new concept even to many educated people. This study was conducted in Addis Ababa city mainstream and special schools that have Special Needs Education Resource Centers. The data gathered from the ministry of education Special Needs Education office indicated that teachers who are trained in special needs education and who are better experienced in teaching children with SEN in their schools were selected and assigned to be itinerant teachers. Regarding the qualifications of itinerant teachers, data from the SNE strategy (MoE, 2012b) indicated that among the ten itinerant teachers in the country nine of them were graduates in degree and only one of them was diploma in Special Needs Education (MoE, 2012b). The findings of this study also showed that itinerant teachers in Addis Ababa special and mainstream schools with SNE resource centers are all trained in degree and diploma in special needs education programs. This implies the qualification of the Addis Ababa Special Needs Education itinerant teachers that are working in the special and mainstream schools meet the standards of the Ministry of Education requirements. Furthermore, recent data from the SNE experts who were from the MoE and AACEB (interview on April 21, 2016) revealed that in the second phase of the SNE pilot program, the number of SNE itinerant teachers has increased and it was reported sixteen in the national level and all of them were degree graduates. Lynch and McCall (2007) cited in Lynch, McCall, Douglas, Mc Linden & Bayo (2011) explained “itinerant teachers are usually qualified school teachers who have had some formal training in the education of

children”. According to literature itinerant teacher program is being practiced in different countries of Africa as well as other parts of the world such as Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, Finland, Netherlands, Ireland, Australia, USA and other countries. The experiences of itinerant teacher program in these countries indicated that the responsibilities of the itinerant teachers are; ‘they travel around local mainstream schools and communities to offer lessons, advice, resources, and support to children with SEN, regular teachers, and parents’. The responsibilities of itinerant teachers in Ethiopia are also similar to these countries (SNE/IE Resource Center guideline MoE 2015).

Regarding skills related to their profession, itinerant teachers as well as the SNE experts mentioned that unexperienced SNE teachers have limitations on different skills compared to the experienced ones. They were assigned to be an itinerant teacher due to the absence or shortage of experienced SNE teachers in their mainstream/ resource center schools. This means the newly assigned SNE teachers need other specialist teacher’s support to teach and support children with SEN and to train the skills like sign language or Braille writing and reading etc. However, in all the six mainstream schools where this study was conducted, there were no sign language or Braille teachers assigned. Therefore, itinerant teachers particularly those who are not experienced and had not learned these skills face difficulties in supporting children with SEN. As a result, these itinerant teachers could not fully support children in their learnings. Regarding Experience of SNE itinerant teachers Dark and Light Blind Care (2008), cited in Tirussew, (2006) mentioned the need for experience to support other regular teachers.

The demographic data gathered through questionnaire showed that the number of female teachers in general and in the field of Special Needs Education in particular is less than

male teachers. According to Islahi & Nasreen in their study “*who makes effective teacher men or women*: even though the result wasn’t significant their study report showed that ‘female teachers were reported to be more supportive, expressive, nurturing, informal and open toward their students...’and from their biological nature regarding caregiving and providing support to children with disabilities, female teachers are believed to be more effective than male teachers. Thus, mainstream schools should better involve more female teachers in their teaching so that children with SEN will benefit from the support of female teachers.

According to table 2, majority of the class teachers in this study were relatively at their young age and they have less work experiences compared to the 3(9%) of class teachers in the group. This implies that though majority of the class teachers are young and are keen to help students in their classes, they need different supports from the whole-school environment and advice from their experienced coworkers and the itinerant teachers in their course of work. Therefore, it will help them deliver better education and support that SNE learners needed. Regarding their educational background 47% and 12% of the class teachers that were teaching in the special and mainstream schools have studied SNE and taken SNE course in their studies respectively. But 41% of them were neither from SNE field nor taken SNE courses. This implied these 41% of class teachers might lack knowledge of different types of disabilities and may not be able to easily identify children with SEN in their classes compared to SNE teachers and teachers who have taken SNE courses in their studies and may lack skills to provide appropriate support to students in needs of them. Therefore, they may have the needs to getting advice and supports form the SNE itinerant teacher and access to the RCs in their schools. Thus, they will have the

awareness and be able to address the needs of individuals with SEN in their classes properly. Therefore, the need to train class teachers through in service courses and other life-long learning programs is unquestionably important. Stubbs has emphasized the use of teaching teachers in inclusive schools as follows:

“The principles and practices of inclusive education cannot be taught effectively through separate courses. There need to be a constant message running through pre-service and in-service courses, distance learning programs, informal exchange opportunities, mentoring systems and cluster school programs”.
(Stubbs, 2011, p9)

Regarding on job and short term training, all the SNE itinerant teachers assured that they have taken many important training related to SNE support services; like screening and assessment, material usage, teaching methodology etc. They attended the same training together as a group of itinerant teachers gathered by the SNE pilot program (Finland) and Ministry of Education. Itinerant teachers didn't deny that the on job training was very useful to their career but they believed that the training was too short and insufficient to fulfill the gaps of skills and knowledge that the SNE teachers have. During interview itinerant teachers as well as the SNE experts stressed that most of the itinerant teachers in Addis Ababa special and mainstream / Resource center schools lack proficiency in the most important skills, knowledge and in basic supporting areas in their profession.

A study done by Robert (2011) on training in a full-service school in South Africa revealed that the training offered was inadequate, and that more planning and thought needs to go into the in-service program:

“...Educators demonstrated misunderstanding of the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support strategy. The misunderstanding can be ascribed to the kind of training educators received. The training lacked in-depth content and practical demonstration” (ibid, p.1).

These problems are also observed here in Ethiopia so that they were mentioned as drawbacks in 2012b strategy and SNE teachers and experts have also mentioned them in this study too. Due to these reasons and lack of practicality of the training, SNE teachers admitted that they are weak in supporting their SEN students in different areas of their needs. As a result, this is believed to be a problem affecting the SNE itinerant teachers programs; Because, if SNE itinerant teachers couldn't provide the necessary support to SNE students and their teachers, many problems will remain unsolved to learners with SEN and continue barriers to their learning. However, these itinerant teachers also complained that they should not be expected to be skillful in all skills and do all tasks to all kinds of learners with SNE in their schools. They mentioned that all special and mainstream schools have to employ or get the support of the specialist support staff in different areas of the school support systems or teachers who have different experience skills and knowledge need to support each other in their working environment.

“Teachers need to be able to seek and use the support of other actors who can serve as valuable resources in inclusive education, such as support staff, parents, communities, school authorities... (EADSNE, 2010, p23).

But the SNE itinerant teachers understand and believed that acquiring different supporting skills is necessary for them to be effective in their duties and responsibilities

and most of them were enrolled in different courses to improve their skills and knowledge related to their profession.

Regarding the role of itinerant teachers in the mainstream and special schools there are different concepts mentioned in different countries curriculums. However according to literature the role of itinerant teachers in Ethiopia has a similarity with countries like Finland, Uganda, Kenya and South Africa. During the interview participants responses regarding the duties and responsibilities of the itinerant teachers revealed that the SNE itinerant teachers' main roles are to support students with and without disabilities who are experiencing barriers in their learning as well as to help out of school children particularly children with disabilities get education in the nearby schools without any barriers to their learning. On the other hand, they claimed that they provide supports to the class teachers, parents and other support staff who are working on the learning of children with Special Educational Needs (MoE, 2015). They reported that they also provide advice and professional supports to the class teachers of the cluster schools including (the satellite schools teachers) in their cluster. Additionally, they give training on the inclusive education/ SNE; like awareness rising, material usage in the resource centers, identification and assessment for those easily identifiable disabilities of children with different disabilities (sever and moderate disabilities) and find supports to the needs of learners from nongovernmental and governmental organizations and concerned bodies.

The finding in this study indicated that itinerant teachers in these mainstream and special schools provide different supports and didn't have similarities in their course of work. They work according to the needs of individual students in the mainstream schools and they don't have similar services in the RCs too. The result of this study is supported by

Olmstead, (1991), Stephens & Birch, (1969), they claimed that SNE itinerant teachers are multi-tasked professionals whose main responsibility is to support the learning of children with SEN in the mainstream schools.

Regarding assessing the child's educational needs the study finding indicated that most of the itinerant teachers do not do regular assessments and they don't do standard assessments. That means the assessment tools that are being used in all the mainstream schools particularly in some disability areas were not standardized tools. As a result, these schools use different tools of assessment to the same type of disability. This indicated that if there are differences in the assessment tools there may lead to a result that can put the child to the wrong curriculum or supports systems.

Regarding the practice of identifying a child with disability or multiple disabilities, a Special Needs Education expert (official) from the woreda education bureau and the itinerant teacher work in collaboration to find children with disability left at home in the beginning of the school year. The Special Needs Education specialist team (the itinerant teacher and the SNE expert from the woreda) will gather information from the community and ask parents of a child if their child/children has/have any type of disability that is identified by medical centers. Either by medical assessment or through observations during learning in the classroom, children will be identified if they have any disability that can be considered as any significant for their learning. On the other hand, if parents suspect any type of disability within their child or children, itinerant teachers will advise and support them to take their child to the medical centers for further assessment and identification. Then, the child will be placed in the school system either in a special unit or in the inclusive classes. However, according to this study the schools'

identification system is weak and many children are believed to remain in the regular classes unidentified due to poor identification system particularly those who are mild and sometimes moderate disabilities that cannot be observed or easily noticed. Despite all this constraints schools are open to accommodate all children with different disabilities and itinerant teachers are providing the support to the extent they can to help children stay at the school setting and benefit from their school.

Itinerant teachers practices in supporting parents in their children's referral to relevant stakeholders: like supporting referral of children to schools for placement and supporting referral of children to local clinics and hospitals for medical assessment and support were addressed through different questions and the finding revealed that All of the itinerant teachers reported that their main support in identifying disabilities like, Autism learning disability, mental retardation and most other mental delays, are from hospitals. That means referral is common to hospitals and better equipped schools that have special materials to assess and identify the child's disability; like Alpha special school for assessment of deaf and hard of hearing children. But as to the SNE itinerant teachers and the researcher's observation, there is still a wide gap in finding, assessing and identifying mild and moderate disabilities in the school support system. Due to this and other factors children can be placed in non-supportive school system.

Regarding discussions with class teachers on how to support learners with special educational needs, they sometimes do discussions with the class teachers and with the school principals and the SNE core team has also a monthly meeting. However, class teachers and principals reported that the meeting doesn't bring significant change in the itinerant teachers work. Because schools don't allocate budget to support the itinerant

teachers program and they also don't have well organized monitoring and evaluation system of the itinerant teacher program. As a result, both the school administrators and itinerant teachers complain about the lack of uniformity in the itinerant teachers work and lack of supportive system from the schools.

According to many literatures, one of the major problems in the field of special needs education is lack of appropriate data on children with disabilities in the schools as well as in the country level. Thus, itinerant teachers have helped class teachers prepare portfolios of their learners with SENs and support teachers to use it. But still schools have lack of well-organized records of children with disabilities.

Itinerant teachers collaborate with the satellite school directors and teachers. They have a core team meeting in the Resource Center once a month. But since there is shortage of resources, itinerant teachers do not often go to the satellite schools. Due to this the visit to the satellite schools is reported very limited and discussions with satellite class teachers were infrequent. However, they organize training on awareness raising, sign language and Braille reading and writing etc. to the class teachers where they are assigned. But due to the absence of continuity in the training most teachers who are not using it tend to forget the skills.

5.1. Good practices of itinerant teachers

The establishment of the SNE resource centers and the availability of the itinerant teachers program in the mainstream and special schools are so important that children with disabilities are getting school supports in their learning and their life skills. Regarding their work, all itinerant teachers described that they love both their profession and their students.

The other thing that was considered as success in the itinerant teacher's course of work is that all of them have got at least three and above children with SEN to support in their cases; it could be a pullout session to children who were not benefiting from the regular class or teaching other skills in the resource rooms etc. However, itinerant teachers are considered as the regular class teachers and there is no system or framework established to evaluate and record the efficiency of itinerant teachers' services in the schools so that they have to teach some regular classes on top of their main duties.

Regarding the effort that is made by itinerant teachers to create a link between donors and NGOs with the Mainstream resource centers, some of the itinerant teachers reported that they have made good progress in creating connections with some non-governmental organizations that showed interest to provide some support to children with SEN. However, they mentioned the need to work in coordination with the school administrators and other support personnel from their schools. Moreover, they pointed out that the school administrators should understand their activities and to plan and allocate budget for transportation fuel and other expenses.

5.2. Challenges of SNE itinerant teachers

In Ethiopia itinerant teachers are working as regular teachers and resource room personnel in addition to their major responsibilities of helping regular class teachers, students and parents. Being itinerant teachers, they are working in more than three different schools; with many teachers under different principals. Most of the time school principals of the school with the resource centers, where itinerant teachers are posted, do not understand the demanding nature of the itinerant teacher's job. This lack of common

understanding created a range of confusions and uncertainties between Itinerant teachers and the school administrations. Though it seems that there is a job description of the itinerant teachers, the responsibilities of the itinerant teachers are quite vague and cover a large scope of activities. For example, there is no clear statement about what kind of consultation and support should they give to the teachers and to which extend should they support each children needed precisions and occasioned confusion in the project implementation. This resulted in conflict with the school principals and misunderstanding of the responsibilities of itinerant teachers in the schools. On the other hand some of the itinerant teachers have limited knowledge of inclusive education as well as itinerant teaching. Thus, these itinerant teachers tend to use the medical approach to support children with SEN. The findings therefore suggest that itinerant teachers have a limited understanding of the Inclusive Education paradigm and this poses implications for the effective functioning of itinerant teachers and the learners. This finding was also supported by the Ministry of Education (2012b) strategy report.

Itinerant teachers were not getting the necessary support from the woreda and the regional education bureaus. Especially, in terms of financial support and other necessary materials to fulfill the resource centers, there is no budget allocated from the school or the government. They were only supported by the SEN project that was worth of little money for the transportation and mobile card to talk to the satellite school teachers. Consequently, itinerant teachers in this study felt very less-confident to visit other schools teachers because they don't have much support to provide and there are no immediate answers to the needs of children with disabilities. As a result, they will not be interested to go bare hand and without any solution to children's needs.

The findings further reveal that the majority of the itinerant teachers were newly assigned to mainstream schools. Therefore, experienced teachers may ask them questions that are beyond their knowledge. In essence one can therefore argue that itinerant teachers cannot be expected to meet the needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning and development if they did not get appropriate support from schools and the department of education.

The itinerant teachers support service is running by the support of the Finnish project and it is at its final year of financial support. As a result, there is a frustration to the itinerant teachers that there will be a challenging time coming to the service and the professionals that there will not be any support from the government unless there is immediate solution from the Regional Educational Administration Bureau (AACEB). Local authorities need support to lobby at Provincial and National level of relevant government authorities in order to obtain the formalization of itinerant teachers' status. SNE experts also recommended engaging also with non-formal department in order to increase itinerant teachers' role to access for out of school children.

5.3. Availability of supports and resources in the Special Needs

Education /inclusive education Resource Centers

The questionnaire conducted in six cluster primary schools of Addis Ababa city revealed many results. Particularly data regarding available support services and resources in the resource centers were gathered via questionnaire and results are discussed as follows. Table shows that all the respondents, special needs education and class teachers, 34 (100%) mentioned that regardless of their number, they have students with SENs in their

classrooms. This indicates that children with different disabilities are enrolled and are attending regular education in the nearby mainstream and special schools with their non-disabled peers. They are also special units for those of who their health status or disability prevents them from joining the regular classes. Some schools teach children in the inclusive classes but some other schools have special units for the better education and care of children with some types of disability. For example, two of the six primary schools in this study have special units for children with Mental Retardation and Autism and the other two schools are with special units and special schools for the deaf.

Regarding the availability of screening and assessment tools to identify children with suspected disabilities in the cluster schools, 26(73.5%) of the class teachers mentioned that they do not have any screening and assessment tools. However, they use traditional methods of screening and assessment for some visible or severe disabilities. This result is confirmed by the Ministry of Education (2012b:8) as there are no screening and assessment tools for early identification of learning problems of (attention deficit hyperactivity, learning disability as well as gifted and talented) learners. But 9(26.5%) class teachers replied that they have few screening and assessment tools to identify very common disabilities. According to MoE strategy guide (2012b:8) there are some assessment tools to identify disabilities like mathematics, hearing and blindness but there are still no standardized assessment tools in the country to identify children with mild and profound disabilities. As a result, teachers and other supporting staff found it difficult to accommodate and provide the right support to learners with Special educational needs.

According to special needs education and class teachers all the six mainstream and special primary schools have children with different types of disabilities attending in the

inclusive or special units in their respective schools. So that it is very important to have special needs education and specialist support staff including itinerant teachers.

As we can see in table 4(item 1), class teachers were asked if the school has personal assistants to support the SNE students as well as class teachers. 22(65%) of the respondent class teachers revealed that there are no personal assistants in the cluster schools. whereas, 12(35%) of the class teachers replied that there are personal assistants in the cluster schools. In order to triangulate the abovementioned finding, interview findings, from the school principals and itinerant teachers were used. As a result, the data confirmed that there are personal assistants in some preschool classes and special units; however, there are no personal assistants in the regular primary schools. The availability of assistants in the inclusive school environment is very important because children with disabilities will get different supports in situations that are difficult to them. For example in fostering the student's participation, to enable them learn independently, to raise standards of achievement etc... (Halliwell, 2003:p20).

Another question was forwarded to the same groups of class teachers about the presence of school psychologist, 28(82.4%) of class teachers responded that there are not school psychologists in their schools. On the contrary, only 6(17.6%) of the respondents responded as their school has school psychologist. But school principals reported that they haven't got any school psychologists in their schools.

As the study findings indicated the entire mainstream and special cluster schools in this study do not have specialist support staff like speech therapists, psychologists counselors etc.

One of the school principal said:

No we don't have any of these specialists. Sometimes, we use our teachers as interpreters for free. Sometimes, the itinerant teacher serves as a psychologist or as a speech pathologist or an interpreter.

Similar responses were gathered from all the cluster schools principals. They reported that except the SNE itinerant teachers and focal SNE teachers of the satellite schools, there are no other specialist support personnel in their schools. Most of the Special Need Education/ Inclusive Education supports are not available for children who are in need of them. However, the availability of the school support staff is always mandatory to the overall growth of students in the school.

All support staff can add to, and support the curriculum so long as joint working practices help the exchange of information and the discussion of learning opportunities and provide ways to review pupils' progress.

(Halliwell, 2003:p27).

As table 6 indicates, the availability of free enrolment service in the mainstream schools is assured by 27(79.4%) of the class teachers. But 5(14.7) of the class teachers said that there isn't free enrolment in the mainstream schools. To find out the right information school principals were interviewed and they responded that school enrolment is free to all their SNE students.

Regarding the provision of free food and nutrition services, class teachers 30(88.2%) replied that there is food and nutrition service to children with and without disabilities in the schools. only 3(8.8%) of the class teachers replied that there is no free food and nutrition service in the schools. but during observation the researcher could observe that

all of the mainstream schools that have pre-school class students and some primary class students, they provide food and nutrition.

Regarding the availability of school transportation service for students with SEN only 1(2.9%) of the school teachers said yes there is school transportation for children with SEN but the rest of group members that is 32(94.1%) of them concluded that there is no school transportation for students with disabilities in the mainstream schools.

School health service is one of the school specialist support services for students with SEN or with disabilities. Therefore, question was posed to know whether the services are available in the mainstream schools or not, and many of the respondents that is 27(79.4%) said that there are no health services in the mainstream school. However, 5(14.7%) of them stood against their counterparts. The other issue that class teachers were asked to respond was about home and hospital educational services. Almost all of the class teacher respondents 33(97.1%) replied that there is no home and hospital educational service provided by the mainstream schools. only 1(2.9%) respondent agreed on the availability of home and hospital educational service in the mainstream schools.

Students spend much time of a day in the schools; so, during this time they will need to go to the toilets and bathrooms at least once or twice in a day. Thus, students, particularly children with disabilities want to have accommodated toilets and bathroom with grab bars. As a result, the researcher wants to see how far these needs are fulfilled. More than half 18(52.9%) of the class teachers replied that the bathrooms in the mainstream schools are not accommodated but 16(47.1%) disagree about the availability of accommodated school bathrooms for children with disabilities. On the other side the response of school teachers regarding the availability of modified toilets was positive 24(70.6%) of them

assured that there are modified toilets in the mainstream schools. 10(29.4%) of these teachers evidenced that the toilets in the mainstream schools are not modified and comfortable to children with disabilities.

As can be seen from table 5, the question asked whether the classrooms and the school compounds of the mainstream schools are easy to move in and around, many participants 27(79.4%) of the class teachers reported that the classrooms and the school compounds in the mainstream schools are accessible to children with and without disabilities but 7(20.6%) of the group members opposed the report on the accessibility of the classrooms and the schools' compounds. More than half of the respondent class teachers 19(55.9%) responded "yes, there are." to the availability of these three school facilities. On the contrary 15(44.1%) of the respondent class teachers disagreed on the accessibility of playground, the availability of sign posts for places and directions and the unique seating arrangements. Whereas, respondent class teachers responses were equally divided in to two while answering the question that was asked about the availability of Spaces for wheelchairs in the mainstream classrooms and inside the schools' compounds 17(50%) of the respondents responses was "Yes" and the other half was "No".

Regarding well secured school stores 21(61.8%) of the class teachers replied there are good and secured stores to keep the resources of the school facilities. But 13(38.2%) of the respondents stood against their group members ideas and they stand on the side of there aren't good and secured stores to keep the schools resources.

Questions regarding the availability of resources like special materials and equipment and SNE services in resource rooms, in the mainstream schools were asked to the class

teachers. Based on the data gathered through the questionnaire, the researcher has done summary analysis on selected special materials, equipment and SNE services.

According to the class teachers, only few of these special materials, equipment and SNE services are reported available in the resource rooms. They responded that these are; Adaptive computer technologies with Jaws, Stylus, different kinds of toys, pictures and music play kits(Montessori), TV and DVD, Text books, Photocopy materials and Stationeries (pen, exercise book, pencil etc.). But, majority of the special materials and some equipment like Canes, Reader, Note taker, Braille slate, Perkins(Adaptive six key Braille), Braille Embosser machine, Brailier or Braille Writer, Braille Ruler, Braille Watch, Talking Watch, Reference in Braille text books and materials, Braille Dictionary, large print, audio or e-text, Sound/ Beep Ball, Mathematics kit (like Taylor Frame), talking calculators, tape recorder, Optical Devices hearing aid (head phone), Cochlear implants, Sign Language Dictionary, Sign Language chart, FM systems, Audiometer, Otoscopy and Otoscopy picks, Hearing impaired telephones, Lifts or ramps, Crutches, Wheelchairs, Walker, Rails in corridors and toilets, lowered tables, special chairs, hip straps, foot boxes (to keep hips bent at 90 degree angle), writing material, keyboards, switches, Reference materials on adaptive behavioral skills, Vocational and technical training materials, Picture exchange communication system (PECS), Speech training kits for children with speech difficulties, Video Camera, Soft boards where information is well displayed, Charts, Overhead projector, Videos, Laptop for the itinerant teacher, Comics, Globes, Carpet and First aid kits are reported that they are not available in the resource rooms.

However, according to the itinerant teachers and observations of the researcher in the RCs, there are materials and some equipment like reference Braille books, wheelchair, the slate and stylus, abacus and Braille paper in the resource rooms but students do not have the chance to use these materials in the classrooms because teachers of the mainstream schools do not have adequate skills to manipulate these materials. On the other hand, in some of these mainstream schools or resource centers as well as the satellite schools there aren't students with disabilities that are in need of these equipment and materials. But regarding the conduciveness of the physical environment, the school principals reported that the school compounds are not suitable enough for students who use wheelchairs and it can be a barrier to physically disabled children. Thus, it can affect the teaching learning process to some extent.

As table 7 indicates, regarding the availability of academic intervention in the mainstream schools out of 34 class teachers, only 28(82.4%) participants could give their answers on the questionnaire sheets. Among them 15(44.1%) of the class teachers, more than half of them responded that there is no academic intervention in the mainstream schools. On the other hand, less than half of them or 13(38.2%) of the class teachers assured that there is academic intervention in the mainstream schools. Therefore, the researcher tried to triangulate and get the fact about the availability of educational intervention in the mainstream schools. As a result, data gathered through interviews with itinerant teachers, revealed that though it is not adequate, there is academic intervention program provided by class teachers as well as itinerant teachers in the mainstream schools. School principals also assured that children get additional supports in their

weakness from the itinerant teachers in the resource rooms and class teachers in the tutorial sessions.

Here in the above table, we can see and understand that almost all of the class teachers responded positively about the availability of the following list of services. These group of class teachers said that there are Lesson formats, modification of instructional materials, teaching strategies, instructional groupings or arrangements, adaptations to the method for responding, curricular goals and learning outcomes, simplified tasks, an alternative activities, extra time to learn and practice new skills, examination modifications, social interaction skills, recreation and leisure skills and School counseling services etc. Moreover, regarding these services, the researcher could informally observe itinerants and SNE teachers providing speech (or lip) reading, teaching Reading and Writing, Sign language training, using Abacus and Models materials, and tactile maps in the resource rooms in different mainstream schools. This finding supports the result in the questionnaire too.

Questionnaire questions about the class teachers' different skills they have and use in and outside the classrooms to support and create conducive classroom atmosphere for the better teaching learning process were constructed. So, the analysis of the data is presented as follows.

According to table 8, most of the class teachers 13(38.2%) and 6(17.6%) of the respondents responded that they can use sign language at a good and very good levels respectively. But, not much less than half 15(44.1%) of the class teacher respondents revealed that they are poor in using sign language. However, class teachers' Braille reading and writing skills are found much poorer than their sign language skills

26(76.5%) class teachers reported they do not have the skills to read and write Braille. Only few of the class teachers responded as only 4(11.8%) of them are good and 3(8.8) of them are very good in reading and writing Braille.

Regarding behavioral disorder management skills almost all the class teachers 8(23.5%) and 23(67.6) totally, 31(90.1%) of the class teachers assured that they have got the skills to correct children with behavior disorders. In this case only 2(5.9%) of the class teachers respondents responded that they do not have the skills how to correct children with behavioral problems. Regarding teaching children to develop the social interaction skills, all of the class teachers responded that they are capable of teaching social interaction skills to children with SEN. In addition to social interaction, class teachers said that 29(85.3%) of them are also skilled in teaching recreation and leisure skills. However, 5(14.7%) of the class teachers pointed out that they are not skillful in teaching recreation and leisure activities to children with disabilities.

Using assistive technology in the inclusive classroom is not a leisure activity rather it one of barrier reduction methods to children with disabilities. Thus, class teachers are expected to use different assistive devices in their classes. Regarding practice of assistive devices, class teachers were asked if they use assistive devices or not and 12(35.3%) and 11(32.4%) of the class teachers reported that they do use assistive devices in their classes but 11(32.4%) of them responded that they are poor in using assistive devices in their classrooms.

Class teachers respondents were asked questions to what extent do they teach their students to develop their self-determination, visual efficiency and computer software skills, and many of them responded that 9(26.5%) good and 19(55.9%) very good totally

28(82.5%), 10(29.4%) and 20(58.8%) totally 30(88.2%) of the class teachers responded that they can teach their students the skills respectively. Whereas, regarding computer software 19(55.9%) of the class teachers reported that they are poor in teaching the skill. But 9(26.5%) and 5(14.7) totally 14(41.2%) of the class teachers responded that they can use and teach their students the computer software skills.

Questions in the above table were constructed to identify the attitudes of the school community towards special needs education teachers and teachers of children with special educational needs whose background is not from the special needs education. Therefore, the finding is presented as follows.

Class teachers from the SNE background and non-SNE background but who teach both children were questioned if they like teaching in the inclusive classroom and their students or not. Thus, 28(82.4%) and 29(85.3%) of the SNE and class teachers respondents responded that they like their work as well as their students respectively. Only 2(5.9%) and 3(8.8%) of the respondents of the class teachers responded that they don't like their job and their students respectively. The remaining 4(11.8%) and 2(5.9%) of the respondents remained neutral. This indicates that respondent class teachers have positive attitude towards their teaching career. The next question forwarded to the same group of respondents class teachers was that if they like sharing ideas to other teachers about children with disabilities in the schools or not. Regarding this question almost all the class teachers 32(94.1%) of them were positive and they replied that they are interested to share ideas about children with disabilities or SENs in their classes. From this finding one can understand that class teacher's attitudes on sharing ideas about their children's problems are positive and this implies that they are interested to support their

students heartily. This finding is also accorded with the finding that was gathered by the interviews with the itinerant teachers.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter consists of summary, conclusions and recommendations of the research results. The study was intended to assess the good practices and challenges of SNE itinerant teachers in the mainstream schools in Addis Ababa City Administration. Therefore, to reach at the purpose of the study, three types of data gathering instruments (interview, questionnaire and observation) were used. The data which was gathered through the above mentioned gathering tools was tabulated analyzed and discussed in chapter four. Based on the analysis and discussion, the following conclusions and recommendations were made.

6.1. Conclusion

The main purpose of the current study was to assess the good practices and challenges of SNE itinerant teachers in Addis Ababa Primary mainstream schools. The data sources of the study were totally 49 selected from six primary mainstream schools, the Addis Ababa City Education Bureau and the Ministry of Education by using purposive sampling technique. The reason why purposive sampling used was that in Addis Ababa there were only six cluster mainstream schools and six itinerant teachers were assigned to these cluster schools. Therefore, the researcher decided to see all the itinerant teachers' practices in the schools the data was collected from these data sources by using three tools, such as observation, questionnaire for class teachers and interview was conducted with itinerant teachers the school principals and SNE experts from MOE and AACEB. Finally document analysis from minutes was assessed.

After collecting the data by using the above mentioned tools, both qualitative and quantitative data analysis method were employed in order to arrive at the results. The data that was collected through interview and observation were analyzed using qualitative description of responses and events whereas the data that was collected through questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively using frequency and percentage. According to the following research questions, this study come up with the major findings mentioned bellow.

- Findings in this study show that the special needs education itinerant teachers are qualified school support personnel who are graduates in SNE and were assigned to support children who are facing barriers in their learning. They were allocated to the position of itinerant teacher by the school principals of their schools.
- The criteria to be itinerant teacher are to be certified in Special Needs Education and to have teaching experience. But the finding revealed that half of the six itinerant teachers were not experienced teachers. They reported that they were directly assigned after graduation and with no experiences. Because, according to the school principals, in some of the mainstream schools itinerant teachers were the only special needs education teachers. In these schools there were no other SNE teachers to choose for the resource centers/ mainstream schools. Therefore, there were no other alternatives than using the available one. But it is clear that it has negative effects in the provision of advices and supports to the satellite school teachers who may have better experiences and knowledge than the itinerant teachers.

- The other finding revealed that Itinerant teachers do not provide sufficient support to the class teachers. For example they don't give those skills training because some of the itinerant teachers themselves have lack of skills and others have also the attitude and belief of that they are not assigned to be sign language or Braille teachers. So, they believe that they are not responsible for teaching Braille or sign language to the class teachers or children with disabilities. This indicates a gap in providing different necessary supports to the class teachers. As a result, there is lack of adequate support to the class teachers as well as children with disabilities. Additionally, the assessment identification and screening method they apply is traditional because there are no standard assessment tools for most of the disabilities and SEN problems. This resulted in wrong placement of children with SENs and disability. Moreover, children with disabilities will not benefit from their education and support services in the school as well as in the community rehabilitation centers. Moreover, itinerant teachers are a support to children with SEN out of the regular class time. Regarding to this itinerant teachers work is not satisfactory there is no pull-out session or IEP program in the school support system and there is very limited support of materials and equipment and educational intervention sessions.
- On the other hand, itinerant teachers have no job structure so they do not have evaluation criteria as itinerant teacher and what they are doing in the schools. Consequently, school principals let the itinerant teachers to have two or three classes per week. This is to help the itinerant teachers to get promotion as a teacher and get incentives of a class teacher. Otherwise, they will not be

considered for promotion and other advantages like itinerant teachers. Additionally, itinerant teachers do not have budget to run the Resource Center thus itinerant teachers use their own expenses to buy necessary materials to their children.

- The SNE resource center doesn't have any support from the school budget. As a result, Resource centers in Addis Ababa mainstream schools don't have or lack financial support to the practices of itinerant services. Because, the regional education bureau doesn't consider them in their budget system. Consequently, the service of the itinerant teachers become limited to only the schools they are assigned to. Due to these cases according to the itinerant teachers and school principals, there are very limited educational interventions provided in the cluster schools.
- Itinerant teachers do not conduct screening, identification and assessment in scientific way to identify and assess children with special needs or with disabilities regularly. And the schools do not have eligibility criteria to admit students with special needs. Therefore, schools are always dependent on the medical results or hospital certificates.
- There is a shortage of special educational materials and equipment in the resource Centers such as Braille embosser machine, e- texts, FM system, sign language chart, reference books written in Braille and some geographical, mathematical aids and hearing aid etc. In addition to this the available resources are not used for the classroom teaching learning process with students with special needs.

6.2. Recommendations

The establishment of RCs in the mainstream schools has enormous contribution to the implementation of inclusive education throughout the country. It supports the itinerant teacher to address the needs of marginalized children particularly children with disabilities who are in schools or out of schools. Particularly teachers of children with disability can access the resources in the RC to teach learners with different disabilities. However, there is still a gap in accessing the resource centers to addressing the needs of children with disabilities. Most of the class teachers do not have the skills to organize their teaching with the resources in the RCs. Itinerant teachers are expected to improve class teachers' skills of the RC usage so as to help their learners with SEN achieve in their learning like their non-disabled peers.

To improve the existing trends and practice of teaching students with special needs and to address the special educational needs of those children, it require the collaborative efforts of parents, community members, teachers, school principals, governmental agencies. With this background, the following recommendations are forwarded.

- Mainstream primary schools should accommodate or adopt applicable job descriptions and responsibilities to the itinerant teachers based on the job description of itinerant teachers prepared by the Ministry of education. The need for this is to be flexible to the needs of learners in their schools. That way the itinerant teacher can be used and evaluated.
- Mainstream schools should involve standard/scientific ways of screening, identification and assessment procedures and should conduct periodic assessment.

Because if the students' needs are not fully assessed, it is very difficult to address their needs or it might put them in inappropriate placement.

- The school administration should be supportive to the effectiveness of itinerant teachers' supports and they have to supervise and evaluate the work of itinerant teachers based on certain criteria followed by feedback for the successes and weaknesses in their work.
- Itinerant teachers have to advise and consult the school administrators to organize a voluntary multi-disciplinary team and have to take part to prepare individualized educational plan for students with special needs to address their needs. Because the real essence of teaching students with diverse educational needs is to address the unique needs of each students.
- The itinerant teacher should discuss with the school administrators to ensure the availability of special materials and equipment by allocating special budget to the resource centers therefore the resource center should be equipped with the necessary materials to provide the service needed for students with special needs.
- The school system has to work on the structure of itinerant teachers with concerned bodies and arrange training to change the attitude of the school community towards inclusive education and children with SENs.
- Itinerant teachers should be trained in different skills until they master the skills then they can be used as mentor or a trainer to the school community as well as a resource to the nearby (satellite school teachers) to help them update their skills and knowledge so that they can help their students with diverse needs.

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Declaration

I, the under signed, declared that this thesis is my original work and that all the sources of materials used for the thesis have properly been acknowledged.

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