



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND BEHAVIORAL STUDIES  
CENTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PRACTICE OF TWO PRIVATE  
KINDERGARTENS IN TABOR SUB-CITY, HAWASSA CITY  
ADMINISTRATION

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*JUNE, 2018*  
*ADDIS ABABA*

Inclusive Education Practice of Two Private Kindergartens in  
Tabor Sub-city, Hawassa City Administration

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A Thesis submitted to the Center for Early Childhood Care and  
Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree  
of Master of Art in Early Childhood Care and Education

Addis Ababa University  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

June, 2018

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## **Acknowledgment**

Above all, I would like to thank my Almighty God for his great love, care and mercy throughout the entire period of the study. There are many institutions and individuals who contributed to the accomplishment of this thesis. Since it is impossible to mention everyone, I remain grateful to them all. However, there are some to whom I am particularly indebted. First and foremost, my sincere gratitude goes to my advisor Laureate Professor Tirussew Teferra, who devoted a lot of time and rendered me scholarly and professional guidance and input all through the study. His constructive and critical comments shaped my overall activities and brought me towards the success now I am enjoying.

I wish to convey my sincere gratitude to Hawassa College of Teacher Education for the sponsorship of my study. I would like to thank the kindergarten teachers, assistants, directors and officers from the centers who voluntarily participated in this study. My beloved wife Konjit Markos, my son Mintesinot Dereje, my mother Amsalech (Shena) Duchisho and my father Dakamo Tomora for their encouragement, patience and prayers during the working period have to be thanked. Indeed they were pillars always in my strength that their strong commitment had a great effort in my life.

I also extend a word of gratitude to all my friends and workmates for their contribution and support in every step I made in completion of my thesis. I wish to acknowledge all those who contributed directly or indirectly towards the success of this work. Authors and researchers whose work is reviewed critically in this report are also duly acknowledged.

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## **Acronyms**

CRC – Convention on the Right of Child

CRPwD – Convention on the Right of Persons with Disability

CwSEN – Children with Special Educational Needs

DEC – Division for Early Childhood

ECCE –Early Childhood Care and Education

EFA – Education for All

ESAA - Education Statistics Annual Abstracts

ETP – Education and Training Policy

FDG – Focus Group Discussion

FDRE – Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

GEQIP – General Education Quality Improvement Program

IE – Inclusive Education

IECCE – Inclusive Early Childhood Care and Education

KG – Kindergarten

MoE – Ministry of Education

NAEYC – National Association for Education of Young Children

NPS – National Preschool Standard

SNE – Special Need Education

UDL – Universal Design for Learning

UNESCO – United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF – United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund

ZPD – Zone of Proximal Development

## **Abstract**

*This study was aimed at investigating the implementation of inclusive education in two private kindergartens in Tabor Sub-city, Hawassa City Administration. Early inclusion and intervention has the greatest impact on child's learning and development. Conducting research on this kind of issue is expected to have a significant role providing insights to improve the practice. Factors that hinder proper implementation of inclusive education in selected private kindergartens had been investigated across this research. To find solution for the problem stated above, all participants who were believed to give rich information were purposively selected. Qualitative research method specifically phenomenological approach was employed and all necessary studies conducted before were critically reviewed. There were about twenty eight key informants involved in the study. They were six children with disabilities, two kindergarten principals, twelve teachers/assistants, six parents and two officers from the centers. Document analysis, semi-structured interview, participant observation and focus group discussion were data gathering tools employed. All raw data were transcribed and narrated in to meaningful report. Even though both kindergartens claim that they are inclusive, finding shows that they are not inclusive. Neither physical nor social environment of both kindergartens was accessible for children with disabilities. Absence of trained manpower, lack of knowledge with regard to inclusion of children with special needs and negative attitude of the parents were factors hindering the implementation of inclusive education in the kindergartens. Findings imply that teachers, principals and parents need awareness raising training, and private kindergartens have to assign special need education teachers so as to promote inclusion of children with disabilities.*

**Key Terms:** *Inclusive Education, Practice, Private Kindergarten*

# *Chapter One*

## *1. Introduction*

### *1.1. Background of the Study*

UNESCO, (2014) states that early childhood is the period from prenatal development to eight years of life. It is a crucial phase of growth and development because experiences during early childhood can influence outcomes across the entire course of an individual's life. For all children, early childhood provides an important window of opportunity to prepare the foundation for life-long learning and participation, while preventing potential delays in development and disabilities. For children who experience disability, it is a vital time to ensure access to interventions which can help them reach their full potential.

Early intervention and education for children with disabilities can have a positive impact on a child's cognitive and social development. Inclusion for early childhood programs supports the right of all children, regardless of abilities, to participate actively in natural settings within their communities. Natural settings are such as home, preschool, kindergarten, community, school classroom, child care center, place of worship, recreational space, and other settings that young children and families enjoy (Raver, S.A., 2009).

According to Neaum, S and Tallack, J. (2000), the young child's active participation should be guided by developmentally and individually appropriate curriculum. Access to and participation in age appropriate general curriculum becomes central to the identification and provision of specialized support services. High quality early childhood programs form the foundation for high quality inclusive programs from which all children benefit.

Despite being more vulnerable to developmental risks, young children with disabilities are often overlooked in mainstream programs and services designed to ensure child development. They also do not receive the specific supports required to meet their rights and needs. If children with disabilities and their families are not provided with timely and appropriate early intervention, support and protection, their difficulties can become more severe often leading to lifetime consequences, increased poverty and profound exclusion. Successful practice of inclusive care and education is characterized by presence, participation and achievement of young children with special needs in the same setting (Neaum, S. and Tallack, J. 2000).

The Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities highlight how children with disabilities have the same rights as other children for example to health care, nutrition, education, social inclusion and protection from violence, abuse and neglect. Ensuring access to appropriate support, such as early childhood intervention (ECI) and education, can fulfill the rights of children with disabilities, promoting rich and fulfilling childhoods and preparing them for full and meaningful participation in adulthood.

UNESCO (2006), describes inclusive education as “a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children through inclusive practices in learning, cultures and communities and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children”.

Inclusive Education is believed to highlight the needs of children with disabilities. It has shown a great progress in the education systems of many countries. Whereas some of these initiatives have helped some previously excluded children to receive care and education, they have needlessly been at odds with the vision of the Salamanca Statement and have in some cases seriously undermined it. For example, the UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report on Quality Education (2005) attempted to focus on those who were most at risk of being excluded from education (UNESCO, 2006).

Ethiopian constitution accepts the international declarations and conventions, and states education as human right. In line with the international declarations, conventions and policies, it establishes the universal right to education, emphasizes the need to allocate resources and provide assistance to disadvantaged groups. In line with the constitution Ethiopian Education and Training Policy (1994), directs implementation and development towards inclusive education for all. It states that education is not only a right but also a guarantee for development. Again it assures that disadvantaged groups will receive special support in education.

## ***1.2. Statement of the Problem***

Every child is unique. Children have their own strengths and weaknesses. Their development progresses according to certain sequences, but the pace may vary. It is natural that some children may excel in certain areas but have deficiencies in other areas. However, if children display marked problems or difficulties in one or more developmental area(s), and their performance shows significant discrepancies compared with other children of the same age, it is advisable to provide necessary support for the individual child (Woods M. 1998).

Making learning accessible for children with special educational needs is getting a global issue. Different conventions, right movements and struggles that can enhance inclusive education are taking place among the world nations. Florian and McLaughlin (2008:3) elucidate, “in many countries the number of children being identified as in need of special support provision is highly increasing”. Consequently, countries are now shifting to a new way in making efforts to accommodate the needs of these learners. Inclusive Education has become a paradigm that is assumed to change the world of education.

According to UNESCO (2005), Inclusive Education is a concept that assumes children with or without disabilities can learn together regardless of diversity. It is all about thinking all children are a part of society; the community helps the development of resources where all children are equally valued and have the same opportunities for participation, the underlying values of an educational system is acceptance and belongingness. It assumes that with good teaching, each child can learn a given appropriate environment, encouragement, and meaningful activities.

Wall K., (2011), argues that there is no better time or place to begin accessing inclusive communities than in preschool. Simply assigning a child in a setting with typical, same-age peers, without support and collaboration of key stakeholders can be very stressful for the child, family, and staff. Mohay H. & Ried E., (2006), also underline that effective inclusion support must be a careful, collaborative process that creatively plans and delivers the specialized services, accommodations, curriculum modifications, and differentiated instructional strategies appropriate to the specific needs and interests of each child.

Today a lot of infants and young children with and without disabilities play, develop, and learn together in a variety of places like home, early childhood programs, neighborhoods, and other community based settings. The notion that young children with disabilities and their families are full members of the community reveals societal values about promoting opportunities for development and learning, and a sense of belonging for every child. Tirussew T., Teka Z., Belay T., Belay H., and Demeke G. (2008), state that this growing interest has been scientifically, legally, morally, philosophically and economically justified.

According to Tirussew T. et al, (2008) there is no better way to break the cycle of poverty and inequality than to invest in children. However, millions of children in sub-Saharan Africa still lack access to appropriate care and education. The situation of children with disabilities by far is worse than children without disabilities. As a matter of fact most of them are deprived from any form of early stimulation, early childhood education and subject to different forms of abuses locked behind the back doors. The core cause for excluding such children from the mainstream society is embedded how society perceives and cognitively constructs disabling factors and disability (Demisew A. 2014).

The participation of children with disabilities in ECCE is extremely discouraging and almost non-existent. According to the recent statistical report of the Ministry of Education, the participation rate of pre-primary enrollment of children in Ethiopia is about 2,958,803 (Ministry of Education, 2015/16), which doesn't show figure regarding children with disabilities. This is also an implication for less participation of children with disabilities in the early childhood care and education settings. It can show that the possibility of early inclusion is almost getting low hence children are believed to transit through early childhood care and education.

The Ethiopian government has already developed the Special Needs Education Strategy Program of the Ministry of Education (2012), which promotes the philosophy of inclusive education as opposed to the education of children with disabilities in special or segregated schools. The current movement is towards inclusive education with the goal of mainstreaming children with disabilities in general or regular schools with the aim of making education accessible for all. This is a shift of paradigm which has far reaching ramifications on the rights, education, economic and psycho-social development of children with disabilities in the country (Tirussew Teferra, 2005).

Exclusion of children with disabilities in the early years of development is more disabling than the disability puts them in the vicious cycle of poverty constituting the poorest of the poor in the continent (Tirussew Teferra. 2008). He states that in order to improve the present status-quo of early childhood care and education, as well the participation rate of children with disability, require the mobilization of local, national and international resources. To this effect, at a grassroots level, parents and teachers can play a tremendous role for the holistic development of the children.

In Ethiopia, there are a lot of preschoolers with disabilities in need of accessible early years care and education. Kindergarten education was given for private sector though the government of Ethiopia is striving to open it now. The program was considered as a luxury that has a complex system of implementation. Therefore, thinking that it is impossible to address all children in government effort, private sector is given an opportunity to run the program. But, at present government of Ethiopia now a day recognized the importance of early childhood care and education program; therefore, is expanding it under governmental schools. However, it is not well known whether private KGs are implementing inclusive education or not.

Kindergarten education is still out of control until recent days and it is not clear if the program is accommodating children with special needs particularly children with disability. However, special needs and inclusive education has been practiced among all primary, secondary and tertiary education programs in Ethiopia for the last few decades. There are actual policy documents, strategies and guidelines namely Special Need/Inclusive Education Strategy (2012) and Special Need/Inclusive Education Implementation Guideline (2012) that clearly articulate the importance of inclusive education. Yet, more focus is given for middle and upper level education and as a result of this; private kindergartens are not identified if they are practicing inclusive early childhood care and education or not.

Even most kindergartens acknowledged for providing quality education still have no clear evidence that reflects as they are providing all accessible services for children with diverse needs. Kindergarten education is getting expanded alarmingly across our country in both rural and urban settings even though, there is no insight that shows their availability for disadvantaged and vulnerable children. Practicing inclusive education is to value children with special needs so they can participate equally in all educational activities together with their peers without disabilities.

This study was conducted to investigate the status of early childhood inclusive education in two private kindergartens in Tabor Sub-city, Hawassa City Administration. In a much globalized world, all children are expected to get equal access to care, stimulation and education. But it is not clear whether this is practical or not among private kindergartens in most Ethiopian localities. Besides children with special needs/children with disabilities out of kindergartens, it is critical to see whether children with special needs/children with disabilities included in the program are getting accessible care and education or not.

Consequently, the researcher was initiated to conduct this study to see the insight of private kindergartens in the implementation of inclusive early childhood care and education. Therefore; the following basic research questions were posed. As a result, this study has tried to answer the following research questions.

These are;

1. What is the status of implementation of inclusive education in private kindergartens of Tabor Sub-city in Hawassa City Administration?
2. What are the challenges faced in implementing inclusive education on the ground?
3. How do kindergarten teachers, principals and other stakeholders perceive their role in implementation of inclusive education?

### ***1.3. Objectives of the Study***

#### ***1.3.1. General Objective***

The main objective of this study was to investigate the status of implementation of inclusive education in two private kindergartens in Tabor Sub-city, Hawassa City Administration. Besides this, the study was aimed at identifying factors hindering effective implementation of inclusive education in the study area.

#### ***1.3.2. Specific Objectives***

Specifically, this study was aimed to;

1. identify the state of inclusive education practices of private kindergartens.
2. assess factors hindering proper implementation of inclusive education among private kindergartens.
3. examine the appropriateness and accessibility of private kindergartens for children with special needs.
4. explore how kindergarten teachers, principals and other stakeholders view their role in implementation of inclusive education.

### ***1.4. Significance of the Study***

Now days, inclusion is getting a matter of quality education that all children are expected to reach their fullest potential throughout their development. This is why quality care and education matters on child's later personality. Understanding nature of inclusive early childhood care and education as well investigating factors that affect implementation of inclusive early childhood care and education were the basic issues addressed in this study. Most kindergartens never accept children with special needs in to their programs and are not well organized so as to provide quality services for all children regardless of diversity. Therefore, this study was;

- believed to promote the right understanding among the two private kindergartens just by creating awareness, promoting good practices and informing some factors hindering proper implementation of inclusive education.
- It may initiates collaboration among teachers and other concerned bodies in the kindergartens selected for this study.

- It also mobilizes all responsible bodies in the sub-city to bring significant change in implementation of inclusion education.
- Other professionals can also use it as a supplementary material for their further study in the area.

### ***1.5. Scope of the Study***

Inclusive education in kindergarten context is a new approach. In South Nation, Nationalities and Peoples Region, it was totally forgotten in the past and emerging recently. Inclusive education practices in middle and upper grades were studied by many researchers but there was too little consideration with regard to kindergarten education. Even though the problem is of most kindergartens in Ethiopia, the researcher purposely investigated only two private kindergartens in Tabor Sub-city in Hawassa City Administration. The reason why only two private kindergartens were given priority was that the current status they have in the provision of effective child care services is better than other kindergartens in the sub-city.

The study focused on implementation of inclusive education in two private kindergartens in Tabor sub-city. The centers were Ethio-Parent School and Elroi kindergarten. Therefore, this study was delimited to the centers discussed above. The fundamental dimension of the study was access, participation and supports. Furthermore, it focused on the accessibility (both physical and social accessibility) of the kindergartens for children with disabilities/special needs. In this case, the study was delimited to the investigation of how children with special needs are getting access to welcoming environment, adapted learning and playing materials. It was to see whether both kindergartens accommodate children with disabilities or not.

### ***1.6. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework***

Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society. The desired results of inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential (DEC/NAEYC, 2009). Theoretically, inclusive education has the origin of human right and attempted to establish just and equitable educational society. It includes wider philosophical assumptions as equity, participation, non-discrimination, social justice which all promotes the human right.

According to Vygotsky's social constructionist view on development and learning, the social situations of development is a source for the development of consciousness. Social play constitutes the source for development and forms the basis for the zone of proximal development and inclusive education is fundamentally developmental. Inclusive learning is to bring about transformation of ZPD and the zone of actual development (Gindis, B. 2003).

Vygotsky approves that a positive approach implies a favorable societal view on children with disabilities, directing the focus point not on weaknesses and disorders, but on the strengthening and empowerment of individual skills. Vygotsky has influenced early years practice, emphasizing the importance of social interactions in child development. Current theoretical and practical conceptualizations in the field of early childhood special education are limited in their attention to the socio-cultural context in which development occurs (Pass, 2004).

According to Gindis, B. (2003), socio-cultural theory emphasizes inclusive classroom practices through stress on the socio-cultural context, the role of social activity including instruction in learning, and the contributions of learners to their own development. Principles for inclusive early childhood practice are explicated based on the concepts of classrooms as communities, learning as socially mediated, curriculum as contextually relevant and problem based, and assessment as authentic and personally meaningful. Vygotsky argued that human development is the process of a child experiences in their social environment. He contended that 'defects' should not be perceived as abnormality, but need to be brought in to social context.

Booth, T., Ainscow, M. & Kingston D. (2006) state that a founding principle of inclusion is to give children with special needs equal opportunities to participate fully in every life activities and in kindergarten classroom with non-disabled peers. Inclusion can provide improvement for the quality of education and social life for children with special needs. Inclusive classrooms provide a better experience for the entire class. In any classroom, children learn from their more experienced peers, and those more experienced learn from playing with and teaching others (Gindis, B. 2003).

Early childhood inclusion is all about having children with different backgrounds, interests, needs, capacity to learn and play as well as tendency to explore their environment. The way they come together and interact with others is believed to yield significant change in child development. Enrolling students with disabilities is just the start. Having an inclusive classroom is like having a culturally or socially diverse classroom, according to Snell, M., & Janney, R. (2000). In inclusion, children with different abilities are part of the community and their needs are integrated into the entire program. Bringing young children with special needs in to kindergartens without proper support and intervention does not mean inclusion.

Moreover, social constructivism views each learner as a unique individual with unique needs, interests and backgrounds. According to Vrasidas, (2000), social constructivism acknowledges the uniqueness and complexity of the learner and at the same time encourages, utilizes and rewards it as an integral part of the learning process. Inclusion principles for inclusive practices further refer to classrooms as communities, where learning is socially mediated, the curriculum is contextually relevant and problem based, and assessment is authentic and meaningful.

In different international and national documents, it is stated that all children regardless of their diversity can learn, develop and survive with all children of the same age hence education, care and stimulation at early age is a human right issue. This study was assumed to stress on the way how private kindergartens are implementing inclusive education. Therefore, it was conducted in light of socio-cultural theory of Lev Vygotsky. This theory is relevant to this study as it stresses the importance of acknowledging that every child is different and has a unique need.

In this study, the Inclusive Classroom Profile (Soukakou, 2010) and the DEC/NAEYC Inclusion Position Paper (2009) were used together as an organizing framework to better conceptualize the multi-faceted issues of early childhood inclusive education, illustrated in the figure below.

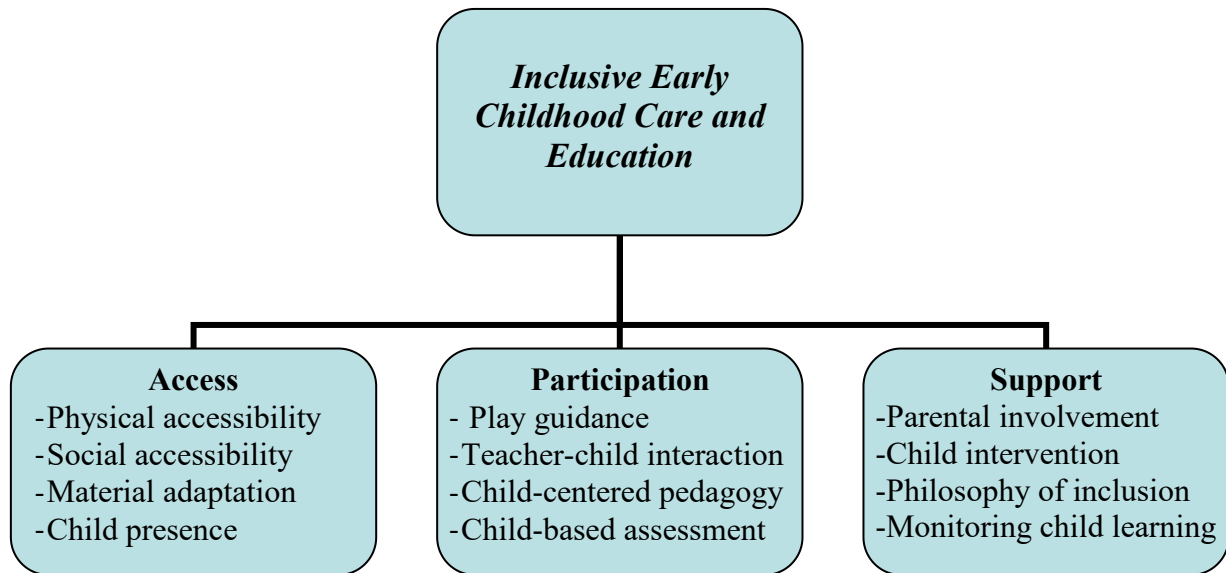


Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework: Crosswalk of ICP items and the DEC/NAEYC position statement

The three main constructs from the DEC/NAEYC Inclusion Position Paper (2009) are access, participation and supports. The items in the figure are practices that have the strongest research base for supporting young children with special needs in inclusive early childhood care and education classrooms (Soukakou, 2010).

They are important elements of inclusive education and one element cannot exist with the absence of the others. Access alone does not give guarantee for inclusion unless children with disabilities are given an opportunity to take part in the activities. Inclusion can be achieved through necessary support provision for the individual child based on the child's best interest. The researcher placed the items corresponding to the three focus areas namely access, participation and supports which was stated in DEC/NAEYC Inclusion Position Statement (DEC/NAEYC, 2009). This conceptual framework guided the conceptualization of the study, data collection and data analysis.

### ***1.7. Operational Definition of Terminologies***

Lists of terminologies defined below are used in this research report.

***Children with Special Needs***- are children in need of special attention and additional support provision. They are children with disability such as children with physical impairment, sensory impairment, developmental delays and etc.

***Disability*** – is a limitation imposed on children as a result of impairment or loss of any body part that can affect child’s potential in participation in the activities.

***Early Intervention*** - is a process of on time support provision for very young children (aged from three to seven) who have certain kind of disability or special need.

***Early Inclusion*** – is an approach to educating and caring children with special educational needs starting from early years of development.

***Inclusion***– a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all young children through increased participation in learning, culture and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education.

***Kindergarten*** – is an early childhood educational setting commonly based on playing, singing, storytelling, practical activities such as drawing, and social interaction as part of the transition from home to school.

***Private Kindertartens*** – are an early childhood care and education settings owned by private sector like investors and organizations.

***Kindergarten Teachers*** – are individuals assigned as facilitators (service providers) for young children in kindertartens owned by private sector.

***Universal Design for Learning*** – is creating accessible social and physical environment so as to facilitate accessible pedagogy for all young children based on their unique needs and potential.

***Zero rejection*** - a condition in which all children with or without disability are successfully included in the early childhood care and education program.

### ***1.8. Limitation of the Study***

Like any other investigators, the researcher faced a lot of challenges during and after data collection. One of the major challenges faced but solved later was unwillingness of the participants during data gathering from the very beginning. Due to lack of awareness about the research, teachers and participants were not interested to give information confidentially. They were not free to give information especially during focus group discussion. The researcher informed them the objective of the study then they provided all the necessary information.

Parents from the two private kindergartens were told to gather in one center and they were not accessible at a time researcher wanted. All of them were extremely busy to attend at any time when required. It was so challenging that their inability to attend timely destructed the researcher to get information as required. The other encounter was children with disability were collected to participate in the focus group discussion nonetheless they were unable to discuss because they were too young to do so. It was highly challenging for the researcher to get information from the children involved in the FGD. But after certain strive, all the problems were solved and information required was collected.

### ***1.9. Organization of the Paper***

This report is organized in to six chapters .The first chapter is an introduction, which deals with the background of the study, statement of the problem, scope of the study, significance of the study and definition of terms. Chapter two presents the review of related literature, and the third chapter is about the methodological approaches of the study including the research setting, participant selection and data collection tools, main procedures of the study and method of data analysis. The fourth chapter deals with result of the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered. Chapter five deals about discussion of the main findings using relevant literature and the researcher's views under the themes. Lastly, the six chapter focuses on the summary of the study. This chapter also presents the conclusion, and implications of the study.

## *Chapter Two*

### *2. Review of the Related Literature*

#### *2.1. Definition of Early Childhood Inclusion*

Inclusive early childhood care and education is rapidly increasing as a common and advocated practice in today's ECCE settings (Cologon, 2014; Odom et al., 2011; Simpson & Warner, 2010; Winter, 2007). It is the right to equal educational and social experiences for all children with and without disability aged birth to six in the same ECCE settings (DEC/NAEYC, 2009). As a philosophical and practical approach, IECCE means children with varying needs and abilities are cared and educated in the same environment (Darragh, 2010).

Moore (2009) and Underwood (2013) stress the active participation of all children in the same IECCE programs and community settings, with engagement and participation in the same activities and routines as their typically developing peers. Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society. The desired results of inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential.

The defining features of inclusion that can be used to identify high quality early childhood programs and services are access, participation, and supports (NAEYC/DEC, 2009). The classroom is seen as a community where diversity is valued and celebrated and all children work, talk, cooperate and share (Booth and Ainscow, 2002). Inclusion requires the removal of barriers to learning for all children regardless of their diverse background. It is all about creating an early years setting with an inclusive culture that accepts diversity as normal and includes all children within a common educational framework.

## ***2.2. Rational for Inclusive Early Childhood Care and Education***

The most stressed arguments for inclusive early childhood care and education are discussed by Smith et al., (2012) as follows. These are;

### ***2.2.1. Human Right & Moral/Ethical Justification***

The child's right is the pivotal argument for IECCE practice (Cologon, 2014, DEC/NAEYC, 2009). The fundamental right to full life and education of children with disability and typically developing peers is experienced in inclusive early childhood care and education (Denier, 2013; Heward, 2013; Moore, 2009). As noted, the UDHR (1948) and Article 23 of the CRC (1989) endorse the right to education and care for all children and provision of special care and support for the education and development of the child with disability.

Children with disabilities are first and foremost children, like other children in ECCE settings (Darragh, 2010). Inclusive early childhood care and education ensures that children with disability participate, learn and thrive together with other children who have varieties of abilities, interests and cultural backgrounds (DEC/NAEYC, 2009). Hence, it is unethical to separate children with disability from inclusive settings that have natural experiences for enhancing learning, playing and developing together for all children.

### ***2.2.2. Brain Development***

Brain development and early learning are important for all children. As noted, neuroscience, developmental neurology, neurodevelopment and other brain research indicate that the age from birth to 5 years are critical for brain development of all children, including children with disabilities. The pace of brain development for children with disability is dependent also on the same early stimulation or experience provided by the environment for children without disability (Bowen A, Agboatwalla M, Luby S, Tobery T, Ayers T, and Hoekstra RM. 2012). Similarly, (Winter, 2007) discusses that IECCE can provide stimulating environments to address the impact of early negative experiences on all children's brain development.

Inclusive early childhood care and education ensures that all children acquire early learning skills that foster future learning and relationships (Driscoll & Nagel, 2005). Through IECCE programs, all children have opportunities for play, hands-on exploration and learning in ECCE settings. Such programs not only enhance children's ability to learn, but also to work with others, be patient and develop other skills, which are foundational for learning and social interactions in the school and beyond (Gindis B., 2003).

### ***2.2.3. Social Equity and Reducing Early Disadvantage***

Inclusive early childhood care and education is advocated as the centerpiece for attaining social equity (Darragh, 2010). IECCE accords all children access and opportunity to benefit from typical settings and experiences. Young children with disability need the same early enriching and stimulating experiences (Allen & Cowdery, 2015). Through IECCE, children with disability gain access to the general early years curriculum, typically developing peers, and more of the typical activities available to the other children. Furthermore, all children are provided equal opportunity to participate in the same curriculum, assessment and teaching practices and materials, and to achieve and succeed within the same nurturing and supportive environment (Darragh, 2010).

### ***2.2.4. Economic Justification***

Inclusive early childhood care and education expands the platform for developing human resources by promoting all children, including children with disabilities, with early and equitable access, participation and supports (Booth et al., 2006; DEC/NAEYC, 2009). At any early age, all children can be equally equipped with foundational knowledge, skills and learned abilities for future work and life, to secure the continuity, productivity and regeneration of human resources for society (McCarty, 2006). Moreover, IECCE practice enhances children's early learning, and skills acquisition and competencies for future employment, and the productivity and growth of society. Early and inclusive preparation of today's crude human resources can ensure that many and diverse children become participants in the future labor market (WHO, 2011).

## ***2.3. Inclusion in Education***

Inclusive education is an approach, to secure the right to education of children by promoting the educational system. The aim of inclusive education is to reduce exclusion in education through ensuring participation of excluded children. It came to international practice with the UNESCO Salamanca Statement and within the few decades since the adoption, and accumulated a positive role in educational policy and has become a global movement. Recently, inclusion in education is recognized as a basic human right and the foundation for a more just and equal society (Norwich, 2013).

There is no single and universally accepted definition of inclusive education because it is viewed from different social and contextual lens. Inclusive education is described basically an ideological shift of international educational discourse that underpins multiple disciplines. Although, inclusive education has been conceptualized in many different ways, the idea of inclusion within the educational framework is frequently attached to the concepts of mainstreaming, diversity management, learning environments, school cultures, inclusive schools, and equal educational opportunities (Westwood, 2013).

On the other hand, disability discourse in education has established the right perspective in education. But, now inclusive education is viewed in deeper connotation and it does not only refer to children with disability, it also includes all children who face some kind of barrier to learning. Booth et al., (2002) argued that, inclusive education is not a special education but the convergence of the need to restructure the public education system to meet the need of a changing society. It is ultimately about transformation of a society and its institutional arrangements.

Similarly, Forlin (2010) viewed inclusive education much broader than simply inviting children with disabilities into mainstream classrooms and mentioned that, it is a means of extending educational opportunities to marginalized children who are still unable to attend school. Stofile (2008) noted that, inclusive education is a paradigm shift that focused on management of student's deficits through the creation of more inclusive classroom environments that respond constructively to class, poverty, gender, disability, and education for a multi-cultural society.

From this perspective, inclusive education is an innovation of educational development that offers a strategy for promoting effective universal education to ensure the right to education of every child. It is about minimizing exclusion and fostering participation for all children in the culture within a wider framework of support for all children in ordinary schools and concerned both access and equality (Beal & Piron, 2004). As Loreman (2009) stated, increased attendance of children in classroom does not ensure the learning achievement of children because within school too, children may be excluded from learning opportunity.

Therefore, inclusive education is not only concern with the increasing access to school, it also focused to create equal and positive learning environment to every child. Inclusion in education can be understood both social inclusion and physical accessibility of the learning environment. The DEC/NAEYC's (2009) defines inclusive early childhood care and education in terms of three key features: access, participation, and support, which provides a framework for quality IECCE implementation. Access means provision of broad range of learning opportunities by applying the principles and practices of universal design (UD); like removal of physical and structural barriers to all children's activities and experiences in inclusive early childhood care and education settings (Chandler et al., 2011; DEC/NAEYC, 2009).

It also involves a proactive approach including barrier-free physical and social environment, instruction based on differentiation, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach (Chandler et al., 2011) and uses multiple means of representation, engagement and expression to ensure that all children have quality inclusive early childhood care and education (Darragh, 2010; Tomlinson, 2014). Access to the same learning environment, including the physical setting, ensures that all children benefit from general education curriculum, materials, activities and routines, teacher-led instruction and experiences, and interactions with peers and adults (DEC/NAEYC, 2009).

Participation occurs when teachers and adults promote a sense of belonging and engagement for all children in inclusive early childhood care and education settings through planned implicit and explicit play and learning activities (DEC/NAEYC, 2009). Briefly, participation is facilitated through the use of instructional and intervention approaches. Most children require specialized and individualized instructional strategies and support to active and meaningful participation in IECCE settings (Buisse & Hollingsworth, 2009).

Mass system-level support is identified as essential to inclusion in ECCE setting. Strong administrative and program support enhances effective IECCE (Chandler et al., 2011; DEC/NAEYC, 2009). System level support includes communication and collaboration opportunities for families, professionals and teachers, and provision of systems are shared philosophy and vision of inclusion, shared instructional approaches, and strategies for teaching and supporting all children. For Booth et al., (2006, P.4), IECCE means reducing the barriers to play, learning and participation of all children; inclusive settings becoming more responsive to diversity of children in the teachers, and putting inclusive values in to action.

## ***2.4. Historical Development of Early Childhood Inclusive Education***

### ***2.4.1. Origin and Development of Inclusive Education***

Historically, children with disability often experience stigma from birth and are more prone to exclusion, concealment, abandonment, institutionalization and abuse (UNESCO, 2009). Stofile, 2008, discussed two key movements that simulate the origin and development of inclusive education. These are disability movement and disabilities studies that urged refocused to education system and drew attention on discrimination and the barriers to participation experienced by children with disabilities. Second is the social model of disability that played a great role, which finally led continuous debate on education reform. This reform debate has established the foundation of development of inclusive education.

Like disability and educational reform movement, UN international conventions on education also played pivotal role in the development of inclusive education. The term inclusive education has been cited in number of key UN Declaration and Conventions (UNESCO, 2005) that brought international attention to practice inclusive education globally. United Nations Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, established education as human right and appealed for free and compulsory elementary education. Similarly, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 ensured the right for all children to receive education without discrimination. It declared that education should be compulsory and available free to all (Peters, 2004).

Although, inclusion has been indirectly advocated since the United Nations Declaration (UN) in 1948, especially it became the prominent only after 1990s. In 1990, the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) has attempted to address gap between the ideals and reality in education. It has visualized universal access to education and appealed to promote equity to vulnerable and excluded children including girls, the poor, street and working children, rural and remote populations, ethnic minorities, and particularly children with disability.

#### ***2.4.1.1. Across the Globe***

The present worldwide evolution of inclusive education is, however, attributed to the 1994 Salamanca Statement of Spain developed by representatives of 92 governments and 25 international organizations (Peters S.J., 2004). It is considered as a significant IE milestone, which sanctioned that regular schools should those with special needs with in child-centered pedagogy. It was believed to put ground for the emergence of inclusive education.

John Locke (1632-1704), a seventeenth century English physician and philosopher, was an early contributor to our understanding of the importance of the early childhood care and education for later development. According to his view, what children learn is a direct result of experiences, activities, and sensations; and what children become is determined by the type and quality of experiences they have, especially during their early years. Locke's belief in the powerful influence of the child's environment and early experiences is reflected in compensatory education programs for young living in poverty. These compensatory programs are designed to make up for the disadvantages experienced by children living in deprived environments (Agbegna et. al., 2014).

According to Cologon, 2014 another prominent advocate for early childhood inclusive education was Robert Owen (1771-1858). He was concerned about the living and working conditions of the children and their parents. He prohibited very young children from working at all and limited the number of working hours for older children. Believing that the early years represented the best time to influence a child's development, Owen established an infant school for children between the ages of 3 and 10. These schools were seen as a way of compensating children of poverty for the deprived conditions they experienced at home. His work was based on the premise that poverty could be eliminated by educating and socializing young children from poor families. The establishment of compensatory programs indicated that the belief that early intervention can make a difference in a child's development and learning was becoming more readily understood and accepted (Cologon, 2014).

Simpson et al., 2010 discusses that in the late 1800s, Montessori was a founder of education and care for young children with disabilities. She observed that educational intervention rather than medication would be a more effective strategy for working with these children. To provide enriching experiences for the children with special needs, Montessori developed an innovative, activity-based sensory education program involving didactic teaching materials.

Inclusive Education is globally accepted as a movement of educational reform in order to establish universally accessible and quality education system that addresses the problems of exclusion in education. In the first year of 21st century, the global community had established expansion of preschool education as a global common agenda and focusing to work together against the exclusion in education (UNESCO, 2014).

As a result, the last decade has enormous progress in expanding access to education worldwide. Despite this progress, 150 million children are still denied the opportunity to learn. This implies that there are a large number of children not being given opportunity to get early care and stimulation. Children with disabilities still remained as most of the neglected and disadvantaged group in education. Around half the world's out of school population lives in a very low income and conflict-affected countries. This has a big implication for preschool inclusion (UNESCO, 2014).

#### ***2.4.1.2. The Ethiopian Context***

Historically, kindergarten education in Ethiopia was long recognized in the 17th century by Ethiopian philosophers Zär'a Ya'aqob and his disciple Wäldä Haywat (Sumner, 1992, in Tirussew et al, 2008). There is little doubt that it was rooted in the traditional Ethiopian Orthodox Church (Pankhurst, 1955, in Tirussew et al., 2008). Moreover, evidences indicate that the significance of early education was recognized as early as Medieval Ethiopia. During that period, male children began attending church services at around age 4.

The curriculum for children of this age consisted primarily of drill and practice of the alphabet (Tekeste N., 1996, in Tirussew T. et al., 2008). The traditional pre-primary priest preschool education remains still to be easily accessible, affordable and main feeder of formal primary education in Ethiopia (Tirussew T., 2005). However, this does not give evidence about the emergence of early childhood inclusive education. The vast majority of parents as well as teachers are still tied-up with the traditional method of parenting which does not give space for diversity and chance for the children to air out their opinion and to be listened to. Children with disabilities were feared and restricted from the activities shared by other age mates without disability.

Along with global community, the government of Ethiopia also committed to ensure universal quality education and adopted principles of inclusion in education to promote overall education system. Despite the various provisions of inclusive education at policy level, many children in Ethiopia still remained out of school, among those who come to school, many children leave school before completing the program and many children suffers from lower learning achievement as well as class repetition.

ECCE Policy Framework, (2010) reveals that Early Childhood Care and Education is one of the most neglected areas in Ethiopia. The early childhood education enrollment rate in 2007/08 was about 3.9% and increased to 39% in 2015/16, which is nationally a negligible figure. This means, from the expected total number of children 7,522,942 which accounts 3,805,523 male and 3,717, 419 female children, and only 1,536,794 male and 1,422,099 female children were enrolled. This indicates that a lot of preschoolers are out of the program due to different reasons including disability. In the last few years, the private sector in the urban centers is increasing tremendously. However, they are only accessible for the very few children coming from well-to-do families (ESAA, 2014/15).

### ***2.5. Elements of Inclusive Education***

The fundamental principle of the IE is that all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any differences they may have (UNESCO, 2012). Inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of these learners, accommodating both different learning styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, teaching strategies, use of resources and partnership with their communities (UNESCO, 2004).

Arthur, L, Beecher, B, Death, E, Dockett, S & Farmer, S (2007), argue that young child's active participation should be guided by developmentally and individually appropriate curriculum. Access to and participation in age appropriate general curriculum becomes central to the identification and provision of specialized support services. High quality early childhood programs form the foundation for high quality inclusive programs from which all children benefit. Some of the elements discussed below.

#### ***2.5.1. Environment, Engagement and Inclusion***

The classroom has to be divided into well-defined areas with adequate work space for individual students, and large/small groups of students. There must be a wide variety of real and representational materials reflecting student interests, learning levels, and cultures. Materials/shelves have to be labeled and can be accessed by students. Then, all students will follow classroom routines without dependence upon adults based on the transition signals given and students respond to engage in transition routines (Frankel, E., et al., 2010).

They also argue that students' need to be observed independently moving their schedule icons and schedule task strips to reflect current activities. Schedules should be portable and accompany students to different locations as appropriate. Throughout the daily routine there has to be a balance of large/small group and individual instruction as well as active/outdoor and reflective/indoor activities. Again, students' need to be observed actively engaged with materials, peers, and adults the majority of the time throughout the day in the least restrictive curriculum and environment (Frankel, E. et al., 2010).

### ***2.5.2. Communication and Technology Support***

As UNESCO, (2012), all students should be observed using an individual daily schedule to direct to classroom activity/location without adult assistance. Students may be observed using visually based work systems, which are individualized per student learner characteristics. Students must be observed using their individual work. Students may need to be observed using individual schedules and work systems in other settings outside of the classroom. Communication systems should be used by students throughout their daily routine that support engagement, choice, and language with peers and adults.

### ***2.5.3. Behavioral Support and Social Skills***

Environmental accommodations that prevent or minimize problematic behavioral patterns need to be observed such as: boundary markers, visual schedules, labeling, choice/communication boards, transition/activity completion signals, etc. All team members will contribute to functional behavioral assessment that results in holistic interventions used to decrease challenging behavior patterns as stated in Chitiyo, M., & Makweche-C., (2011).

## ***2.6. Benefits of Early Childhood Inclusion and Intervention***

Empirical research indicates IECCE provides a range of benefits for children with and without disabilities, early childhood care and education teachers, child-care providers, parents and families, and society (Smith et al., 2012, Odom et al., 2011).

### ***2.6.1. Academic and Social Benefits to Children with Disability***

Studies have identified a range of learning and social outcomes that children with disability have attained in IECCE (Allen & Cowdery, 2012; Guralnick, 2011; Odom et al., 2011). Well stimulated and supported children in early years benefit more in later academic achievements.

Benefits are realized through provision of appropriate experiences for children with disability in IECCE settings (McLeskey et al., 2013) and purposeful and careful support system (Moore, 2009). This can be actual when there is greater variety of nurturing, stimulating and responsive experiences (DEC/NAEYC, 2009).

Inclusive early childhood care and education settings are argued to increase opportunities for children with disability to develop friendships with peers without disability (Buysse, Goldman, & Skinner, 2002; DEC/NAEYC, 2009; Moore, 2009). Friendships are major developmental tasks of early childhood that predict later outcomes. Buysse et al., 2009 state that inclusive care and education in early childhood years yields a positive benefit in academic, social and emotional development for children with disabilities. They benefit through increased likelihood to observe and learn meaningful way of interacting peers, other people or toys; and development of social skills through modeling.

### ***2.6.2. Academic and Social Benefits to Children without Disability***

Typically developing peers benefit from social interaction in IECCE settings (Smith et al., 2012; Odom et al., 2011). Worley & Odom, (2000) found that children with disability develop realistic understanding, tolerance and appreciation and sensitivity towards peers with disability in IECCE, and also provide assistance to peers with disability in their daily activities. Similarly, at an early age, typically developing peers learn to appreciate similarities and differences between people, develop greater understanding of disability, and increase sensitivity to individual differences (Odom et al., 2004).

Inclusive early childhood care and education settings offer all children without disabilities opportunities for peer tutoring (Allen & Cowdery, 2012). This fosters multiple practices and assistance in the teaching and learning process for all peers. As understanding and tolerance of children with and without disability grow, all children in IECCE settings can learn strategies for interacting with their peers-valuable lifelong skills (Denier, 2013).

### ***2.6.3. Benefits to Teachers***

Early childhood care and education teachers face challenges as educators and care givers of young children in inclusive settings. Denier, (2013), underlines that inclusive early childhood care and education can benefit teachers through implementation and practice.

Both regular and special teachers have also witnessed improvement in their professional knowledge & expertise from their involvement in inclusive early childhood care and education (Winter, 2007). It is also believed to heighten collaboration and communication among early childhood care and education teachers and other staff members (Moore, 2009). Inclusive Early Childhood Care and Education teachers become competent in early childhood curricula modification, instruction, and assessment through continuous exposure and acquisition of knowledge and skills (Simpson & Warner, 2010).

#### ***2.6.4. Benefits to Parents***

Akalm, S. (2014) noted that parents of children with disability favor the increased social contacts inclusive settings provide for children with disability and typically developing peers. Simpson and Warner, (2010) argues that inclusive early childhood care and education settings provide many learning opportunities for parents and families. Parents of children with disability learn about typical child development through wider exposure to inclusive early childhood care and education programs.

Parents also have opportunities to form meaningful relationships with parents and families of typically developing children. Opportunities where all families learn and relate with each other in inclusive early childhood care and education settings further enhance community acceptance and development of positive attitudes towards children with disability. Families and parents become supportive of one another, decreasing feeling of isolation and self-doubt, and ultimately promoting feelings of confidence (Armstrong et al., 2010).

#### ***2.7. Features of Inclusive Kindergartens***

Inclusive education is intended to remove barriers of learning and to provide opportunities for students to actualize their unique potential, regardless of their race, ethnicity, (dis)ability, exceptionality, socio-economic status, and sexual orientation (UNESCO, 2012). This aim could be achieved through the inclusive school where every child experiences a welcoming and supportive environment that foster the development of a sense of belonging and value. Loreman (2009) has suggested the features of inclusive education as schools have a zero rejection policy (while registering, teaching and caring), all children are welcomed and valued and follow substantively similar programs of study with curriculum that can be adapted and modified if necessary.

Loreman (2009), again discussed about culturally and socially responsive instruction in which all children can contribute to the learning activities and are supported to make friends and to be socially successful with their peers. UNESCO, (1994) discussed inclusive kindergartens recognizes and responds to the diverse needs of their children, accommodates different teaching styles and ensure quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, effective use of resource, and partnerships with their communities. An inclusive school accepts all children and responds the diverse needs.

The fundamental principle of the inclusive school is all children should learn together regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. Inclusive schools therefore, deliver a curriculum to children through organizational arrangements that is different from those used in schools which support to exclusion to some preschoolers from their regular classrooms. In an inclusive school, all member of the school community have a sense of being welcome, of belonging, and of being valued within the context of school and experience pedagogy of care (Kunc, 2000).

According to Center for Studies on Inclusive Education, an inclusive school is characterized by community based services, barrier free settings (accessible to all), promotion of collaboration with all concerned bodies and promotion of equality among the learners (Peters, S.J. 2004). This implies inclusive school strives towards developing practices that reflects support, and care to all children. In doing so, it has emphasized to build inclusive culture so that wide variety of individual needs could be addressed.

Inclusive school has the collective commitment to educate all children and has the philosophy to value the individual contributions. In a truly inclusive school, the principal, teacher, parents and students work collaboratively to ensure that all members of the school community experience a sense of being welcome, of belonging and of being valued within the context of school (Kunc, 2000). Inclusive school positively responds individual needs with accepting the value of every student with diverse background and capabilities. Soukakou, E.P. (2010) states that classroom teachers in inclusive school deliver meaningful learning experiences with the collaboration of support staff. Teachers seek to maximize the strengths of students and assure the success of all children in achieving curricular learning goals.

Inclusive school is to invite every child to participate fully in all aspects of school life and valued as an integral member of the school community. Inclusive schools are those where the teacher, other staff, students, and local community valued the ideology of inclusion and committed to ensure fullest and meaningful participation in the school community with collaboration Soukakou E.P, (2010).

A qualitative study done by Odom et al. (2000) described the characteristics of inclusive early childhood programs in terms of organizational contexts and service delivery. Throughout the research there were characteristics that overlapped in many of the studies and articles. Increasing parental involvement by empowering, forming partnerships, and giving parents information as well as expecting their participation was stated in a variety of articles and studies. Numerous studies included a strong language enriched program to be beneficial in facilitating a quality preschool program.

According to DEC/NAEYC, (2009), the Early Years Curriculum is based on the principles like ensuring all children are welcomed, feel included, secure and valued. It should be age appropriate, socially and culturally sensitive, collaborative practice, intervention based, and all children are given an opportunity to learn, play and develop together with considering their diversity.

To meet diverse needs of the children, inclusive kindergarten is characterized by the following points as stated in UNESCO, 2005.

- Planning opportunities that build on and extend children's knowledge, experiences, interests and skills and develop their self-esteem and confidence in their ability to learn.
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies, based on the child's learning needs.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate, support and develop children and help them be involved, concentrate and learn effectively.
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment, free from harassment, in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Using materials that positively reflect diversity and are free from any discrimination.
- Planning opportunities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills.
- Monitoring children's progress, identifying any areas of concern and taking action to provide support.

There are several areas of focus including the organization of physical space, appropriate and adequate supply of materials, teacher qualifications, programming variables, instructional strategies, collaboration among team members and families, as well as individualization and adaptations within daily routines. Ideally, quality inclusive systems are developed intentionally from the start according to Amsden, D., & Griff-Cabelli, R. (2013).

Casey T., (2004) reveals that Inclusion alone does not guarantee desirable outcomes for children with disabilities. Two conditions, a high quality environment and supports for classroom staff, must characterize all inclusive early childhood settings to ensure desirable outcomes for all children, especially children with disabilities. Overall quality measures of inclusion based on an average rating of a program, classroom or setting may not reflect the actual inclusion experience or appropriateness for individual children.

Again Mohay, H & Reid, E (2006) stress that high quality ECCE programs helps all children have opportunities to develop their language, social, physical and cognitive abilities. Inclusive early education is not just about placement in a program, but also active participation in social interactions and the development of children's abilities and skills. Children at a range of developmental levels, including children identified with special needs in the ECCE service system, should be welcomed as valued members of the community by supporting active participation in all early childhood settings. In order for all children to fully participate in education, care and community, they must have equitable access to programs. ECCE programs should have an inclusion policy that states the anti-discriminatory policies for enrollment. The relationships between service sectors including health, education, social services, and care services has to be collaborative (Buisse& Hollingsworth, 2009).

Physical resources that are important for inclusive practice include an accessible environment that provides adaptive materials, specialized equipment and a well-planned layout. Many of the materials and environments that are identified in high quality early childhood education overall are consistent with high quality inclusion (Buysee & Hollingsworth, 2009). Staff in ECCE programs can use the range of materials they have for multi-age programs to adapt activities for all children. Programs that are able to provide both quiet and active areas are good for children with a range of attention and sensory needs. Programs that respect the natural pace of each child's development and the family context are also inclusive (Frankel & Ajodhia, 2010).

Inclusive classrooms look different all the time because the environment is created by interactions the care giver and children have as a group. According to Caroline Jones, (2004), a given preschool center is said to be inclusive when;

- children are active and creative learners.
- a classroom is a beehive of different activities which are child-centered.
- children get an opportunity to do different things with people helping them.
- children are allowed to move from one activity to another based on their need and potential.
- all children are actively engaged and the teacher is delighted to be there.
- it may sound like pandemonium and looks messy, but a lot of learning is happening.
- children are engaged in a problem solving activities.
- parental involvement is encouraged.
- children with special needs are free to learn at their own pace and have accommodations as well as be taught with learning strategies in place to meet their unique needs.
- there is a classroom where learning often happens in small groups with peers helping and supporting each other.
- the classrooms are characterized by social interaction that is meaningful for curriculum expectations.

### ***2.8. Factors Hindering Implementation of Childhood Inclusive Education***

UNESCO, (2003), states that the challenge of IE considerably lies in its implementation. Although children with disabilities are entitled to the same rights and to equal opportunities as all other children in kindergartens, their lives are impaired by various factors which hinder their full participation in school and family activities. Studies done by UNESCO showed that, there were various factors which influenced inclusion of children with disabilities. It is the nature or the situation of these factors in any school that will either support or pose limitations to inclusion.

Inclusion could be influenced either positively or negatively by factors such as: school and the surrounding environment, teaching/learning resources, curriculum, support services among others, language and communication, as well policy itself when developed by someone who do not understand the concept of inclusion.

These factors may create barriers towards effective learning for children with disabilities however; if proper intervention is done, children with disabilities would learn with little or no problems. Eliminating the barriers gives such a school positive characteristics for an inclusive environment (Eleweke, C. J., & Rodda, M. 2002).

From the literature reviewed, teachers training on special needs education, methods of instruction and their attitude are among the teacher related factors that may influence inclusion of the learners with special needs in schools. Mohay, H and Ried, E (2006) say that, when teachers are trained and have the skills to handle children with special needs, they normally gain courage in their work. Awareness on various disabilities makes them have positive attitudes towards the learners. Teachers can experience greater job satisfaction and a higher sense of accomplishment when all children are succeeding in school to the best of their abilities (UNESCO, 2004).

Social, cultural and economic factors which may influence inclusion of children with disabilities in kindergarten schools may include: community attitude, beliefs and financial capacity. Inadequacies and inequalities in the education system are most evident areas which have sustained poverty and high level of unemployment. These may either support or limit inclusion depending on whether proper intervention if need be has been done or not (UNESCO, 2012).

Effective practice of inclusive education is very complex process that requires sufficient resources, greater commitment and wider participation. A study by Cologon on inclusive education showed different problems at different level in ensuring effective practice of inclusive education. The problems in practice are realized from the clear understanding of inclusive education to developing positive attitude. One crucial problem that contributes to the difficulties in the successful implementation of inclusive education internationally is conceptual confusion regarding inclusive education (Cologon, 2014). If teachers and educators lack of clear understanding about the philosophy of inclusive education, it becomes impossible to implement it effectively.

The lack of common understanding and lack of knowledge about the practice of inclusive education can be barriers to inclusion itself (Armstrong et al., 2010). Similarly, Westwood, (2013) found that problem related to attitude can be challenge to implement inclusive education. Teacher's and parent's negative attitude towards mainstreaming children with disabilities affects the implementation.

Most of the teachers doubt about the efficacy and feasibility of attempting to teach an ever increasing range of children with disability in one classroom (Korkmaz, 2011). As teacher has central role in the practice of inclusive education, his/her attitude has direct impact on successful implementation of the program. Teacher's attitude towards inclusion may vary according to the nature of disability of the students (Westwood, 2013). Research evidences showed that when teachers lack desired skills and expertise to implement inclusive education successfully and to teach students with special needs, it is additional challenge (Westwood & Graham, 2003, Smith & Tyler, 2011).

Another problem of effective implementation of inclusive education is resource constraints. Despite the introduction of inclusive education in all countries, it is reported that most of the developing countries are suffering from lack of financial resources to implement inclusive education. Due to this problem, the practice of inclusive education is affected mainly from insufficient materials and equipment provision, lack of teacher training program, and lack of support staff (Belay et al., 2015).

Along with the resource problems, educational system factors also affects in implementation of inclusive education. These factors include physical environments of school, school curriculum, language and communication, socio-economic status of the parents, educational policies, and organizational structures. Most serious factors are inadequate education and professional development for teachers, and specialist support staff, lack of funding and limited support from educational authorities (UNICEF 2008). Additionally, inflexible curriculum, school culture, lack of coordination, and communication in the school creates many other barriers in successful implementation (Frankel, et al., 2010).

### ***2.8.1. Lack of Teacher Training***

Winter, (2006) suggests that training and education are critical to the success of inclusion programs. The finding reveals that teachers feel ill equipped to teach in an inclusive setting because they feel that they did not receive appropriate training or professional development to properly implement inclusion into their classrooms. It shows teachers feel that they are not prepared to plan and make adaptations for students with disabilities.

As Winter (2007) states, both pre-service preparation and in-service trainings are critical factors in helping teachers to formulate their beliefs about inclusion as well as affecting their ability to teach students with special needs. Without a coherent plan for teacher training in the educational needs of students with disabilities, attempts to include these students in the general education classroom become extremely difficult. In order for inclusion to be considered successful, it is important that teachers are prepared and have confidence and skills to teach in inclusive settings by providing instruction to every student (Winter, 2007).

### ***2.8.2. Lack of Support Staff***

According to Stofile SY., (2008), once a general education classroom becomes an inclusion setting, it usually means that there will be more staff in the classroom to assist the general education teacher. Staff turnover also affects the teachers and students involved in the inclusion program. When there are changes in personnel, this can result in extra demands and stress put on the teachers. Teachers then need to take the extra time, which no teacher has, to train the new paraprofessional and teach them the routines and help them become familiar with the students they are working with. Other staff turnover also impacts students because they build strong relationships with the concerned bodies and when they leave, it is a significant loss for them, socially and academically as stated in Stofile SY., (2008).

### ***2.8.3. Social Pressure***

For children who are experiencing inclusion for the first time, becoming socially accepted by their peers in this classroom setting can be very difficult. It is difficult for them to interact socially. Becoming socially accepted also depends on the severity of a student's disability, according to Voltz and Brazil (2001). Students without disabilities soon realize the differences in capabilities of those students and label them and treat them differently, as found by Kavale and Fornes (2000).

This can result in children without disabilities rejecting them as friends, especially if their behaviors are unusual or inappropriate. If students with disabilities become frustrated, they may act out inappropriately (Voltz and Brazil, 2001). Being in a larger classroom with more children and more noise can become a distraction for them and a catalyst for inappropriate behavior.

#### ***2.8.4. Lack of Staff Collaboration***

Staff collaboration is an involvement of teachers, supportive staff and other concerned bodies in the kindergartens to support inclusion. Successful inclusion requires teamwork and collaboration from everyone involved. Voltz and Brazil (2001) believe that, "it is critical that general and special education teachers routinely meet to engage in collaborative planning and problem solving in order to facilitate the inclusion of children with disabilities " (p. 30). This can lead to the general education teacher taking the lead teacher role and the special education teacher becoming more like an instructional aid than a co-teacher (Voltz and Brazil, 2001).

Wilson and Michaels (2006) have found that feelings of frustration and helplessness can arise from children with disabilities and teachers when poor teaching arrangement occurs. Children with disabilities feel that they are not receiving the individualized instruction they need. Teachers feel that they are lacking the support they need from administration to make accommodations in their classroom to successfully implement the inclusion process.

#### ***2.8.5. Perceptions and Attitudes toward Inclusion***

Many people take part in the inclusion process especially with the number of children with special needs that are being included in the education. Perspective and opinions of teachers, administrators, parents and children can have either positive or negative impact on inclusion.

##### ***2.8.5.1. Teachers' Attitudes***

Preschool teachers play a major role in the education and care of children with disabilities. Teachers help develop and implement inclusive education that addresses the social and academic needs of all children served in general the program. The attitude of teachers towards children with special needs is a key factor in determining the success or failure of inclusive education. As stated by Salisbury (2006), attitudes toward inclusion were mostly influenced by the amount of education and academic preparation teachers received. Another factor influencing teachers' attitudes is the severity of the students' disabilities.

Leatherman, J.M. (2007) states the more severe the disability of a student, the less positive inclusion was regarded by teachers. Including students with severe disabilities requires a greater amount of responsibility. If teachers are not provided with the proper training or professional development opportunities they needed to teach students with special needs, they believe that they are not being fully supported by their administrators.

Instructional modifications is viewed as difficult to implement hence it requires extra time and planning. Smith et al., (2011) also found that teachers perceive it is necessary to still use pull out services for some students with disabilities because they need more one-on-one attention and assistance than inclusion. Kavale et al., (2000), also believes that the general education teacher should not have the primary responsibility for the education of students with disabilities when they are in an inclusive environment because they thought that the inclusion process is a great task for special education teacher. The attitude, skills and willingness of the teacher has significant influence on effective implementation of inclusive education.

#### ***2.8.5.2. Administrations' Attitudes and Perceptions***

Salisbury (2006) discovered that preschool principals believe that inclusion is more than about children with disabilities. They suppose every child, including those with disabilities is part of the school community, and belongs to a classroom he/she attends. Inclusion requires a positive attitude and strong commitment of the concerned administrative staff. They have to feel that unless children with disabilities are included in a regular education and care centers, they cannot learn better (Salisbury, 2006).

Praisner (2003) found that preschool administrators face many challenges when implementing the inclusion process. The implementation of inclusion is not without a struggle. The most frequently stated barriers are the negative attitudes of teachers and parents. Other challenges that can be mentioned are staffing issues, time and meeting individual student needs. Each of these challenges can have an effect on the momentum of change according to Praisner (2003).

Problems with staff shortages, turnover, attitudes, and changing roles and responsibilities for teachers affect the implementation of inclusion. Salisbury (2006) noted that due process and IEP planning meetings can be taken as time consuming among most teachers. Inclusive education particularly at kindergarten level requires attention, patience and critical understanding among the administrative officers and teachers.

### ***2.8.5.3. Parents' Perceptions and Attitudes***

Parents' views of inclusion are also considered to be very important because they play a major role in the education of their child. Parents need to be dedicated to the inclusion process in order for it to be successful and effective for their child (Brown, 2001). Children with and without disabilities are now being educated together in the same inclusive environment and parents need to be involved to help teachers become aware of what is best for their children.

Brown (2001), found that parents seem to be concerned about their child's inclusion in all areas of life as well as the school environment. Many parents of children with disabilities want them to have a normal life experience and not be excluded or isolated from their peer group. De Carvalho M. (2001) found that parents of children without disabilities believe that being in an inclusive setting helped their child by preparing them to live in the real world and enhanced their awareness about individual differences.

A study done by Brown (2001), revealed that children without disabilities show an improved sense of self-worth from helping their peers, social cognition, and a greater acceptance of diversity. Parents of children with disabilities also believe it gives children increased opportunities to foster their acceptance and provide them with an interesting and creative environment to stimulate their learning (Brown, 2001).

There are certain factors that can influence parents' beliefs of inclusion. One of these factors includes the attitudes of the teachers, administrators, and school as a whole toward inclusion. The severity of their child's disability can also influence parents' attitudes toward inclusion; parents of children with mild disabilities express significantly more positive views of inclusion compared to parents of children with moderate to severe disabilities, according to Elkins, J. et al., (2003). The child's age and the number of years their child has received special education can also influence their views of inclusion.

### ***2.8.5.4. Students' Perceptions and Attitudes***

Brown (2001) reveals that students without disabilities are now being exposed to students with disabilities and are learning with each other in the same inclusive environment. In fact, children enjoy the opportunities to meet peers that have diverse personalities. Children with disabilities may also believe that they feel more accepted by their peers now that they are in an inclusive setting (Brown, 2001). They have to feel comfortable around their classmates.

Furthermore, it is believed that children without disabilities that are in inclusive settings show a greater understanding of individual differences and are less likely to hold prejudices or stereotypes toward their peers that have disabilities compared to students who are not taught in an inclusive setting, according to Brown (2001). If children observe their teacher providing support and respect to each and every student in their classroom, then they will follow suit. Children need to have positive role models that fully support inclusion and diversity in order for them to accept and embrace it.

## ***2.9. Policy Issues in Inclusive Early Childhood Education***

### ***2.9.1. International Declarations and Conventions***

According to UNESCO, (2012) every individual has a right to education. This is clearly stipulated in article 26 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 (UN, 1948). It is universally recognized that the main objective of education is to provide quality education to all children, where ‘all’ means ‘ALL’ even the children with special needs. This draws global attention to the fact that “Education for All” (EFA) is a fundamental human right which cannot be realized without enabling all people who have disabilities, to access basic quality education. This is to enable them attain their full potential and be able to meaningfully contribute and participate in their society throughout their lives. Making such people access education is important for human capital development for it prepares those who were most likely to be dependants to become self-reliant.

Powerful policy statements have been adopted by the international community following pressure from human rights activists and the Disabled People’s Movement. The declaration of EFA did not use the term inclusive education directly, but it has made several provisions to ensure the opportunity of education to the marginalized groups in order to bring them in the mainstream educational system. In the same way, the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, 1993 has further incorporated the rules governing all aspects of right of disabled people. It has stated that, states parties should have responsibility for disabled persons’ education (Peters, 2004).

Salamanca Statement for Action on Special Needs Education stated that, school should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. Article two of this framework mentioned that regular schools with the inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes. They are bases for creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all. Moreover, these types of schools provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system (UNESCO, 1994).

Likewise, Dakar Framework has urged to create safe, healthy, inclusive and equitable educational environments to excellence in learning with clearly defined levels of achievement. It has explored the issues of children from marginalized groups and recommended that education system should be inclusive and actively search children who are not enrolled and responds flexibly to the circumstances and needs of all learners as well. Dakar Framework for Action (2000) ensured that all children have access to and complete free and compulsory education by 2015 focusing on marginalized and girls child (Peters, 2004).

With the intent of placing disability issues on the development agenda and to advance inclusive education as a primary approach to achieving education for all (EFA), Flagship Program on Education and Disability was launched at the end of 2001. UN Disability Convention has also promoted the right of persons with disabilities and encouraged mainstreaming people with disability in development (Peters, 2004).

Inclusive education has originated as a result of continuous debate within reform perspectives that established education as fundamental human right. It is grounded on human right perspective & developed from the disability right movement. IE in nowadays is also conceived as a foundation to develop inclusive society. The philosophical foundations of inclusive education are opportunity, acceptance of disability & diversity, and increasing full participation of all children in local school. The ultimate goal of inclusive education is to end all forms of discrimination, foster social cohesion (UNESCO, 2011), and to identifies and removes barriers to participation in education (Mittler, 2012).

The Salamanca Statement from UNESCO adapted in July 1994 declared;

*“Every child has a fundamental right to education and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain acceptable levels of learning because he/she has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs. Education system should be designed to take into account the wide diversity of the children. Schools should accommodate CwSN with a child-centered pedagogy so as to combat discriminatory attitudes, create welcoming communities, build an inclusive society and achieve education for all.”*

The UN Convention on the Right of the Child (1989) and the UN Standard Rules on Equalization (1993) both unequivocally support the right to equal treatment for all and view this as a right to mainstream education. Dakar Frame Work on Education for All (UNESCO, 2001) has appeared, affirming the principle of inclusive education and the importance of working towards “schools for all”. The spirit of inclusion was further emphasized on the UN standard rule no. 6 requiring member states to provide education all without segregation.

All these are powerful tools in the struggle to abolish segregated education which limits the opportunities for CWDs to be educated in regular schools and reinforces society’s prejudice and discrimination against them as stated in UNESCO, (2005). The convention on the rights of persons with disabilities that was ratified in 2008, Article 24 states that state parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning directed to enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society.

### ***2.9.2. National Guidelines and Strategies***

Ethiopia ratified the international convention on the rights of children on the December 1991. Ethiopian government is moving forward to address the issue of Persons with Disabilities (Tirussew T., 2005). As a result, the proclamation concerns citizens with disabilities targeted to protect Persons with Disabilities, including proclamation No. 101, 1994 that focuses on the elimination of discrimination and protecting the rights of Persons with Disabilities as a targeted to secure the rights of the people. According to SNE Guide (2006), the Ethiopian education and Training policy (TGE, 1994) deliberately outlined the principles of special needs education as the Fundamental rights for all children including Persons with Disabilities and gifted children, to learn in accordance with their full potential and needs.

Nevertheless, practically there are various problems in implementing these policy issues in Ethiopia. FDRE constitution Article 41, sub article 5 underlines that persons with disabilities/children with disabilities shall have access to publically funded services. Services shall be provided for those who require additional support and this has to be considered as a right issue.

ECCE inspection framework (2007), on the other hand discusses children with disabilities should get access to inclusive learning and play environment. It recommends that buildings and other kindergarten facilities have to fit to the need and interest of children with special needs. The Ethiopian education and Training policy (1994) declaration ensures the importance of early childhood education establishment to promote their holistic development and as it prepare them for formal education (Tirussew T., 2005) as cited in Demisew Abebe, 2014. But not much effort was made by the government to strengthen and expand pre-school program in the country, because this sector is left for private and other non-governmental organizations. Ethiopia has also ratified various international Conventions and instruments of relevance to inclusive education.

Similarly, the Education and Training Policy (ETP, 1994) states that the “expansion of quality education to all citizens is not only a right but also a guarantee for development”. It also aims at providing education to all children without any discrimination and assures that disadvantaged groups will receive special support in education (MoE, 2012). Based on ETP, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has designed a Special Needs Education Program strategy in 2006 to make education accessible to children with special needs and marginalized groups.

In all national documents, the issue of special need and inclusive education was highly stressed but there is even no a single word that underlines the importance of early childhood inclusive education. In national preschool standard (2007), the issue of children with disabilities is raised and emphasized even though there is a gap in implementation. Other documents and policy frameworks discuss about the significance of early intervention which is an integral part of inclusive early childhood care and education. This shows there is still poor consideration for inclusion of children with disabilities in a very early age.

### ***2.10. Roles of Stakeholders to Implement Inclusive Education***

Explicit planning for successful inclusion requires administrators, teachers and assistants to provide input and observations about children, settings and resources. Staff plays an essential role by collaboratively and deliberately planning inclusive experiences. Regular, ongoing reflection about the success of collaborative planning is vital for ongoing improvement. Team approach is mutually beneficial to specialists, parents/care givers, teachers, assistants, community and children (Wall, 2011). Effective implementation of inclusive education is complex process. It requires a clear vision and commitment to overcome all types of barriers in implementation mainly an attitudinal and socio-cultural.

The effective and successful implementation of inclusive education depends on a myriad of functional variables to create the ideal system of education (Caroline J. 2004) and requires significant changes in policy, structure and delivery system of education to all students (Sharma et al., 2013). Most of the studies on inclusive education concluded that, successful implementation of education requires over all reforms in educational system.

Kyauta, I. (2013) suggests developing an educational system that values differences, morally committed to the integration of all children into a single education system, urges centers to work with children, and adopt flexible curriculum. Mittler (2000) suggested that, every school need to move from 'a deficit model' where the problem essentially was located within the individual to a 'social model' that believes disability is created through social institutions by oppressive, discriminatory and disabling practices. It means successful implementation of inclusive education requires the transformation of schools in such a way that helps to increase their capacities to respond to all learners and not just children with special education needs.

In order to make inclusion more effective, school must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating different styles of instruction and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, utilization of resources and partnership with their communities (UNESCO, 2005). Most importantly, successful implementation of inclusive education requires effective teacher. The effective practice of inclusion depends upon adequate number of teachers and their professional development (Sharma et al., 2013).

Sharma et al., 2013, added when teachers are adequately trained and have access to appropriate resources and support and have a positive attitude towards including students with disability, there is a high possibility of good practices of inclusive education within their classrooms. They may have a positive effect on children's development and learning that they gain experience on home and school environment.

According to Eleweke et al., (2002), information sharing workshops, time management for planning, adequate resources, reducing class size, and training for school administrators are integral part in the implementation that help to promote inclusive education. The essence of IE is to transform educational system that brings people together, improve the system, and promote the inclusive society. To practice inclusive education effectively, school requires a high quality of service, well trained teachers, support personnel and material resources.

### ***2.10.1. Role of Administrators***

The International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ICRPD) has emphasized the role of government in providing an inclusive education for all learners, at all levels of the education system. The convention also placed the responsibility of government to promote education through equitable assess, increased facility, provision of reasonable accommodation, and availability of effective individualized support (UN, 2006).

Principals and other administrative officials play a critical role in creating conditions necessary for inclusive education practices to be implemented into their school systems. They are ultimately responsible for ensuring that every child in their center is receiving an appropriate and equal care and education. They acknowledge that inclusion requires a strong commitment and support from the entire school community. As discussed in Stofile S.Y, (2008), KG principal leads the school in a focused effort to implement an IECCE Program.

MoE Special Need/Inclusive Education Strategy Implementation Guideline (2012), discusses the following roles and responsibilities for the kindergarten principals. KG principal;

*“...plans and budgets for effective implementation of SNE/IE strategy in the school, ensures that school physical environment (playground, ramp, water supply, toilet, library, signage, etc.) is accessible for learners with disabilities, avails budget to purchase materials like Braille paper, slate, stylus, white cane, sign language dictionary organizes awareness creation sessions.”*

### ***2.10.2. Role of Teachers***

Teachers play a significant role in the development of effective practices that support inclusive programs for all young children (Winter, 2007). His research reveals that inclusive practice must correspond to the diversity of students (i.e., including children with disabilities and special educational needs). Simpson and Warner (2010) identified major accommodations and modifications approaches essential for enhancing inclusive practice, including environmental support, material adaptations, special equipment, and use of children's preferences and simplification of the activities, adult support, and peer support.

It does not matter how excellent the educational infrastructure might be, and how well articulated educational policy might be, effective inclusion does not take place until regular classroom teachers deliver relevant and meaningful instruction to students with disabilities Simpson C.J, (2010). Teachers have a key role in successful implementation of inclusive education as they optimally assume responsibility for teaching and creating opportunities to learn for all students within their classrooms.

Teacher creates a supportive and inclusive learning environment where students are valued as integral members of the classroom and where positive interactions are paramount. The teacher takes the responsibility of classroom to meet the needs of all students. Similarly, creating effective learning environment that accepts diversities and address wide range of needs of the students in classroom is a major role of teacher (Leatherman J.M, (2005). The role of inclusive education teachers includes personal sensitivity to the complex nature of the specific disabilities of their pupils and the way to reach out to their students so that no learners suffer from their practices while delivering their lessons.

Leatherman J.M, (2005) added that teachers contribute to understand background of students so that appropriate teaching strategies could be developed. Teachers in inclusive education play the role as designer and developers of inclusive practices (Operti & Belacaza, 2008). Therefore, teacher is considered as catalyst of effective implementation of inclusive education. Along with ensuring inclusive pedagogy, teacher contributes to change the school culture through mobilizing resources, motivating local community to participate schools' development and innovating modern pedagogy which are integral part of inclusive education.

Early childhood educators have an ethical obligation to collect information that helps design an appropriate service for children and their families (McConkey, 2003). For those children whose additional needs have already been recognized, much assessment information will already have been gathered, perhaps by a range of specialists. Snell et al., 2000 state that regular classroom teachers in IECCE settings are expected to collaborate on lesson plans with the special education teacher, participate in the development of IEP's, maintain confidentiality about all children, ensure that accommodations are provided for students when a member of the special education team is not available to do so. He is believed to be alert to understand children's need and potential so as to promote their learning.

On the other hand, Special Need Education Teachers are also likely to assume the primary responsibility to participate in developing, monitoring, and writing assigned students' Individualized Educational Programs then, giving parents a copy of IEP. They develop and implement strategies and accommodations in compliance with the IEP and coordinate weekly scheduled collaboration meetings with the regular education teacher to identify necessary accommodations then, assist regular education teacher with tests and materials, providing accommodations, classroom interventions or whatever necessary to promote child learning and success. They design a type of assessment appropriate for each child with special educational needs (Snell et al., 2000).

MoE Special Need/Inclusive Education Strategy implementation Guideline (2012), argues that teachers particularly special need education teachers have the roles and responsibilities like teaching students with severe/profound disabilities that require intensive support in small groups, modifying curriculum and teaching approaches to develop children's learning in terms of behavior, social, language, emotional, self-care, and cognitive skills, conducting action research to tackle learning difficulties in the classroom situation, serving as a resource person for other teachers and schools, to provide knowledge and skills in special needs education in order to promote IE; and finally working in collaboration with other professionals that provide expertise services in their respective area.

### ***2.10.3. Parental Role in Implementation of Inclusive Education***

Parent-teacher partnership is considered as a fundamental principle of the effective IECCE (Tassoni, 2003). The readiness and motivation of parents and teachers to form partnership is a starting point in the fulfillment of parental roles in the education of their children. Establishing trust between parents and caregivers, the school team monitoring and supporting the child's development is an important precondition for the beginning of cooperation.

Collaboration between parents and educators comprise parental satisfaction with their level of involvement in the preparation of IEP, a realistic assessment of the child's abilities, accepting responsibility for the children, successful communication, and the stability of relations. Parents play an important role in the development of successive inclusion program through the active participation and involvement in their children's education (Leyser & Kirk, 2011).

The success of cooperation between the school and the family depends largely on the communication competence of both subjects, including parents as important partners in the encouragement, and the maintenance and enhancement of this cooperation. Setting boundaries between home and school becomes an important precondition for establishing satisfactory cooperation (Wolery et al., 2010), while the blurring of boundaries and the lack of clearly defined roles have an unfavorable effect on the development of partnerships (Wall k, 2011).

Based on the Special Need and Inclusive Education Strategy Implementation Guideline (MoE, 2012), to implement inclusive care and education in kindergartens, parents are believed to have roles and responsibilities such as working closely with school and teachers, providing resources and information about the child's behavior, strength and abilities to provide necessary care for their children, providing social, physical, psychological, and educational support to the child at home and on the way to school, and introducing child's strengths and various talents to the community they live in.

Traditionally, the care and education of children have been viewed as separate entities. Research has demonstrated, however, that very early children need a variety of positive learning experiences provided in a secure and loving environment if they are to achieve their full potential. Because parents are the primary educators of their children and have a life-long relationship with them, effective programs of parental involvement are essential to enable them to support their children to be cared for and educated to the highest standard (Mittler, P., 2000).

According to Elkins j., et al., (2003), parental involvement is beneficial to parents as it builds on their knowledge of child development and helps to support them in their parenting skills. In turn, parents are needed by the childcare setting if children are to optimize their cognitive, emotional and social learning. In effective childcare settings, practitioners find a real help in the presence of parents and in a good relationship with them. Each brings their own competence to educate the child and this requires mutual respect and understanding.

Successful childcare services invariably identify parental involvement as a significant contributory factor to their effectiveness. Parental involvement leads to positive outcomes for the setting as they gain a better understanding of the child's needs, a positive reputation in the community, and improved staff morale and job satisfaction with higher rating of participation by parents and increased support from families. To participate fully, parents need to have a clear understanding of the policy/structures in place to facilitate participation. Building partnership is a daily process based on ongoing communications and dealing with issues as they arise as stated in De Carvalho, M. E. (2001).

There is a large body of evidence that discusses the nature and importance of the child-parent/family attachment relationship. Driscoll and Nagel, 2005 states attachment relationship has been shown to be important for both the survival and the quality of a child's development. There are a multitude of factors that can negatively affect a child's experience. Parents want the best for their children and many go through a period of anxiety and uneasiness when their child enters a childcare setting because they are concerned about their child's wellbeing.

Parents can also be encouraged to help staff to get to know the needs of their child such as their fears, how they are best comforted and their favorite toys, food or songs. The needs of the child must be the center of any service that is provided and one of the hallmarks of a quality childcare service is that it works in partnership with parents to focus on these needs. One of the benefits of parental involvement is that a positive experience gained in an early years setting will leave parents more confident about getting involved in their child's primary schooling. Working in partnership with parents, children and the wider community provides a foundation from which a childcare setting can build on and develop attitudes towards inclusion and equality for all families (Elkins j., et al., 2003),.

## ***Chapter Three***

### ***3. Research Methodology***

In this section, five main issues are raised namely; research design, data sources, sampling technique, data gathering tools and method of data analysis and interpretation employed in the study. Besides to that the rationale the research method used was preferred is discussed. Ethical consideration is also stated in this this section.

#### ***3.1. Research Method***

According to Pring, (2005), the practice of inclusive education refers to collective activities of student, teacher and educators with the aim to implement the values of inclusion in education. Researching practice of inclusive education is complex and requires freedom and flexibility in the research process so that researcher can contribute in developing realistic idea on educational innovation. As this research is intended to assess the situation of practice of inclusive education, it focused on the combination of different information which are obtained from various data sources.

This study was aimed to investigate the practice of inclusive education in two private kindergartens in Tabor sub-city, Hawassa City Administration. The researcher preferred to employee qualitative research method which was more appropriate to understand the experience of practice of inclusive education. The qualitative research approach was based on several philosophical paradigms, one of them is, the interpretive/constructive paradigm claim that reality is created as a result of social construction; that is, there is no one reality that is waiting to be “discovered”, as it is believed in the positivist paradigm (Guba and Lincoln, 1989) as cited in (Mertens and Mc Loughlin, 2004).

#### ***3.2. Research Design***

Qualitative research helps the researcher to identify and in-depth how was the practice. Particularly phenomenological research design was employed for this study. Phenomenological research design is a deep investigation of what experiences mean to people. It focus on inquiry of people’s common sense understanding and the meaning they make of their experiences. Phenomenological research requires a researcher to focus on people’s experiences of a phenomenon to obtain comprehensive details that provide a basis for reflective structural analysis that ultimately reveals the essence of the experience (Linda A. Bliss, 2016).

### ***3.3. Key Informants***

This study has used KG teachers, assistants, principals, children with disabilities, and officers as key informants. The reason behind the selection of private kindergarten teachers was the desire to obtain teacher's knowledge and skills to practice as they have a key role in the effective practice of inclusive education. It was so difficult to think about inclusion in poorly organized 'O' classes (school readiness program) in public schools whereas private kindergartens are full of furniture and materials though they may not satisfy the needs of children with disabilities/special needs.

In this context, kindergarten teachers were believed to have deep and close experiences regarding the practice of inclusive education therefore; they can provide real information on issues and problems that they realized during the practice. Creswell (2014), states that it is possible to have 5 – 25 size participants in qualitative study particularly in phenomenological approach.

This study has used children with disabilities, KG teachers and assistants, principals, and parents, from the two kindergartens as well as officers from education department and regional education bureau. Therefore; three focus group discussions (with teachers/assistants, parents and children with special needs) and two interviews (with principals and officers) were conducted. Children having extreme needs were observed while learning and playing. This was to find out the situation of children with disabilities in the centers. Likewise, in order to assess the situation of inclusion in both indoor and outdoor settings, general classroom practice and outside environment and activities were also observed with the help of observation checklist designed.

### ***3.4. Sampling Procedures***

In order to select the research area and participants, the study has followed purposive sampling method. It is a non-probability sampling that involves the procedure of selecting certain units on a specific purpose rather than randomly (Creswell, 2014). Scholars underline and argue that, qualitative research does not use probability sampling to represent population rather it employees non-probability sampling. That is why the researcher in this kind of research always describes implication of the findings for the same population. As there is no generalization in qualitative design, the researcher selected all participants purposively.

Among the eight sub-cities in Hawassa City Administration, Tabor Sub-city was purposively selected based on the information provided from City Administration Education Department regarding the status and performance of the private kindergartens. This sub-city is one of the best performing sub-cities in the city administration. Children with disabilities were available in two kindergartens in the sub-city.

Likewise, 2 kindergartens were purposively selected from 23 private kindergartens of Tabor Sub-city in Hawassa City Administration, considering the number of children with special needs in the centers and better services they provide. Then, the total number of participants in this research were 28 individuals. 26 of them were from two selected private kindergartens and each of the centers had about 13 participants. From the total population, 2 of them were officers from City Administration Education Department and Regional Bureau of Education. Teachers, assistants, principals and officers were selected based on the assumption that they are rich in information needed for the study and their availability to be involved in the study. Parents were also selected keeping that they have children with special needs.

### ***3.5. Tools of Data Collection***

In social research, researcher collects data through asking people (interviews), observation, and document study (Flick, 2015). The researcher employed participant observation, semi-structured interview and focus group discussion to gather data. The documents were used to gain more precise information about the policy provisions and theoretical orientation of inclusive education at national level. The observation was intended to collect qualitative information regarding the situation of practices of inclusive education at kindergarten level.

Individual interview was conducted with the officers and principals. Teacher participants were gathered in their centers and discussed on similar FGD questions. Questions during the interview sessions were more of open ended. Interview guide was prepared in local language and was used for both individual and group interview. The researcher used tape recorder for both individual and group interview. To assess the implementation of inclusive education, the researcher used checklist that is useful to gather data through observation. For this matter, the researcher had note taking book so as to record events.

All data gathering tools listed above were used in an integrated manner and most of the questions asked during the whole sessions were developed based on the basic research questions posed under the statement of the problem. These data gathering tools were employed because they are suggested instruments in qualitative research particularly to the phenomenological approach which was used for this study. They focus on the experience or phenomena of the practitioners in the study areas.

### ***3.5.1. Participant Observation***

Observation has long tradition in social science and it has been especially extensively employed by education researcher. It is the process of noting a phenomenon in the field to describe the events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting. An observation involves active looking, improving memory, informal interviewing and writing detail field situation. The distinctive feature of an observation as a research process is that, it offers an investigator the opportunity to gather live data from naturally occurring social situation (Cohen et al., 2011). Casey T, (2004) pointed that, what people do may differ from what they say they do, and observation provides a reality check. It enables researcher to look everyday behavior because it is focused on fact and behavior. The data which are obtained from an observation are useful for recording nonverbal behavior in natural setting and should enable the researcher to enter and understand the situation that is being described (Patton, 2015).

Realizing the significant contribution of observation in describing the real situation, it was also used as tools of data collection. The observation checklist used was particularly concerned to analyze the gap between saying and doing and included the indicators related to inclusive education. The main rationale of using observation in this study was to assess how kindergarten teacher responds the individual needs of students in the classroom, what types of strategies they used to promote the learning of students, how they manage different dimensions of inclusive education as well as to find the gap between knowing and doing and what kind of facilities are provided for the children with disabilities. Three classrooms were observed, each observation was about 45 minutes and information was recorded with the help of observation check list.

### ***3.5.2. Semi-Structured Interview***

Interview in general refers to the way of talking and listening to people to collect data from individuals through conversation. It is an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasizes the social situation of research data (Cohen et al., 2011).

The most useful interview format for conducting qualitative research is often “semi-structured” (sometimes called “moderately scheduled”). This means the interview is not highly structured and that the interviewee is simply given a license to talk freely about whatever comes up. Semi-structured interviews offer topics and questions to the interviewee, but are carefully designed to elicit the interviewee’s ideas and opinions on the topic of interest, as opposed to leading the interviewee toward preconceived choices. They rely on the interviewer following up with probes to get in-depth information on topics of interest.

In order to obtain desired information on situation of children with disability in kindergartens, this study has adopted a semi-structured interview procedure. An interview guideline was developed and interview was conducted according to the guideline to ensure uniform and relevant questions to the Participants. Both principals and two officers were interviewed. The time of interview was about 20 minutes for each interviewee and extra time was managed based on the questions posed while responding. During the interview, all Participants were highly encouraged to speak openly, frankly, and give as much detail as possible. The goal of conducting interview with principals and officers was to find the situation of children with disabilities in the kindergartens.

### ***3.5.3. Focus Group Discussion***

A focus group discussion is a way to gather together people from similar backgrounds or experiences to discuss a specific topic of interest. The group of participants is guided by a group facilitator who introduces topics for discussion and helps the group to participate in a lively and natural discussion. The strength of FGD relies on allowing the participants to agree or disagree with each other. It is an advisable data gathering tool for qualitative research that participants argue and come together on the existing practice based on the reality.

Teachers and parents were gathered separately in the centers and asked questions to discuss on. Parents were considered as a primary teacher of their children therefore; they were believed to state about child's home environment. Teachers were also focused due to they can speak about child's life in the kindergartens. Therefore; three FDGs were employed that include 6 children with disabilities, 6 parents who have children with disabilities and 12 teachers from the two selected private kindergartens who were purposively selected to be asked about children, children's disability, peer friends, family involvement and the school situation.

#### ***3.5.4. Document Analysis***

Document analysis is a data gathering tool especially for second hand data collection. For the sake of this study, the researcher employed different literature review and journal summary so as to gather relevant information regarding inclusive early childhood care and education. International and national policy documents, guidelines and conventions regarding implementation of inclusive education and child right issues were critically reviewed.

#### ***3.6. Reliability and Validity***

The validity and reliability of research tools ensure trustworthiness of the study. In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments of the research, attention was paid to the appropriateness of the techniques through literature review prior to the construction of instrumentation. After the development of tools, discussion with the thesis supervisor was made to collect useful suggestions to establish content validity and to improve the quality of instrument. After the feedback from supervisor, some revisions were made.

#### ***3.7. Data Collection Procedure***

In this study, data were collected in two phases. In the first phase, secondary data were obtained. In order to find relevant documents and research literature, strategies such as internet search, and library visit were used. After then, research report, policy report, journals, articles and book regarding inclusive education were selected and critically reviewed. The first phase of data collection basically focused on synthesis of theoretical orientation of inclusive education globally as well as Ethiopian context and to develop theoretical and conceptual framework with the expectation to guide overall research work. In second phase, field work was conducted in selected kindergartens.

The field work was conducted from 12 January of 2018 to 04 March 2018. During the field work, firstly, permission was obtained from the respective kindergartens. After getting the permission, letters of request were given to the principals with explanations of purpose of the research and requesting their participation in the study. Principals were interviewed based on the schedule they managed. Teachers and parents were gathered separately to discuss on the issues. They were assured about the confidentiality through the informed consent.

Similarly, classroom observation was carried after the permission of the principals. Observation was conducted in both indoor and outdoor settings. The total duration of one session observation was about 30 minutes. Observation was conducted on the basis of observation checklist but some aspects which were not included in observation checklist also noted in diary.

### ***3.8. Method of Data Analysis and Interpretation***

Qualitative data analysis is a process in which researcher moves from the raw data that has been collected as part of the research study and use it to provide explanations, understanding and interpretation of the phenomena, people and situations which the researcher is studying. It involves processes such as coding (open, axial, and selective), categorizing and making sense of the essential meanings of the phenomenon. In qualitative study, sometimes data can be interpreted while collection process is going ahead and data collection may be stopped when it starts reoccurring or getting repeated.

As this study used qualitative data, data analysis strategy was also used based on the assumption that qualitative data is stated and described in terms of word. In order to analyze qualitative data, this study has used phenomenological condensation approach that involves the reduction of large texts into brief statements then narration in to meaningful report. Consistent with this approach, first of all, questions which were presented for the interview and FGD were transcribed in to English language by the researcher himself and then long statements were summarized in concise expression and meaning were determined. Themes were organized according to the research questions. The same procedure was applied to analyze the data received from observation check list.

### ***3.9. Ethical Considerations***

According to Hamersley and Traianou (2012), researcher should pay highest concern on risk of harm, autonomy, and informed consent and privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity. In this study ethical issues like access and participation, anonymity, informed consent, confidentiality and researcher-researched relationships were highly valued. It is advisable to gain permission early, inform the participants the possible benefits of the research. It helps in achieving goodwill and cooperation. The essence of anonymity is that information provided by participants should in no way reveal their identity. The principal means of ensuring anonymity is not using the names of the participant or any other personal means of identification (Cohen et al., 2011).

The researcher provided letter of consent for all participants included in the study. It helped them to decide whether they take part or not. To include children with disabilities in the FGD, their parents were asked permission using a written format. The researcher used commonly understandable language based on the context of the participants. All key informants were asked to participate voluntarily that they can withdraw at any time regarding inconvenience. They were told as the researcher will not publish their names, personal addresses and any issues than their opinion. Even information they would provide will be disclosed directly based on their negotiation. Again the researcher told them the data they will provide would not be used for any other purposes and they would be informed about the progress of the study if necessary. Therefore; it is clear that an ethical issues discussed above were strictly followed by the researcher.

## *Chapter Four*

### *4. Data Analysis and Interpretation*

#### *4.1. Key Informants Demographic Information*

As stated earlier, this study was conducted in two private kindergartens in Tabor sub-city of Hawassa City Administration. The research participants included in this study were kindergarten principals, teachers/assistants, children with disabilities, parents of children with disabilities, and education department officers. They all were selected purposively and their profile is as presented below.

<i>KGs Included</i>	<i>Key Informants</i>	<i>Sex</i>		<i>Age</i>	<i>Educational Background</i>	<i>Area of Training</i>	<i>Current Job</i>	<i>Service Year</i>
		M	F					
Elroi	Children with disability	2	1	6 & 7	UKG	-	Student	-
Ethio-Parent		1	2	6 & 8	UKG	-	Student	-
Elroi	Teacher or Assistants	-	6	22-32	Diploma	Subject	Teaching	3-16
Ethio-Parent		-	6	27-38	Diploma	Subject	Teaching	8-19
Elroi	KG Principals	-	1	29	Diploma	EDPM	Director	8
Ethio-Parent		-	1	34	Diploma	Subject	Director	14
Elroi	Parents of children wDs	2	1	31-40	Degree	Subject	Officials	NA
Ethio-Parent		3	-	32-43	Grade 5-8	Literacy	Merchants	NA
Total		8	18	6-43	KG-Degree			

Table 1: Demographic Background of the Research Participants

Both schools have lower and upper kindergarten classes. The number of children attending both kindergartens was 423 which accounts 173 male and 250 female children. The centers did not identify children with special needs/disabilities. Using mere observation, the researcher him-self screened out about 23 children (10 male and 13 female children) who were in need of special attention, care and education.

Among them, 19 children were with certain kind of learning problems like attention deficit and only 6 children (3 male and 3 female) with extreme needs who require special support provision were targeted in this study. These children were with easily observable disabilities like with physical disability (1 with upper limb deficit and 1 with lower limb impairment), 2 with vision problem (low vision case) and 2 with hearing impairment (partial sightedness).

As mentioned above, all teachers and assistants in both centers were females. They were Diploma holders in different subject areas and took kindergarten training at certificate level. They all are mothers thus they are matured enough to provide care and support for all children. Some of them were graduates of Amharic, English and Mother Tongue language subject areas where as others were graduated in mathematics and science areas. Only one care-giver from Ethio-Parent School got relevant training with regard to kindergarten education.

From the above table, one can understand the profile of kindergarten principals just by reading their corresponding detail. One of the principals was diploma holder and her training specialization was Educational Planning and Management. The other principal was graduate of Diploma in English subject. Both of them did not take any training regarding ECCE management and administration. The only thing they got was training in subject area and educational leadership.

From both kindergartens, about 23 children with special needs/disabilities were identified. Among them, only six children requiring more attention were targeted therefore; parents of these children were involved in the study. Three of them were degree holders and officials in government offices whereas; the rest three were grade 5-8 and currently working as merchants. All of them were of age 31-43 and they have long experience in their job. They were gathered in one center and asked to discuss on the questions regarding their child, child disability, care and learning in light of both home and school settings. They were required to present the status of care and education of the centers in which their children are attending. The way centers accepted their children was another big question for the parent participants.

Both officers were degree holders in Educational Leadership and Management. They have more than 5 years work experience serving as education sector expert. The reason why they were involved in the study was that inclusive education and early childhood care and education process belongs to them.

## ***4.2. RQ1: Status of implementation of Inclusive Education in two KGs***

In order to answer the basic research question stated above, physical observation and interview with participants was conducted.

### ***4.2.1. Indoor and Outdoor Setting***

Physical and social setup of the kindergartens was observed for two consecutive weeks and the following images were found. In both kindergartens, the points stated below were observed.

#### ***4.2.1.1. Physical Accessibility***

Both indoor and outdoor physical and social environments were observed while children with disabilities were taking part in the activities. There were no child sized chairs and tables that can satisfy the need of children with disabilities. In both kindergartens, children's seats especially for upper kindergarten children were that of adult sized and of medium quality. In Ethio-Parent School, the researcher observed that children with physical impairment (leg defect) were struggling to fit to the adult sized chairs and tables provided for them.

In both kindergartens, indoor and outdoor settings were well equipped. But the playground is organized without considering children with special needs. Indoor facilities for lower kindergarten children were somehow better and can accommodate the needs of children with disabilities. Children were allowed to play on mats; stand and sit based on their need and interests.

In both kindergartens, play materials like Merry-go-round, Balance Beam, Swing, Seesaw and etc. are not modified/adapted so as to facilitate development and learning of children with disabilities. Both kindergartens have very crowded and narrow sized classrooms that do not allow children play and learn according to their unique interest. The classrooms have no ramp to support children those who require physical accommodation. Doors and windows were old and have no ventilation.

In terms of the school compound size, both kindergartens have relatively similar ground which is fenced separately from upper grades. All indoor and outdoor play materials were placed simply for the requirement and therefore; all children were forced to stay in the classroom listening to the teacher based instruction than playing based on their interest and potential. Particularly children with disabilities were not given an opportunity to interact with others, take part in interest based play and other learning activities.

As a result of school compound narrowness, especially in Elroi kindergarten, the classrooms were not bright enough. Toilets and other services like water pump and meal room were extremely dumped. Textbooks, story books and other learning materials do not reflect diversity. Most of them reflect western culture and even strange for all children. For example, a story book found in both kindergartens is written by a woman so called Carol More and it reflects all the culture of her country. Therefore; the whole physical environment of the kindergartens seems disorganized and not child friendly.

Furthermore, questions related to physical and social accessibility of both kindergartens were raised during the interview session. Participants from Elroi kindergarten realized that there is no scarcity of child play and learning materials in the center. As to Participants understanding, mere fulfillment of play and learning materials can enhance development and learning of children with disabilities/special needs. They replied that even there is no possibility of having children with such extreme learning needs in the kindergarten, all materials and furniture fulfilled were appropriate for children with disabilities.

Other Participants in the same kindergarten argued that all play and learning materials are stored because they are required. One Participant clearly stated that no child is playing and learning because the time given for play was not enough. Children spend more time counting letters and numbers in the classroom they attend. Similarly, participants from Ethio-parent kindergarten shared more of what other Participants said. They stated that children who may or may not require attention and care are placed in the same classroom of the kindergarten. Nonetheless the problem is that all learning and play materials furnished well may not be appropriate to support development and learning of children with disabilities.

School physical environment (playground, ramp, water supply, toilet, library, signage, etc.) has to be accessible and conducive for learners with disabilities, particularly due attention should be given to avail suitable toilet services for female children with physical disabilities according to MoE/SNE, (2012). However, data gathered through interview assured that though they are well furnished, both kindergartens were not physically accessible for children with disabilities/special needs. Data gathered through observation also states about similar issues. Building, the whole school compound setup, indoor play and learning facilities as well as outdoor furniture were designed and prepared considering only children without disabilities.

As private kindergartens are organized for business, they always compete to get attention by decorating physical setup of the schools. But the reality is that they never accept children with disabilities and do not have adapted and modified materials (learning and play materials designed considering diversity including children with disability). Not enrolling children with disabilities is a principle for many private kindergartens according to the information from Participants. Children with disabilities were collected for a focus group discussion and they were unable to discuss freely. Discussants were asked whether they feel themselves different or not. Most of them noted that they do not feel as they are different.

Moreover, with regard to material and service accessibility, children with disabilities involved in the focus group discussion agreed that most of the outdoor learning and play materials like Seesaw, Jumping Rope, and swing are not accessible for them. They also discussed that toilet entrance, desks, tables and water pump are not easily reachable for them because all of the facilities are presented considering children without disability.

Officers from REB and City Administration Education Department were asked in relation to conduciveness of the private kindergartens to provide inclusive services and the type of support offices provide for private kindergartens.

**Participant O** said,

*“As it is known, all Ethiopian schools are expected to run the same education policy structurally. Some KGs have a huge and wide compound and the others have very small and narrow ground. Kindergartens that have narrow compound are inaccessible not only for children with disabilities but also for non-disabled ones. Almost all kindergartens are not accessible particularly for children with disabilities. As I have said earlier, we do not support them at all. I ensure you that; next, our office will strive to work with private school owners and will facilitate trainings for teachers.”*

The above discussion shows that both kindergartens have narrow school compound that cannot fit to the best interest of the all children. They may be well facilitated in terms of material and equipment but the reality is that they are not accessible for children with disabilities/special needs. There is no as such professional relationship with the private kindergartens and government bodies. They do not collaborate so as to promote societies development.

#### ***4.2.1.2. Social Accessibility (Child-child, and Child-Caregiver Interaction)***

Social interaction particularly child-child, child-caregiver and caregiver-parent relationship was critically observed. Unlike Elroi, in Ethio-parent KG, children with disabilities were welcomed and greeted in a loving and respectful way. The problem was that, they were considered as those who require pity. Caregivers feel that children with disabilities are like individuals having certain kind of life problems as a result of unfortunate circumstances. Children were assumed as very special and problematic learners who are in need of sympathy. It was observed that caregivers speak negatively about children with disabilities/special needs. They stated children with disabilities cannot learn, develop and succeed like any other non-disabled peers.

According to the observation made, all caregivers have a close contact with children with disabilities though they were extremely protective. All caregivers and staff members used to label children with disabilities/special needs. They all call children by their name but in a very different way (feeling pity). They all feel sympathy on children with disabilities/special needs and their parents. Children with disabilities/special needs were standing still while other non-disabled peers were playing and moving. Sometimes they stay in the classroom just sleeping on table whereas their age mates are playing in and outside the room.

Children with disabilities receive individual attention that was why caregivers were conservatives and more of protective. Most of the time, all children were forced to listen to the instruction provided from the teacher. Assistants move around the children in the classroom and ask them to stop disturbing and shouting while teachers were teaching. They adjust children's seat, dress/uniform, reading and writing materials and indoor play and learning materials. Children with disabilities and other non-disabled ones were exposed to communication only during music and storytelling.

Teachers/assistants and principals involved in the focus group discussion argued that they provide all necessary support, engage children with disabilities in meaningful learning and play activities. However, the researcher observed children with special needs /with disabilities withdrawing from their age mates at the time of play and moving around. Children with disabilities were not given as such support needed. Therefore; the reality was that teachers/assistances do not give child-based support in an organized and planned way.

They stated that care and special protection is focused to reduce any risk conditions. This shows that they made attempt in keeping the learning and play environment safe for all children than supporting children with disabilities in particular.

Besides observation, children with disabilities were asked in group how teachers/assistants care and educate them in both indoor and outdoor learning environment. All of them agreed that teachers/caregivers sometimes undermine their capacity to play and learn. The relationship they have is not as such motherly. This implies that teachers/caregivers feel overloaded when supporting children with disabilities. Most of the Elroi kindergarten community members feel sympathy while watching these children (children with disability) playing, doing, building and interacting with other children. Even children without disabilities ignore them while playing, moving and doing activities. It was observed that children without disability playing football were not volunteer to involve children with disability.

### ***4.3. RQ2: Challenges faced in the process of implementing IE***

This research question is about factors hindering proper implementation of inclusive education in private kindergartens. Both semi-structured interview and focus group discussion with teachers/assistants, kindergarten principals and parents were held to gather relevant information. The question was subsided in to different interview and FDG questions and Participants discussed on them as stated below.

#### ***4.3.1. Factors Related to Training***

During the interview sessions, principals of both kindergartens were asked similar question that assesses the availability of trainings (courses, and short term training) related to inclusive education and its implementation. They responded as follows:

**Participant A** elucidates, “*During KG certificate training, I did not take any course regarding inclusive education and its implementation. But during my diploma training in educational planning and management, I took one course of Psychology that deals about special need education/education of children with disabilities.*”

**Participant B** clarifies, “*I did not get any course as well as short term training related to inclusive education and its implementation. During my diploma training, I learned a psychology course though it does not mean a course for inclusive education.*”

It is possible to say that the first Participant stressed she got training even though it was not adequate. As a kindergarten principal, she did not get as such sufficient training on how to include children with disabilities/special needs in kindergarten education. The course she got provided her a very little understanding of concept of inclusive education when compared with those who did not take any course in the area. It is impossible to say Participant A understood well how to facilitate care and education of children with disabilities/with special needs in kindergarten settings.

In contrary to that, Participant B totally did not take any course, and short term training with regard to inclusive early childhood care and education. There is no evidence that shows one of the principals is actively engaged in implementing inclusive education. Therefore, both kindergarten principals are similar in the understanding regarding implementation of inclusive early childhood care and education.

From the members of the group A, **Discussant C** said, *“I got training with regard to children with special needs/disabilities during my diploma level education. But the problem with the training was that it gave me little understanding and it was not adequate so as to help me implement inclusive education.”*

Other discussants responded that they did not get any training related to inclusive education. They stated that the term ‘inclusive education’ by itself is new for them. They never heard it before. Some of them know very well about special needs education just integrating it with the disability issue but they do not know what inclusive education is.

In FGD B, **Discussant I** said, *‘Actually, I did not get any training related to inclusive education. The term by itself is very new for me because I am hearing it for the first time.’* All other members remained quiet.

Teachers/assistants in their corresponding group discussed that they did not access any training with regard to inclusion of children with special needs/disabilities. They care and teach children with diverse needs in a very traditional and biased way that they do not attend every child’s unique need and potential. One of the teachers/assistants from group A stated that she had an opportunity to get training on the education of children with disabilities. She also mentioned the training given was not satisfactory. Even the institution provided training was not teacher education provider and the training was given for a short period of time.

The other question raised for the interviewees was the availability of special need education teachers in the kindergartens. Their responses are as follows.

**Participant A** discusses, “*There is no special needs education teacher in our kindergarten. Teachers/assistants support children with special needs/disabilities using teacher directed classroom instruction.*”

**Participant B** stated, “*Even though they are available in market, our school does not have special need education teachers. It did not assign special need education professionals.*”

The above responses underline that both kindergartens have no teachers qualified with the program itself. SNE teachers are not available at market. It shows the problem is of getting teachers in the market. Even special need education teacher are available, private kindergartens do not assign them in their schools.

#### ***4.3.2. Awareness Related Barriers***

To assess their understanding regarding children with special needs, similar question was provided for both principals. When they respond:

**Participant A** said, “*Children with special needs are those who require attention and additional support in their development and learning. Children who have certain kind of family problem are children with special needs. In our kindergarten there is a child with psychological trauma. She can hear but was not active since attending nursery. Because of the support teachers/assistants provided for her, she is capable to talk, write and interact with other children now. There is a high progress in her development and learning.*”

**Participant B** described, “*Children with special needs are those with observable and non-observable disabilities. They are children who have certain kind of physical, socio-emotional, cognitive and psychological disorders.*”

From the above point of discussion, Participant A stated that children with disabilities are those who require additional support and attention. Their interest may not be similar to that of interest of other children in the same learning and play environment. On the other hand, the second Participant also described children with special needs as those whose disability or disorder is either easily observable or not. Some may be clearly observable and the other may be psychological or non-observable.

Similar question was raised for teachers/assistants included in the group discussion. The responses were;

Discussants from FGD A stated, *“Children with special needs are those who need candy, and biscuits so as to attend learning. Such children may not play and learn unless their needs are fulfilled. Other kids may like to watch children singing songs and playing. Again children whose parents are divorced or in trouble by any factor as well as who are whether fast or slow in their learning and development may face challenges during their play and learning thinking that they are alone.”*

Based on the responses gathered from both FGDs, one can conclude that teachers/assistants in both kindergartens little bit understood the nature of children with special needs except some contradicting ideas they raised. They totally ignored the natural tendency and traits children may have. Their discussion focused on more of the external fulfillment of the individual child. They mentioned characteristics more of common for every young child in the classroom. This shows that teachers/assistants understanding about children with special needs/with disability is poor. They have some confusion with regard to the concept of special educational needs.

The other question raised for the group was how they feel about the need of all children and children with special need in particular. Both groups discussed and agreed that all children necessarily may not need similar support. They argued every child may need unique and very different learning situations than other age mates.

Here, it is easily understandable that almost all teachers/assistants feel children are different by nature. The level and type of support they provide for children with disabilities is limited to the individual child's potential and need. This shows that their understanding and view is somehow similar to the philosophy of inclusive early childhood care and education. The only thing different is that their understanding was simply traditional and experience based, not training oriented. With regard to the way how the kindergartens accept children with disabilities, both principals replied as follows.

**Participant A** said, *“Yes. In our previous experience, there was a child with physical impairment who use wheelchair for movement. Finally, as a result of no upper grades in our kindergarten, he was sent to other school. Likewise, a child with psychological disorder came to this kindergarten through her aunt who is working as assistant in our center.”*

**Participant B** elucidates, “*According to my understanding, in our school there are children whose age is not quite appropriate for the program. The other one is, due to many different causes like family and health problems, some children may come with certain kind of need. Therefore; in our kindergarten, there are children like these.*”

Both principals revealed that even their kindergartens are open to all learners; children with such needs may not come to the center due to different factors like family interest. Some children come to school due to reasons like having close relative in the kindergartens and the others are because they are of children of higher government officials. Parents of children with disabilities do not like to discuss as their children have certain kind of disability. Principals discussed that as a principle both kindergartens do not accept children with disabilities/with special needs. They also stated kindergartens even identifies children with disabilities/with special needs after registration.

Regarding availability of children with disabilities in both centers, teachers/assistants were asked to discuss. They responded as follows.

From FGD A, **Discussant J** said, “*Sometimes children whose parents are in trouble come in to classroom and face temporary problems. This means a child whose parents’ fight each other may feel depressed and withdraw from the activities. This kind of problem is sometimes prevalent in our school.*”

Responses given above indicate that most teachers in both kindergartens understood that children with special needs are kids who are not aware about their environment very well. Therefore; children with disabilities are dependents on adults. Some of the teachers involved in the focus group discussion stated that children at risk and those in difficult circumstances are present in the kindergartens.

Teachers/assistances were also asked to discuss about the role they have to care and educate children with disabilities in their kindergartens. Their responses are stated below.

**Discussant G** of FGD A said, “*The number of children with special needs in our school is limited. We cared a child with physical impairment; all teachers strived to support him in and out of the classroom. Children in KG are always in need of help and support, therefore; as teachers, we faced challenges in assisting their development (filling their empty brain).*”

In FGD B, **Discussant M and N** stated, “*Children with special needs require love and motherly support than others though it is a principle of KG program. If it is possible, informing child’s progress for the parents is mandatory. Therefore; attending child’s need, watching child’s interest and providing a necessary support is the way to promote child’s learning. To help children psychologically, we strongly collaborate to address their needs.*”

From the discussions above, one can understand that teachers involved in the group think that they are capable to support children with special needs. There were children with physical, sensory, behavioral disability and developmental delays in the kindergartens for the last years.

Based on their response, especially what teachers did for a child having physical disability helped them to understand whether children with disabilities require special attention and additional supports or not. Both groups underlined that all attempts were made to physical accommodation and support provision for children with different kind of disability.

#### ***4.3.3. Factors Related to Material Availability***

The other important thing that was asked during the interview session held with principals was challenges that kindergartens face to care and teach all children based on their unique need and potential. Both principals stressed that;

**Participant A** elaborated, “*Caring and teaching children with disabilities by itself is difficult job as to me. In our school we had a child with physical disability before two years ago. Taking him to toilet and play ground was highly challenging task for the center.*”

**Participant B** discussed, “*The primary problem in caring and teaching children with diverse needs is material and service inaccessibility. We can also face barriers related to parents. The other problem is that teachers’ overload which leads to time constraint to provide all the necessary support and children’s behavior is also another constraint.*”

This indicates that both kindergartens face more of similar challenges to provide effective support for children with diverse needs. Participant A argues, the job by itself is challenging. Children with different needs require a kind of special support in terms of time and extent. Moreover, Participant B underlined that teachers’ working hour and the load they carry is a factor to reduce the extent of support for children with disabilities.

In both kindergartens, material inaccessibility and negative attitude of the parents of children with disabilities are major challenges to implement inclusive early childhood care and education. On the other hand, teachers/assistants are also busy to plan for each child in need of special care and attention. But the causes may go beyond what the Participants argued. The same question was presented for the teachers/assistants FGD and responded as;

Discussants from FGD A said, *“To support children with special needs particularly those with disabilities, the primary challenge is the way they learn and develop. Such children may lag behind in development and understanding, therefore; striving to provide necessary support without getting adequate training in the area is by itself a big challenge. Actually we do not have children with disabilities. Identification of children with special needs is challenging due to children at preschool age experience certain kind of behavioral problems. This is normal but may be difficult to judge whether it is problematic behavior or not.”*

Responses given above show teachers and principals feel that including children with disabilities in a regular classroom is barrier by itself. They support based on the old method of students classification namely high achievers, medium and low achievers. This shows that there is a huge gap of understanding on how to support children with special needs.

#### ***4.3.4. Attempts Made to Alleviate the Problem***

Both principals were asked to inform how and what they feel to alleviate the existing problems related the implementation of inclusive early childhood education. They responded as follows.

**Participant A** said, *“As a KG principal, my role is guiding teachers and assistants properly. The other thing that I do is that presenting agendas related to such children on every meeting. I feel I must work with teachers not as a commander but as a co-worker.”*

**Participant B** states, *“As a professional, I should identify and assess defects and special need issues to be intervened. Though some children come to our school from a very reluctant family, working closely with teachers and parents can enhance children’s development and learning.”*

The principals responded that they have responsibility and role to facilitate child development and learning. Working in collaboration with teachers, parents, and other concerned bodies are the way they can address the needs of children with disabilities. They believe that collaboration matters the implementation of inclusive education.

According to Kyauta, (2013), teacher should know that children learn substantially by imitating both their parents and teachers. They should know the individual needs of all children. The language teacher use, his/her mode of dressing, what he/she eat and drink, his/her casual discussions and how he/she relate to the child and others in the society have either positive or negative effects on the physical, emotional, moral, psychological and mental development.

Principals were also asked about their suggestion to implement inclusive early childhood care and education in their schools. They responded in a way stated below.

**Participant A** replied, *“I hope we should accept all children without any consideration. Provision of special support for all children in need of special support is another important thing we have to consider. We should help them to get equal attention with their non-disabled peers. It is good to assure positive interaction in between all children in and out of the classroom so as to help them to avoid social withdrawal.”*

**Participant B** answered, *“The primary thing I suggest is provision of training on how to accept and treat children with special needs/disabilities. It seems good to equip teachers/assistants, principals and parents with the right understanding on the issue of care and education of all children regardless of existing diversity. Working in collaboration with the all concerned bodies can enhance the implementation of inclusive education as to me.”*

From the above discussions, one can understand that both principals argued the acceptance and integration of all children in kindergarten programs regardless of any diversity. This is a way to address the needs of all children and children with special needs particularly. Without sufficient understanding of the program, it is impossible to implement it.

Moreover, awareness raising through training provision for the stakeholders is believed to create a means to effective implementation of inclusive early childhood care and education according to the Participants. The researcher believes that training provision and awareness creation for teachers/assistants, parents and other stakeholders is an important issue to be focused before planning, designing and implementing inclusive early childhood care and education program. If the implementers understand it very well, material scarcity may not matter the practice.

During FDG, teachers or assistants were requested to discuss on what they suggest to improve the quality of inclusion in the kindergartens and their suggestion was;

In Group A, **Discussant F** said, *“Even though parents do not bring their children with special needs/disabilities, I hope it is possible to address the need of every child through collaborative care and teaching. If conducive learning environment is created, and children are available, we are committed to support them without discrimination because they all are Ethiopian citizens.”*

From Group B, **Discussant K** underlined, *“As to me, assigning teachers qualified with the area is the best means to go forward.”*

**Discussant I & J** also added, *“To reduce child’s psychological risk, I suggest placing a child with disability in separate classroom and assignment of professionals that can provide special support. Awareness creation for the school community including parents can change the situation.”*

Parents do not send their children with disabilities and this is a problem by itself to implement inclusive education at kindergarten level. All Participants argued that awareness raising trainings and programs are required to implement IE effectively. Some teachers agreed that children with disabilities should be placed in a separate or segregated schools so as to support their development and learning in a good manner. Nonetheless, placement of children with disability in a segregated learning environment is not advisable in the current and globalized world. This is why inclusion is given priority across the world to reduce social isolation.

#### ***4.4. RQ 3: Role of Stakeholders in the Implementation of IECCE***

##### ***4.4.1. Government Collaboration***

Participants were asked to discuss whether regional bureau of education and city administration education department follow up and support their schools. They responded as stated transcribed below.

**Participant A** stated, *“They never support us. Sometimes supervisors come to our office to gather students’ data for the sake of administrative purpose. We did not get any training regarding inclusive education.”*

**Participant B** said, *“Both Regional Bureau of Education and City Administration Education Department are not as such interlinked with our institution. Sometimes, they may come to collect some administrative data.”*

Similar question was forwarded for the officers and they responded as discussed below.

**Participant O** said, *“Regional Office for Education control and monitor private kindergarten’s practice through our supervisors.”*

Based on the response provided by the officers, private kindergartens are followed by supervisors assigned from Regional Education Bureau and City Administration Education Department. Supervisors rarely move towards private kindergartens and collect data related to students and staffs included in the organizations. This shows they have no as such formal relationship with the private kindergartens.

Two officers were asked about actions they are taking to promote inclusive education among private kindergartens. Their responses are transcribes as follows.

**Participant O** stated, *“Private kindergartens are out of focus because we have no way to follow them seriously. Our office links them to gather administrative data and I hope we do not have as such supportive relationship. With regard to registration of children with special needs, those with severe cases do not go to schools. Parents do not send their child with disability and there is low intention among the schools. No resource was provided and even teachers are placed by the investors owning these KGs. The office does not facilitate teacher trainings and related services for the private kindergartens. Children are not receiving special support hence the word ‘inclusion’ by itself is recently emerging in our context.”*

Both officers discussed that offices did not support private kindergartens formally. They are not familiar with the concept itself and they are planning to integrate private and government schools as much as possible. Private kindergartens are out of focus when compare with governmental schools. Officers assured that even curriculum development and implementation in private schools is managed by themselves. This shows there is no professional relationship and clear boundary between these two institutions.

Then, officers were requested to discuss about the challenges that private kindergartens face to implement inclusive education.

**Participant O** said, *“The primary challenge is that lack of trained man power in the area. Second, size of the school compound by itself is challenging. The third challenge is parents may refuse to send their child with disability to kindergartens because they feel their child does not have disability. The last one is challenge related to interlink between concerned bodies like parent-teacher, parent-school, parent-Woreda and the like. Lack of curriculum designed for such program is another challenge for the implementation.”*

Lastly, both officers were asked about measures they are taking to alleviate the problem existing among private kindergartens.

**Participant O** stated, *“Well. We organized about 180 resource centers for different Woreda in the region. The problem is that private settings were totally forgotten and no attempt was made. As we did in government schools, we are striving strongly to organize resource centers in model private kindergartens. We know it will be effective when started in Hawassa and then will be expanded to the whole region.”*

The same interview question was raised for the officer from City Administration Education Department and both Participants assured that offices assigned to support and work with private schools do not follow and support them properly. Their relationship is that of taking and giving administrative data. They supervise private kindergartens to gather administrative data throughout the academic year. Their responses underlined that owners of the private kindergartens always manage and facilitate all the necessary activities based on the capacity and skilled man power they have. There is no clear boundary they share regarding the program. This shows that there is a common practice that cannot promote supportive interlink between private kindergartens and regional office for education.

#### **4.3.2. Parent Collaboration**

**Participant A** said, *“We strongly collaborate with parents of every child because; in kindergarten education it is must to go with them as much as possible. Parents feel better when their children are not considered as having special need. Because her aunt is an assistant in our kindergarten, a child with disability was forced by her parents to stay in the center.”*

**Participant B** stated, *“Actually we always work with parents especially regarding child discipline and behavioral change. The problem sometimes is that they visit us only when they drop in and pick up their children. Teachers meet with parent of each child through communication book and appointment. Parents of children with special need/disability do not like to hear that their child has certain kind of need.”*

Responses from both kindergartens indicate that parents of children with special need/disability have poor understanding and negative feeling towards disability. Parents must be involved in all aspect of learning of their exceptional children. The family is the first source of education for a child, and most learning occurs at home. Parents are the most important stakeholders in any inclusive education settings.

Parent discussants stated, *“Our children were accepted by the kindergartens because we have relatives working there. It was thinking that these relatives can send our children to classroom and bring them back to home when they return. Kindergartens call us if there is any issue for discussion like payment, child discipline, child health and the like. Some of the parents may come together but in most cases the school call us independently.”*

Other parent participants agreed that their children are accepted by the kindergarten like any other children. Again they informed that teachers call them if necessary and discuss on the issues identified by the school. They also mentioned that the support both kindergartens providing are of good quality. Some of them commonly stated that they follow and monitor their child learning and development through home assessment like asking what they learnt and did. Almost all parents also stated that both kindergartens have a problem related to linkage with concerned bodies. The other thing they discussed was the relationship they have with the parents of children with disabilities and all of them underlined they meet based on the schedule school develops. Finally, they stated that their children are capable to learn and develop like any other child if educated well.

## *Chapter Five*

### *5. Discussion of Major Findings*

Inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their children, 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 (UNESCO, 1994).

Addressing the diverse learning needs of all children and students under a universal approach and within a learner friendly environment, fortifies the quest of appropriate and resources available (Robbins, 2011). The development of the learning material for children to work with helps the teacher to facilitate learning, without dominating the classroom or intimidating the children. Kyauta, I. (2013), found that teacher awareness, training provision, physical and social accessibility of the schools, concerned body collaboration as well commitment of the stakeholders' challenges to implement inclusive early childhood care and education.

Much research exists about the importance of parent involvement in education. Parents who are involved in their child's education create a connection between the home and school. (Andrea Peck, 2017).

As it was stated earlier, the researcher used different data gathering tools namely participant observation, semi-structured interview, document analysis and focus group discussion. These were conducted with the research participants such as teachers/assistants, parents, children, principals and officers. Then, it has found the following findings. These are;

- both private kindergartens were not physically and socially accessible for children with disabilities. They have some modern furniture like any other kindergartens and the facilities are not adjusted to accommodate the need of children with special needs. Observation conducted on both indoor and outdoor settings of the kindergartens assured that the learning and playing materials are not adapted and modified so as to support the learning and development of children with disabilities. Even children with special needs available in the centers were not getting necessary support and intervention based on the individual need and potential of each child.

- teachers/assistants are not qualified in the area. All of them are graduates of subject matter and lack training with regard to care and education of children with special needs. During the FGD held with them, teachers notified that they did not take any training in the area. They lack knowledge and awareness related to the nature of children with special needs/disabilities. Even they lack adequate training with regard to education of children with disabilities, both principals were alert to identify and support them. They have better understanding about children with special needs/disabilities than teachers/assistants. The problem was that they do not know how to coordinate teachers to identify and support children with special needs/disabilities. Their leadership was not influential and directional to bring attitudinal change among teachers and parents of children with disabilities.
- Parents of children with disabilities have poor understanding about the issue of disability. They never like to hear as their child is with certain kind of special needs/disabilities. They don't believe that their child has disability. Their cooperation with the kindergartens is limited to the time they drop in and pick up their child. They lack training with regard to care and education of children with special needs/disabilities. Regional office for education also lack awareness and right understanding about the way how private kindergartens work towards inclusion. Both offices do not support private kindergartens that their relationship is of data exchange. Private kindergartens were like separate islands which does not have as such influential relationship with regional education bureau and city administration education department.

Generally, both kindergartens do not accept children with special needs. They lack knowledge, attitude and skill with regard to inclusive early childhood care and education. Some children with disabilities were accepted and enrolled due to reasons such as having family members working in the kindergarten, and siblings without disability attending the school. Others may be due to their parents are higher officials and the rests were as a result of pressure from the government body. The schools have fully furnished play and learning materials even though the materials are not modified and adapted so as to address the special need of individual child with disability. Their organization and design does not consider diversity and differences individuals may have. Chairs, tables, toilet room, classroom entrances and all indoor and outdoor learning materials do not reflect diversity. For children with physical and visual impairment, there was no ramp installed and the entrances were too challenging.

## *Chapter Six*

### *6. Summary, Conclusion and Implications*

#### *6.1. Summary*

This study was intended to investigate the practice of inclusive education in two private kindergartens in Tabor sub-city in Hawassa City Administration. Factors that can hinder proper implementation of the inclusion were assessed in the study. Qualitative research method particularly phenomenological approach was employed in the study. There were 28 participants in the study including teachers/assistants, parents, children with disability, officers and school principals. Participant observation, semi-structured interview and focus group discussion were data gathering tools used for the study. Therefore, three FGD and four semi-structured interview were employed.

Based on the research findings, the enrolment and inclusion of children with disabilities in the kindergartens still remains a big concern in private kindergartens. Results found from the data gathered refer that children with disabilities in both kindergartens were not included well. Parents, teachers/assistants, and school directors lack adequate training with regard to inclusion of children with disabilities. Insufficient follow up from government body is also another challenge for the implementation of inclusive early childhood care and education. Problems like difficulties in identifying children with disabilities, inaccessible infrastructure in private kindergartens and school buildings, and the unsuitability of programs and curricula for children with disabilities, lack of teachers' preparation in working with children with disabilities, lack of support teachers in the classrooms, and parent's negative attitude are challenges for the effective implementation of early childhood inclusive care and education.

To sum up, data gathered through different tools assured that both kindergartens do not know very well about children with disabilities. Mainly teachers and the assistants assume that CwSNs are those with easily identifiable defects only. Both KGs officially don't accept children with disabilities believing that such children require something special. In both KGs, children with special needs/disabilities were accepted due to reasons like some children have parents working in the kindergarten and others were due to their parents are higher officials of the government and the rests are as a result of the presence of their twin in the kindergarten.

## ***6.2. Conclusion***

Even though there has been an incredible effort in availing schools for children with special needs (disabled, marginalized, gifted and talented, etc.) in Ethiopia, it doesn't show a clear boundary for private and government owned schools. Private schools are getting totally departed from the structure and curriculum of the country. Much struggle made from the government of Ethiopia does not bear a significant change with regard to attitudinal change among private schools. Kindergarten education has a long time history among the private sector though there is no as such clear attempt made to include children with disabilities.

Poor collaboration in between private and governmental schools, lack of knowledge and skill among teachers, principals and officers, physical and social inaccessibility of the private kindergartens for children with special needs, inability to implement government policies and negative attitude of the parents of children with disabilities are the major factors hindering the implementation of inclusive education in private kindergartens. Another barrier for the implementation of the inclusive education was lack of SNEd professionals. For this matter, Tirussew, (2005) states that the development of an inclusive education and teacher training programs are the most challenging issue in the process of implementation of inclusive education. Besides, to avoid pedagogical challenges, of inclusive education ordinary class teacher who teaches students (children) with special needs should be capable of teaching skills and knowledge.

Unless learning materials are adapted and modified, well-furnished KGs are not necessarily accessible for children with disabilities. According to this research findings, private kindergartens do not accept children with disability except there are situations force them to do so. Successful inclusion begins from positive child to teacher interaction whereas both kindergartens lack such relationship. There is no inclusion when there is no active child involvement. Parents in private KGs have business oriented interaction. Teachers, principals and parents lack knowledge, skill and attitude to support children with disability. Private kindergartens do not assign Special Need Education professionals. Most play and learning materials in private kindergartens reflect foreign culture. Private kindergartens are separate ice lands (has no clear boundary with the government). Teacher-centered instruction and traditional method of assessment often used by the most Private KGs does not reflect inclusion.

### ***6.3. Implications for the Further Action***

Findings from this study have implications for the concerned bodies, policy implementation and further studies. These are;

- Private kindergartens require close interlink with government bodies like regional bureau of education and city administration education department. The relationship of Private Schools and Government Bureaus must be extenuated from administrative data collection.
- Private kindergartens should work in collaboration with the government to help teachers and assistants to be integrated in to trainings and educational opportunities provided under the government institutions.
- Placement of special need education teachers and professionals in private kindergartens is highly required. They must employ special needs education specialists.
- This also shows that organization of the inclusive education support centers among the private schools has significantly positive impact on the program implementation.
- To avoid poor understanding of the parents of children with or without disabilities, awareness raising trainings and workshops are mandatory.
- Curriculum for inclusion in the early childhood care and education has to be designed in a different way than stated for the grade levels. Policy guidelines and strategies should be developed in a way that includes private sectors and there has to be continuous follow up.
- In both kindergartens, collaboration of parents and kindergartens was business oriented and mutually constructed. It should be based on the idea stated in the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy that is it should involve parents in children's development and learning.
- Because early childhood inclusive education is recognized as a foundation for inclusive society across the globe, private kindergartens are expected to work towards enrollment of children with special needs and support provision for children with disabilities. As they are a part of general society and working to satisfy the community at large, their intention has to be tied to the direction and need of the society.
- It is advisable for the private kindergartens to conduct researches (action researches) specially on children with diverse needs so as to integrate their practice with what is going on now in the world.
- Finally, if observed in light of these findings, most private kindergartens may look similar in terms of inclusion of children with disabilities.

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Appendices

Appendix: A

አዲስ አበባ የኒሽርሲቲ

የሥነ ትምህርትና ባህሪ ጥናት ኮሌጅ

የቀዳማይ ልጅነት ዘመን እንክብካቤና ትምህርት ማዕከል

ለኬጂ ር/መምህራን የቀረበ ቃለ-መጠይቅ (Amharic Version)

የተጠያቂ ር/መምህር መለያ ኮድ: \_\_\_\_\_

ዎታ: \_\_\_\_\_

ዕድሜ: \_\_\_\_\_

የትምህርት ደረጃ: \_\_\_\_\_

የሰለጠኑበት የትምህርት ዓይነት: \_\_\_\_\_

በኬጂ ር/መምህርነት የአገልግሎት ዘመን: \_\_\_\_\_

1. ልዩ ፍላጎት ስላላቸው ህፃናት ትምህርት ከዚህ በፊት ስልጠና ወስደው ያውቃሉ?
2. ልዩ ፍላጎት ያላቸው የሚባሉ ህፃናት እንዴት ያሉ ናቸው?
3. ምን ዓይነት የዕድገትና የመማር ችግር ያለባቸው ህፃናት ናቸው ት/ቤታችሁ ውስጥ ያሉት?
4. ምን ዓይነት ድጋፍና እንክብካቤ እንደሚያደርጉላቸው ያብራሩ::
5. ትምህርት ቤታችሁ ልዩ ፍላጎት ያላቸውን ህፃናትን እንዴት እንደሚቀበል ያብራሩ::
6. የትምህርት ቤታችሁ አከባቢና ገጽታ ልዩ ፍላጎት ላላቸው ህፃናት ምን አመቺነት አለው?
7. ልዩ ፍላጎት ትምህርት መ/ራን በትምህርት ቤታችሁ አሉ? መምህራን በቂ ግንዛቤ አላቸው?
8. ሁሉንም ልጆች እንደየ ፍላጎታቸው ለማስተማር ምን ዓይነት ተግዳሮቶች አጋጠምዎት?
9. ያጋጠሙ ችግሮችን ለመፍታት ያለዎትን ሚና ያብራሩ::
10. ከልዩ ፍላጎት ያላቸው ህፃናት ወላጆች ጋር ያላችሁ ግንኙነት ምን ይመስላል?
11. አካቶት ምህርትን በትምህርት ቤታችሁ ለመተግበር ምን መደረግ አለበት ይላሉ?

Appendix: B

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ

የሥነ ትምህርትና ባህርይ ጥናት ኮሌጅ

የቀዳማይ ልጅነት ዘመን እንክብካቤና ትምህርት ማዕከል

ለመምህራንና ረዳቶቻቸው የቀረቡ የመወያያ ነጥቦች (Amharic Version)

የተጠያቂ መምህር መለያ ኮድ: \_\_\_\_\_

ዎታ: \_\_\_\_\_

ዕድሜ: \_\_\_\_\_

የትምህርት ደረጃ: \_\_\_\_\_

የሰለጠኑበት የትምህርት ዓይነት: \_\_\_\_\_

በኬጂ መምህርነት የአገልግሎት ዘመን: \_\_\_\_\_

1. ልዩ ፍላጎት ስላላቸው ህፃናት ትምህርት ከዚህ በፊት ስልጠና ወስደው ያውቃሉ?
2. ልዩ ፍላጎት ያላቸው የሚባሉ ህፃናት እነዴት ያሉ ናቸው?
3. ሁሉም ልጆች ተመሳሳይ ድጋፍና እንክብካቤ ይፈልጋሉ ብለው ያስባሉ?
4. ሁሉንም ልጆች እንደየፍላጎታቸውና እንደየአቅማቸው ለይተው ይረዳሉ? እንዴት?
5. ምን ዓይነት የዕድገትና የመማር ችግር ያለባቸው ህፃናት ናቸው ክፍል ውስጥ ያጋጠምዎት?
6. ምን ዓይነት ድጋፍና እንክብካቤ እንደሚያደርጉላቸው ያብራሩ::
7. ልዩ ፍላጎት ያላቸውን ህፃናት አካተው ለማስተማር የርስዎን ሚና ይግለጹ::
8. የትምህርት ቤታችሁ አከባቢና ገጽታ ልዩ ፍላጎት ላላቸው ህፃናት ምን አመቺነት አለው?
9. ሁሉንም ልጆች እንደየፍላጎታቸው ለማስተማር ምን ዓይነት ተግዳሮቶች አጋጠምዎት?
10. ያጋጠሙ ችግሮችን ለመፍታት ያለዎትን ሚና ያብራሩ::
11. ከልዩ ፍላጎት ያላቸው ህፃናት ወላጆች ጋር ያላችሁ ግንኙነት ምን ይመስላል?
12. አካቶ ትምህርትን በትምህርት ቤታችሁ ለመተግበር ምን መደረግ አለበት ይላሉ?

Appendix: C

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ

የሥነ ትምህርትና ባህሪ ጥናት ኮሌጅ

የቀዳማዊ ልጅነት ዘመን እንክብካቤና ትምህርት ማዕከል

ለወላጆች የቀረቡ የመወያያ ነጥቦች (Amharic Version)

የተጠያቂ ወላጅ መለያ ኮድ: \_\_\_\_\_

ዎታ: \_\_\_\_\_

ዕድሜ: \_\_\_\_\_

የትምህርት ደረጃ: \_\_\_\_\_

የሰለጠኑበት የትምህርት ዓይነት: \_\_\_\_\_

1. ልጆትን ሲያስመዘግቡ ትምህርት ቤቱ እንዴት ተቀበለው/ላት?
2. ከትምህርት ቤቱ መምህራንና አስተዳደር ጋር ያላችሁን ግንኙነት ይግለጹ።
3. ትምህርት ቤቱ ለልጅዎት አስፈላጊውን ድጋፍ ያደርግለታል/ላታል ብለው ያምናሉ?
4. የልጅዎትን መማርና ዕድገት በምን መልኩ እንደሚከታተሉ ይግለጹ።
5. ትምህርት ቤቱ ያለብትን ችግሮች ይዘርዝሩ።
6. ችግሮቹን ለመቅረፍ ምን ቢደረግ ይሻላል ብለው ያምናሉ?
7. ከሌሎች ወላጆች ጋር ያለዎት ግንኙነት ምን ይመስላል?
8. ልጅዎትን እንደማንኛውም ልጅ መማር ይችላል/ትችላለች ብለው ያምናሉ?
9. የትምህርት ቤቱ ጠንካራ ጎን በምን ይገለጻል? ያብራሩ።
10. ልጅዎት የሚገለገልባቸው የመማሪያና የመጫዎቻ ቁሳቁሶች አመቺነት ይግለጹ።

Appendix: D

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ

የሥነ ትምህርትና ባህሪ ጥናት ኮሌጅ

የቀዳማዊ ልጅነት ዘመን እንክብካቤና ትምህርት ማዕከል

ለት/መምሪያ ባለሙያ የቀረበ ቃለ-መጠይቅ (Amharic Version)

የተጠያቂ ባለሙያ መለያ ኮድ: \_\_\_\_\_

ዎታ: \_\_\_\_\_

ዕድሜ: \_\_\_\_\_

የትምህርት ደረጃ: \_\_\_\_\_

የሰለጠኑበት የትምህርት ዓይነት: \_\_\_\_\_

የአገልግሎት ዘመን: \_\_\_\_\_

1. የግል ኬጂዎችን በምን መልኩ ነው የሚትከታተሏቸው?
2. ትምህርት ቤቶቹን አካቶ ለማድረግ እየተሰሩ ያሉ ነገሮችን ይዘርዝሩ።
3. ለትምህርት ቤቶቹ የሚታደርጉላቸውን ዲጋፍ ይግለጹ።
4. ትምህርት ቤቶቹ ልዩ ፍላጎት ያላቸውን ህፃናት ለመንከባከብ ብቁ ናቸውን?
5. የግል ኬጂዎቹ አካቶ ት/ትን ከመስጠት አንፃር በአሁኑ ጊዜ ያለባቸውን ችግር ያብራሩ።
6. ችግሮቹን ለመፍታት ቢሮው እያደረገ ያለውን ተግባር ይግለጹ።

Appendix: E

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ

የሥነ ትምህርትና ባህሪ ጥናት ኮሌጅ

የቀዳማይ ልጅነት ዘመን እንክብካቤና ትምህርት ማዕከል

ለት/ቢሮ ባለሙያ የቀረበ ቃለ-መጠይቅ (Amharic Version)

የተጠያቂ ቢሮ ባለሙያ መለያ ኮድ: \_\_\_\_\_

ዎታ: \_\_\_\_\_

ዕድሜ: \_\_\_\_\_

የትምህርት ደረጃ: \_\_\_\_\_

የሰለጠኑበት የትምህርት ዓይነት: \_\_\_\_\_

የአገልግሎት ዘመን: \_\_\_\_\_

1. የግል ኬጂዎችን በምን መልኩ ነው የሚትከታተሏቸው?
2. ትምህርት ቤቶቹን አካቶ ለማድረግ እየተሰሩ ያሉ ነገሮችን ይዘርዝሩ።
3. ለትምህርት ቤቶቹ የሚታደርጉላቸውን ድጋፍ ይግለጹ።
4. ትምህርት ቤቶቹ ልዩ ፍላጎት ያላቸውን ህፃናት ለመንከባከብ ብቁ ናቸውን?
5. የግል ኬጂዎቹ አካቶ ት/ትን ከመስጠት አንፃር በአሁኑ ጊዜ ያለባቸውን ችግር ያብራሩ።
6. ችግሮቹን ለመፍታት ቢሮው እያደረገደለውን ጥረት ይግለጹ።

## **Appendix: F**

**Addis Ababa University  
College of Education and Behavioral Studies  
Center for Early Childhood Care and Education**

### **An Interview Guide for KG Principals (English Version)**

Participant's Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Qualification: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject Trained: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Year: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did you get any training regarding education of children with special needs?
2. Who are children with special needs for you?
3. Do you think all children require similar support at kindergarten level?
4. Do you provide support for all children based on their needs and potential? How?
5. What kind of developmental and learning difficulties are prevalent in your school?
6. Discuss about the kind of care and support does your school provide for them.
7. Discuss how your school accepts children with special needs.
8. What enabling environment is in your school?
9. Discuss about the availability of special need education teachers in your school.
10. What challenges do you face to care and educate children with special needs?
11. Discuss the attempts made to alleviate such challenges.
12. What should be done to improve the quality of inclusion in your school?

**Appendix: G**  
**Addis Ababa University**  
**College of Education and Behavioral Studies**  
**Center for Early Childhood Care and Education**

**A Discussion Protocol for Teachers/Assistants (English Version)**

Participant's Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Qualification: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject Trained: \_\_\_\_\_

KG Teaching Experience: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did you get any training regarding education of children with special needs?
2. Who are children with special needs for you?
3. Do you think all children require similar support at kindergarten level?
4. Do you provide support for all children based on their needs and potential? How?
5. What kind of developmental and learning difficulties are prevalent in your classroom?
6. Discuss about the kind of care and support does your school provide for them.
7. Discuss what you do to include children with special needs in your classroom.
8. What enabling environment is in your school?
9. What challenges do you face to care and educate children with special needs?
10. Discuss your role to alleviate such challenges.
11. How is your relationship with parents/caregivers of the children with special needs?
12. What should be done to improve the quality of inclusion in your school?

**Appendix: H**  
**Addis Ababa University**  
**College of Education and Behavioral Studies**  
**Center for Early Childhood Care and Education**

**A Discussion Protocol for Parents/Caregivers (English Version)**

Participant's Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Qualification: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject Trained: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Experience: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How did this school accept your child?
2. How do you interact with kindergarten teachers/assistants?
3. Do you feel the school is providing all necessary supports for your child?
4. How do you follow and monitor your child's development and learning?
5. What problems do you think this kindergarten has?
6. What solution do you suggest to alleviate the problem the school facing?
7. How is your relationship with other parents who have children with disabilities?
8. Do you believe your child can learn better like any other peers?

**Appendix: I**  
**Addis Ababa University**  
**College of Education and Behavioral Studies**  
**Center for Early Childhood Care and Education**

**An Interview Guide for Regional Bureau Expert (English Version)**

Participant's Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Qualification: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject area: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Year: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How do you follow and support private kindergarten schools?
2. What are you doing to make kindergarten schools inclusive settings?
3. What kind of support do you provide for private kindergartens?
4. Do you think these kindergartens are accessible for children with disability?
5. What kind of problems do these kindergartens have?

**Appendix: J**  
**Addis Ababa University**  
**College of Education and Behavioral Studies**  
**Center for Early Childhood Care and Education**

**An Interview Guide for Department Officer (English Version)**

Participant's Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Qualification: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject area: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Year: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How do you follow and support private kindergarten schools?
2. What are you doing to make kindergarten schools inclusive settings?
3. What kind of support do you provide for private kindergartens?
4. Do you think these kindergartens are accessible for children with disability?
5. What kind of problems do these kindergartens have?

**Appendix: K**  
**Addis Ababa University**  
**College of Education and Behavioral Studies**  
**Center for Early Childhood Care and Education**  
**Observation Checklist**

**1. Physical Accessibility**

S/N	Items to be observed	Availability		Quantity		Quality		Remark
		A	NA	E	NE	G	NG	
1.	Child-sized Tables							
2.	Child-sized Chairs							
3.	Accessible Play Ground							
4.	Modified Play Materials							
5.	Rump installation							
6.	Mats to play on							
7.	Appropriate doors and windows							
8.	Accessible learning materials							
9.	Classroom brightness							
10.	Classroom ventilation							
11.	Child-sized toilet							
12.	Textbooks reflecting diversity							

**2. Social Accessibility (Child – Child & Child - Caregiver Interaction)**

S/N	Items to be observed	Yes	No
1.	Are families and children welcomed and greeted in a loving, respectful way?		
2.	Do caregivers speak positively about all children?		
3.	Are the staffs involved with children at eye-level?		
4.	Do the caregivers call children by name?		
5.	Do caregivers really listening to children?		
6.	Are all of the children engaged?		
7.	Are all children receiving individual attention?		
8.	Do caregivers facilitate interactions between all children?		
9.	Are children with disabilities included socially and engaged in meaningful activities.		
10.	Are children with disabilities given support when needed?		

Adapted from: “Choosing Quality Child Care for a Child with Special Needs,” a Child Care Aware brochure. Available at [www.childcareaware.org](http://www.childcareaware.org).

**Appendix: L**  
**Letter of Consent**

**Title of the Study:** Inclusive Education Practice of Two Private Kindergartens in Tabor Sub-city, Hawassa City Administration

**Principal Investigator:** Dereje Dakamo

**Supervisor:** Laureate Professor Tirussew Teferra

This is a research for the requirement of the Degree of Master of Art in Early Childhood Care and Education in Addis Ababa University. You are kindly invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. You can ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. If you do decide to take part in this study, you sign on a consent form below. If you decide to take part in this study, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. You are free to not answer any question or questions if you choose. This will not affect the relationship you have with the researcher. There are no costs to you for your participation in this study and there is no monetary compensation to you for your participation in this study.

**Consent:**

By signing this consent form, I confirm that I have read and understood the information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Name of the Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Letter of Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has been carried out by me under the guidance and supervision of my Advisor Laureate Professor Tirussew Teferra. The thesis is my original work and has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma to any university or institutions.

Researcher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_