

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AS A STEP TOWARDS

INCLUSION: THE CASE OF ENAT PRE-SCHOOL

INJIBARA, AWI ZONE

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SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND BEHAVIORAL STUDIES

Addis Ababa

May, 2011

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RESEARCH OF ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND
BEHAVIORAL STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION**

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Table of Content

Contents	Page
Acknowledgement.....	i
Table of content.....	ii
Acronyms.....	v
Abstract.....	vi
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of the study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the problem	4
1.3 Theoretical framework	5
1.4 Significance of the study	7
1.5 Operational definitions of terms.....	7
CHAPTER TWO	9
Review of related literature.....	9
2.1 Development of pre-school education.....	9
2.2 Inaccessibility of pre-schools	12
2.3 Provision of early childhood education.....	12
2.4 Parents' and pre-school community relationship	14
2.5 Principle of inclusive education	16
2.6 Early childhood inclusive education	22
2.7 Challenges to implement inclusive early childhood education.....	25
2.8 Importance of promoting inclusive education in pre-schools	28
2.9 Characteristics of inclusive education.....	29
2.10 Consent of diversity needs	31
2.11 Provision of accessible and flexible pre-school curriculum.....	31
2.12 Classroom environment.....	34
2.13 Roles of pre-school teachers in an inclusive classroom	35
CHAPTER THREE.....	37
Methodology and Research Design	37
3.1 Design of the study.....	37

3.2 Population and sampling	37
3.2.1 Setting of the study	37
3.2.1.1 Vision and mission of the pre-school.....	37
3.2.2 Data collection instrument and procedure	38
3.2.3 Criteria of selecting the sample	39
3.3 Instruments	39
3.3.1 Observation.....	40
3.3.2 Interview	41
3.3.3 Document analysis.....	41
3.4 Methods of data analysis	42
3.5 Ethics	43
CHAPTER FOUR	44
Finding analysis and discussions	44
4.1 Observations.....	44
4.1.1 Outside classroom observation of the pre-school and its facilities.....	44
4.1.2 Classroom observation.....	46
4.2 Interview.....	49
4.2.1 Discussion of participant's interview	49
4.2.2 Interactions among students ...1.....	53
4.2.3 Parent's and community members' perspective	54
4.2.4 The interaction of teachers with students and parents	56
4.2.5 Interaction of principal with teachers, parents and educational experts.....	57
4.2.6 Lack of coordination and experience.....	58
4.2.7 Awareness of teachers, parents and the community	59
4.2.8 Utilization of material resources in Enat pre-school	60
4.2.9 The support system of teachers and the school administration	60
4.3 Document analysis	61
4.4 Principles of inclusive education in the pre-school.....	62

CHAPTER FIVE	64
Conclusion and recommendations.....	64
5.1 Conclusion.....	64
5.2 Recommendations	68
References.....	70
APPENDIX A.....	74
APPENDIX B.....	77
APPENDIX C.....	79
APPENDIX D.....	80
APPENDIX E	81
APPENDIX F	83

Acronyms

CWD:	Children with Disabilities
CWHI:	Children with Hearing Impairment
CWOD:	Children without Disabilities
ECCE:	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECE:	Early Childhood Education
EFA:	Education for All
ENAMRCY	Ethiopian National Association for Mentally Retarded Children and Youth
IEP:	Individual Educational Plan
KG:	Kindergarten
MOE:	Ministry Of Education
Para:	Paragraph
SNE:	Special Needs Education
TPA:	Teachers Parents Association
UPE:	Universal Primary Education

Abstract

This study attempts to assess and evaluate to what extent inclusive early childhood education is practiced and implemented in AWI zone, Injibara sub-city Enat pre-school. To achieve this objective a qualitative research method was employed. The samples were selected by purposeful sampling method. The respondents were 14, three teachers, three children, three parents, three educational experts and two community members. The data was collected through observations, interviews and document reviews. Semi-structured interviews were prepared and an observation check list was designed to outside and classroom observation of pre-school. The data was analyzed and discussed in descriptive way. By categorizing the data in groups mean that class room observation, outside class room observation, interview and document analysis data and then which data is related to the research questions: the practice of inclusive education, experience sharing, and awareness of teachers and parents. it is summarized and described deeply. The findings of the study showed that the sample school compound is not that much conducive for all children, such as the narrow classes, great number of children in the class, narrow play ground, absence of resources room, high traffic areas and sound disturbance are great physical barriers of the pre-school. On the other hand a good relationship among the children, teachers and children and teachers and teachers was observed. The teacher's activities to help the children with disabilities, enrolling them to the class, instead of leaving them at home are an indication of to a step up towards inclusive education. Lack of training of teachers, experts and parents are great barriers to implement inclusive education. Absence of experience sharing of pre-schools, limited support system of the supervision and collaboration of stakeholders is the other barrier to a step towards inclusive early childhood education of Enat pre- school. Finally based on the findings and discussion made, some helpful suggestions have been recommended.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Education is a fundamental human right and one of the main factors that reduce poverty and improve socio-economic conditions. In Ethiopia, there is an increasing awareness of education as a human right and consequently, a demand to provide education for all citizens. The MOE (2006) Special needs education program strategy emphasizing inclusive education to meet UPE and EFA goals, designed strategy for special needs education, emphasizing that all children and students can learn but many of them need some form of support in learning and active participation. Providing education for all requires identifying barriers that hinder learning, and reducing or removing these barriers in early education and other educational levels. But when we observe practical implementation of the policy and strategies there is a wide gap. MOE (2006) explained to reach achieving universal primary education and EFA the strategies of education should follow inclusive education. This inclusion should start from early childhood education. MOE (2001) explains early childhood education is a preparation of children for primary education. From age four to six children can learn fun like education mean that which is enjoyable, entertaining, relaxing and play. It would enable the children to express feel, appreciate beauty and learn letters and numbers. It requires high investment and trained manpower. MOE (2001) also stated: *"Teachers training and teaching methodology should allow children to relax when learning, to rest when tired and to eat when hungry."* (MOE, 2001, p. 76.).

But the policy of education left kindergartens to the private investors, religious organizations and for parents who can offer to pay the fees. Even if there is a strategic plan to the practice of ECCE (2009) emphasizing that its implementation should be given in inclusive setting in which each child should learn in his /her immediate environment, still there is gap to implement it practically. This indicates that in Ethiopia pre-school education is left aside and has been left to other non-governmental stakeholders despite of teachers' training and technical support on a minimum level. Therefore the provision of inclusive early childhood

education in pre-schools is not well designed and organized. That is why the researcher is interested to study this area.

ECCE is important; ECCE can serve as a support system for all children and particularly for those with development delays or children at risk because of socio-economic problem in their families. ECCE refers to health, hygiene, nutrition, capturing learning through early stimulation, guidance and arrangement of development activities and opportunities. So, to implement such care and education effectively, inclusive setting of pre-school is very important. Early care and education in inclusive setting creates a chance for an early inclusive society and inclusive community, and it prevents discrimination and prejudice. All young children must be nurtured in safe and cared environment that allow them to become healthy, alert, secure and be able to learn. So, early childhood education is one of intervention method for enhancing the later academic success of young children. In line with this, (Biklen, 1992; Sapon-Shevin, 2000/2001; Stainback and Stainback, 1990) explained:

An inclusive school is structured to serve a wide range of students; the environment is flexible and organized to meet the unique needs of all the students. In an inclusive school every one belongs, is accepted, supports, and is supported by all members of the community while having educational needs met. (as cited in Roopnarine and James, 2005, p.109).

But as MOE (2009) ECCE policy explains when we see early childhood care and education practice in Ethiopia, teachers are not well trained in pre-school teaching; they are not working in collaboration with families, and other professionals. Most of them don't know what inclusive education means. So they are in challenge to implement inclusive education in pre-elementary schools.

Experiences in Enat pre-school show that early childhood care and education towards inclusive education is problematic. Parents, teachers and the community regret for the quality of early childhood care and education.

UNESCO (2008) explained:

Regulations and researches support the education of children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment with their typical or usual peers. The curriculum developed as an in compose of the knowledge from special education and early childhood developmentally appropriate practice. Young children have right to get quality education in inclusive environment and to spend their first years in a peacefully, safe and playful environment. (UNESCO, 2008, p.150).

The pre-school physical environment and curriculum design is expected suitable to children learning. It should attract and be conducive to all children and the community should assure equity of learning.

Ainscow explained:

Inclusive education means a shift in service form simply trying to fit the child in to regular classroom; it is a supplemental support for their disabilities or special needs and promotes the child's over all development in an optimal setting. Euans (1998), Therefore, the task becomes one of developing the school to response to diversity. This has to include a consideration of overall organization, curriculum and classroom practice, support for learning and staff development (cited in Ethiopian National Association for Mentally Retarded children and Youth in collaboration with save the children. Research report on the situational analysis of ten schools. ENAMRCY, 2007, p. 3).

When we come to Injibra context, early childhood education in pre-schools is left for private schools and some public pre-schools. Even the policy of education states the importance of pre-schools; still pre-schools are not organized by the government budget support; teachers are not well trained and educational materials and equipments are not accessible. In connection with the above notation, Tesfaye (2005) has stated as follows:

There is a new educational policy that allows all citizens to have equal access to education. The number of children with special needs benefiting from this is

insignificant. He attributes this to the attitude of society, including teachers, towards children with disabilities. (ENAMRCY, 200, p. 4).

From these we can understand that even if there are new strategies and policies teachers' attitudes and awarenesses are decisive factors. In pre-schools there is a wide gap to implement inclusive education. Lack of collaboration from administrators, stakeholders, professionals and parents are also main problems. This means that local education sector experts, teachers and parents do not cooperate with each other for the development of pre-schools.

UNESCO (2008) stated:

Many teachers are employed on a contract basis receive below salaries and have limited or no professional training. So progress towards the ECCE goal has been slow. Especially as it relates to reaching marginalized populations. In some countries, specially trained teachers are paid less than other teachers because they have fewer pupils. This discourages teachers from training for special need education. (UNESCO, 2008, pp. 88-89).

The same problem reflects in Enat Pre-School; teachers are employed in contract and receive below salaries. MOE (2009) ECCE policy supports this idea that is why the researcher is interested to identify the problem to implement inclusive education.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The overall aim of early childhood care and education is to optimize the children's development and ability to participate in family and community life. It also provides parents and the community with the knowledge skills and support to meet the needs of their children.

However, in Ethiopia due to lack of early assessment of children with disabilities, lack of early childhood care and intervention services, lack of knowledge, lack of awareness and services many pre-school children do not receive the care and education they need.

Provision of education in private & kebele pre-school is not inclusive. Having this in mind, the researcher was interested to study early childhood care as a step towards inclusive education in preschools.

Thus, this study attempted to find answers for the following research questions.

1. In what ways inclusive education is offered in ECE institution of Enat Pre-School?
2. How far does Enat Pre-School share experience with other pre schools?
3. How far is the awareness of teachers, parents and the community about inclusive education and its implementation?

1.3 Theoretical framework

To realize inclusion in pre-schools, many changes are necessary at different levels in different dimensions: classroom level, school level, community, country level. In this study, I attempted to explore situations exhibit in Enat pre-school class rooms, teachers, and parents adequate interaction in the environment in line with the following theoretical frame works.

Sally (2004) explains:

Home-school relationships have an essential role to play in promoting children's educational progress. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological model (1977) demonstrates that children's need at school cannot be seen in isolation from their learning in other settings, the first and most significant which is their home and family. Parents are typically not only the primary caregivers but also the first educators of their children and for their earliest interactions onwards they are intimately involved in supporting all aspects of their development. (Beveridge, Sally, 2004, p. 93).

From Bronfenbrenner's ecological model we can understand the learning environment and the child living environment should have interrelation; so to facilitate child development parents and teachers are highly responsible.

Spectrums mean complete or wide range of related ideas work is based on the belief that:

Each child exhibits a distinctive profile of cognitive abilities or a spectrum of intelligences. These intelligences are not fixed; rather they can be enhanced by educational opportunities, such as an environment rich with stimulating materials support learning and self expression. The spectrum approach to early childhood education emphasizes the identification of young children's areas of cognitive strengths and the use of this information as the focus for reflecting and evaluating the needs of individual children in the teaching and learning process. (Roopnarin and James, 2005, p. 251).

As a parent or teacher we should identify the children's strengths and use this information to reflect and evaluate the needs of each child in educational-process

The term developmental interaction calls immediate attention to the centrality concept of development, the ways in which children's modes of apprehending, understanding and responding to the world change and grow as consequence of their continuing experience of living. The term interaction refers to the tent that thinking and emotion are interconnected, interacting spheres of development; and it highlights the focus on the importance of engagement with the environment of people and the material world. (Roopnarin and James, 2005, p. 280).

The developmental interaction approaches goes back to John Dewey philosopher, psychologist and educator. Dewey believes school learning should be connected to children's lives in meaningful ways. The interaction model reflects through; the continuous experience of living, understanding, responding to the world change and growth. The interaction model emphasizes link between the environment, the society and material world. Thus, inclusive education at early childhood pre-school must assess individual child and environmental interaction.

According to Mulat Snishaw (2009), the interaction model is most useful for examining inclusion because it considers the individual, the environment and the interaction between the two. Under this model, service strategies require the shared responsibility of the total

community. Hence many community sectors provide different but complementary kinds of services or interventions that are essential for helping the individual to maximize in to his or her potential. Consequently, I have used the interaction model and related models as a frame work to explore the situation of children with special needs and the environment with their proper interaction in Enat Pre-school.

1.4 Significance of the study

Early childhood care and education in inclusive setting is a base for quality education. So understanding individual diversity, offering opportunities to have individual and group learning at early stage and making the class accessible to all children is what inclusive educational setting means. If inclusion starts at early childhood period, this prepares for an inclusive community with no more cost of time, money and human manpower compared to providing inclusion later in upper class levels when they grow up with it. Inclusion, partnership and friendship can be developed easily and progressively with no more effort.

Therefore, this study aimed at investigating the move towards inclusive education in pre-schools, identifying the problems of attitudinal influences towards inclusion and identifying cooperation of pre-schools to exchange experience so the study had the following significance:

- It is helpful for teachers and parents in the sample school to understand and become familiar with inclusive school practice.
- It identifies attitudinal influence and training gaps that make difficulties towards early childhood inclusive education.
- It offers suggestions and conclusions that may contribute to find solution to support pre-schools to move towards inclusive education.
- It may help other educators and researchers for further research in the area.

1.5 Operational definitions of terms

Early childhood children: - In this study, it refers to children who are not enrolled in primary-school, yet between age 4 and 6 years at Enat pre-school

Step towards inclusive education: - Refers to moving towards inclusion and understand each child's individual needs to have all children learn together in a least restrictive environment.

Early childhood education/ Pre-school education /kindergarten education:

Encompasses provision of education, capturing learning through early stimulation, guidance and arrange of developmental activities and opportunities before elementary school that is in Enat pre-school.

Inclusive education: - Welcoming all children to learn in a least restrictive environment of Enat pre-school, accepting diversity of all, helping each child with conducive educational setting.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of related literature

2.1 Development of pre-school education

The Swiss educator Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) developed a system he called elementary education designed to integrate physical, mental and moral development through the exercise of sense observation and reflection. (Roopnorine and Johnson, 2005, p.4).

In the same way Mccorthy and Hounston, (1980), Feency, et al. (1987) explained Pestalozzi devoted his life to education, particularly for the orphaned and poor: he developed home for the poor and a school for refugees. He believed that education should be based on the natural development of children and that every child was capable of learning; he rejected the practice of memorization and recommended that sensory exploration and observation is the basis of learning (as cited in Haile G/Silase, 2010, p.11).

Here it was the time modern ECCE was diverted its simply imposing adult's knowledge to the natural development of children. ECE has been changed from memorizing and lecture teaching to practical activities and to the child center. This gives base to inclusive ECE.

Pestalozzi writes of the schoolchildren:

Work and play are all one for him, his games are his work; he knows no difference. He brings to everything the cheerfulness of his interest the charm of freedom, and he shows the bent of his own mind and the extent of his knowledge. The preparation of the environment to resemble the home was of prime importance in setting the stage for children's experiential learning. He believed that a home like environment first and for most created a climate of emotional security, the first principle of education. (as cited in Roopnarine and James, 2005, p. 5-6).

According to the quotation, children learn through playing in their immediate environments; their play is their change, progress mentally and physically.

Friedrich Wilhelm Froebel (1782-1852) a German philosopher was concerned with the education of children of three through six ages. Froebel

and Rousseau French philosopher took the view children are naturally good, and their goodness could be harnessed through nurture, care and appropriate education. (Wood and Attfield, 2005, p. 29)

They created new visions on childhood, changed entrenched attitudes towards children and developed appropriate provision for their development care and education where freedom to learn could be combined with appropriate nurturing and guidance. By opening the first kindergarten (children's garden) in 1837, Froebel created a change with the emerging field of early childhood education. Froebel understood and respected the nature of young children.

He accepted and believed that children learned best through active involvement. He designed special play materials and introduced the idea of associating actions with singing songs. Therefore pre-school education from its beginning (in the time of Froebel) employed active learning- teaching methods in its practice and the implementers used this method of teaching.

Some of the educational principles and practices found in today's kindergarten are outgrowth of Froebel's thinking and teaching. Supporting this idea, Bruce (1991) described that Froebel's emphasis on learning through play is strongly supported and music, stories and games have been continued to be significant components of kindergarten programming others followed Froebel and continued to the evolutionary process and the concept of kindergarten.

Maria Montessori 1870-1952 is a pediatric doctor thus a specialist in the training of disadvantaged children and those with special needs. She has done many studies on the development of childhood education through her life. After she left engineering discipline Montessori studied medicine and work in hospitals for children. In 1897 Montessori has a revelation. "I felt that mental deficiency presented chiefly a pedagogical, rather than mainly a medical problem." (Montessori, 1870 -1952, Early life in Italy) Then she wanted to train children in Pre School. Given her new insights she began to transfer her time towards perfecting education. She wanted to use nature in the school in order to meet the real needs of children. She develops an educational theory, which combined ideas of scholar Froebel, anthropologist Givseooe Sergi, French physicians Jean Itard and Eduard Segueing. She was often heard saying. "*I studied my children, and they taught me how to teach them.*"

(Montessori, 1870 -1952, Early life in Italy). She believed that the learning environment was just as important as the learning itself. The optimal conditions around children allow for and support their true natural development. Enrolment must be prepared with particular series of scientifically developed materials, the equipments that are consistently organized by subject degree of difficulty and complexity. All materials are displayed on open shelving and are freely available, independent use, to stimulate their natural instincts and interest for self directing. (Montessori, 1870 -1952, Early life in Italy).

Montessori believed that education ought to be developmentally- oriented and each child should develop in self –discipline independence, and self-direction. Montessori trained a number of teachers how to teach children all over the world. The teacher's role is to observe children engaged in activities that follow their own natural interest. The teacher determines when a child is ready for a new challenge which is followed by a lesson or presentation. She also explained that children make mistakes, they may spill something or drop food unintentionally, etc. there is no need to raise your voice. Instead calmly recognize the mistake. There is no need to blatantly point out a child's mistake, there is away to make them realize it. (Montessori, 1870 -1952, Early life in Italy).

From her practice about educating children, we can understand that, the students learn through activities that involve exploration, manipulations, orders, repetition, obstruction, and communication. The teacher has to encourage children to use their senses to explore and manipulate materials in their immediate environment. The teacher's first duty is to watch over the environment, and this takes precedence over all the rest. Rooms are child sized or prepared to children have individual learning and activities are set up for success, it also allows freedom of movement and of choice. The environment has to be ready and beautiful for the child that it invites them to work, their play is their work and they are still enjoying it.

Mccorthory and Houston, (1980). Feeney, Christenson and Morvciket, (1987) explained:

Here it can be said that early childhood education is a fairly new field, though it has old roots. It has developed out of along historical tradition. Many of the significant aspects and practice found in today's program were suggested by philosophers, writers, and teachers of the past (as cited in Haile G/Silase, 2010, p. 10).

2.2 Inaccessibility of pre-schools

MOE, (2009); explained Pre-school program services begin in early age of four through the service varies with types and degree of disability. Pre-school education prepares children for the primary education and supports their physical and mental development of child. The number of pre schools when compared to the number of children eligible to attend the program in Ethiopia is inadequate. The private pre-schools, currently in state of rapid increase, are accessible only to average and high economic status families as the tuition fee are very expensive. In addition, these schools are not open for children with disabilities. The emerging pre schools have diversified curriculum isolated from one another and lack formulated interaction, dialogue and cooperation among themselves. Most of the programs lack some of quality indicators such as developmental appropriateness and culturally responsiveness in terms of relevant material, activities, and trainee personnel.

The Ethiopian education and training policy (1994) ensure the importance of early childhood establishment to promote their full development. However, the effort made by the government to strengthen and expanding pre-schools is negligible. It is concentrated in Addis Ababa but it is less in rural part of the country.

2.3 Provision of early childhood education

ECE needs all stakeholders' participation. It also asks strategic plan to implement in a way which addresses each child need. So the way to practice inclusive early childhood education has explained in research studies. For instance Heward and Orlansky, (1988) explained:

Development research has show the importance of cognitive, physical and emotional development of appropriate exposure to learning experience

during early childhood. Training of mother and community groups can help in providing information and promoting beneficial outcomes, and for example reducing isolation of families facing barriers to greater involvement of their children in early educational experience. Moreover early education serves as a foundation for early intervention. For example, earlier a hearing impairment has a chance to receive treatment and thus developing good social relationships (UNESCO, 2008, p. 156).

From this we can suggest that early childhood education should run with intimate relation of parents' participation. And the strategic plan of ECE should practice all over the country as MOE (2009) strategic plan says "*informal modalities will be used to reach children in rural and pastoralist communities.*" (MOE, 2009, p. 8). It is planned training of teachers should be widen in colleges and universities, especially teachers of special needs education.

Tirussew, (1995) explained

It is therefore, educationally and psychologically recommendable that integration of children with disabilities starts as early of possible pre-school years in order to facilitate the unfolding potentials of children with disabilities. This process at the same time helps, to increase primary school enrollment rates as well as to reduce the incidence of disability. (as cited in Bizuneh Kebu, 2008, p.31)

Before intervention early identification and assessment are needed. In early identification parents, caregivers and teachers can play a vital role. Assessment means a process of collecting data for the purpose of making decision about children. It is comprehensive understanding of the children academic, behavioral or physical problem according to the degree of disability. Assessment is dynamic and ongoing. Assessment team need to be engaged in extensive assessment to determine whether a child has developmental disorders. Based on the severity the child should be referred for medical, psychological assessment and critical observation can be implemented in school and at home. It helps to early intervention and seeks solution to the problem. So, to practice early assessment pre-school teachers, parents and caregivers should train how to identify their children problem as early as possible.

2.4 Parents' and pre-school community relation and roles

Parents of children with disabilities are often the strongest advocates for the rights of children with disabilities to access education. They ought to have support to achieve their objectives. However, many parents are unaware that their children with disabilities have a right to attend their neighborhood schools. Indeed, the interests or objectives of parents may not always correspond with the needs and interests of their children. Parents need help to organize themselves as a group, and to challenge exclusionary practices in education. Where possible, parents of children with disabilities should be supported to work in partnership with organizations of people with disabilities, and other community-based groups, in advocating for these rights.

Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank and Smith, (2004) explained

"Parents have concepts related to the availability of qualified educators and individualized services and they are frustrated about having to work hard to get the schools to provide inclusive programs.

- 1. The majority of parents appear to be positive about inclusive placement*
- 2. Parents perceive that general educational class rooms as constructed to more special cited setting do a better jobs if improving their Childs self concept enabling friendships making their child happier and more confident helping their child develop academically and preparing their child for the real world."* (Turnbull.R, Turnbull.A, Shank and Smith, 2004, p. 32).

When we see parents perspective in the study area, since most parents need children labor for housekeeping and cow keeping they are not able decide whether their child learn in inclusive setting or not. Most accept their children should learn in inclusive setting. Others might influenced by negative attitudes about their child disability.

As described by Chowdhury and Choudhury (2002) *"parents play a major role in a successful pre-school education through proper understanding of their children and assisting them as and when required"* (as cited in Haile G/Silase, 2010, p.32). Parents must

try to understand the child's natural curiosity and accordingly allow him or her to explore, investigate and learn freely.

"Home-school relationships have an essential role to play in promoting children's educational progress. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1977) demonstrates that children's need at school cannot be seen in isolation from their learning in other settings, the first and most significant is their home and family. Parents are not only the primary caregivers but also the first educators of their children and for their earliest interactions onwards they are intimately involved in supporting all aspects of their development."
(Sally, 2005, p. 93)

Here we can understand how home environment should be similar to Pre-School; mean that the parents should treat children as their teachers or the parents should handle children as preschool teachers help them how to assist children after school. The successful education of children with special needs is dependent up on the full involvement for their parents: indeed, unless the parents are seen as equal partners in the preschool educational process will not success. Generally there should be interaction between the school and the home.

Forest and Pierpoint, (1991) explained.

"Inclusion is a movement of parents, educators, and community members that seek to create schools and other social institutions that are based on acceptance, belonging and community. It designed to alter the philosophy for educating all students who challenge the system." (as cited in Abrham Silesh, 2009, p. 10).

The MOE (2009) give the responsibility to the parents and caregivers as they are important persons to inculcate life principles, spiritual and moral values development. But when we see experience of some parents they do not pay attention to education of their children. They simply leave the responsibility to the teachers only; In relation to this idea Haile G/Silase (2010) state "The parent involvement in the pre schools has been low as compared to the number of children found in the pre schools. Limited numbers of parents have made contact with the teachers about their children's learning."(Haile G/Silase 2010, p. 71)

2.5 Principles of inclusive education

Inclusive education is a concept that seeks to embrace all students in the school community. The idea is especially applicable to students with disabilities, who had long been placed in special classrooms and kept apart from other students in the school. It is incorporating students with special needs into the mainstream curricula and educating all children in regular classrooms, regardless of the nature of their condition. Principles of inclusive education ensure that students with learning disabilities are able to study and interact with all teachers, students, and administration on an equal basis.

Principles for promoting Inclusive Education should practice

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1) Change in system | 5) Children's participation |
| 2) Schools | 6) Community participation |
| 3) Changes in managing schools | 7) Accessibility of Schools and Materials |
| 4) Teachers | |

1. Change in system

Before planning and implementing an inclusive education program, it is important to gain an overview of the whole education system to identify where change is needed. The importance is to collaborate with partners to achieve the goal of realizing inclusive education and the support of government and legislations. Education policies addressing the needs of all marginalized groups in society are likely to be more successful.

An inclusive education system can be justified according to the following arguments:

- 1) There is an educational justification; the requirement for inclusive schools to educate all children together means, that they have to develop ways of teaching that respond to individual differences and thus benefit all children.
- 2) There is a social justification; inclusive schools are able to change attitudes to difference by educating all children together and form the basis for a just and non-discriminatory society
- 3) There is an economic justification; it is likely to be less costly to establish and maintain schools which educate all children together than to set up a complex system of different types of school specializing in different groups of children. If, of course, these inclusive

schools offer an effective education to all of their students, then they are also a more cost-effective means of delivering Education for All.

Accepting responsibility

In an inclusive system it is recognized that schools have an important part to play in children not attending and not learning. School systems need to accept responsibility for children's learning by making their systems and methodologies more relevant and responsive to children's needs.

2. Schools

Adopt a whole-school approach

Schools need to be encouraged to become self-sufficient in responding to children who are marginalized, for whatever reason. In the 'whole-school' approach, all staff members are involved in promoting inclusive practices. Too often in schools, this is the responsibility of only one or two particular members of staff. Promoting a whole-school approach is particularly important in rural areas, which are more likely to be isolated from additional support systems. All members of staff within the school need training and awareness-raising about the inclusion of children with disability, and good leadership is needed from education managers.

Pilot schools

"Many countries trying to establish an inclusive system have found that the development of a pilot school is useful. The pilot can be used to demonstrate the benefits of inclusion to other schools, education managers, head teachers and communities. It can also serve as a resource base for the practical training of teachers. Once the pilot proves to be effective, the methods used can be introduced on a wider scale." (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0009/000968/096884ev.pdf> retrieved on 7/5/2011)

3. Managing schools

Good management is essential when educational changes are introduced. Local education managers, and head teachers, can ensure that schools are well supported, and can help develop networks between schools. To promote more inclusive practices in schools, education managers can ensure that teachers are not overloaded. Careful planning by managers ensures that teachers have manageable workloads. This includes issues such as

class size, and number of children identified as having impairments or difficulties in learning.

Allocate time for teachers to observe each other

One of the most effective ways of improving teachers' practice, and encouraging them to be more flexible and creative is to enable them to observe each other. Managers need to priorities this in their planning, and ensure that teachers have opportunities to reflect upon their experience. This is a valuable form of in-service training. They also need to provide ongoing support for teachers who are beginning to work in new ways.

Promote multi-sect oral collaboration

"Co-operation with other relevant sectors is an essential part of the management of inclusive education (e.g. health or social services). It is possible that children with disability and their families may be receiving services from a variety of sources." (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001252/125237eo.pdf> retrieved on 7/5/2011)

4 Teachers' responsibilities

Teachers need to understand, and accept, that it is their responsibility to teach all children, since all children have a right to education. Motivating teachers to take on this responsibility can be the key to success. Once they are motivated, they will need regular practical support and constructive feedback. Reward systems can be useful to sustain the commitment of teachers who show additional skills, but this should be through existing systems of promotion and grading. Being recognized as a creative teacher and seeing children with disabilities achieve results will, in itself, be rewarding for a teacher.

Teaching methodology

The majority of teachers find it difficult to adapt their style to one that promotes more active, child-centered methods. Changes in teaching methods could include rearranging the classroom, so that children can work in small groups; encouraging more academically able, children are assigned to work with those experiencing difficulties; introducing locally available materials for play activities, or teaching math's and new vocabulary. Teachers need opportunities to try out new methods, share ideas, and observe other teachers using different methods.

(http://www2.unescobkk.org/elib/publications/095/Teaching_Large_Classes.pdf
f retrieved on 7/5/2011)

5. Children's participation: Child-to-child methodology

Children are a valuable and often under-used resource in education. They are usually far more accepting of disability than their teachers and parents. The child-to child approach is an extremely effective way of mobilizing children's participation. Children have been actively involved in challenging negative attitudes in their communities towards disability, identifying children who are excluded from school, carrying or pushing physically disabled children to school, writing notes for deaf children in class, tutoring disabled children in their homes. Children can conduct surveys in their communities with the specific aims of identifying disabled children with disabilities, and influencing their parents to allow them to attend school.

6. Community involvement in education

An inclusive pre-school program must foster a collaborative relationship between teachers and family members to ensure high quality care for children and support parents as contributors to the program. There are many community members who can contribute to the development of inclusive education: CBR workers, community elders, religious leaders, parents, and children themselves. Making use of locally available human and material resources helps to develop links between schools, families and communities, as well as promoting community ownership of inclusive education programs. The long-term goal is to promote inclusion in society as a whole.

7. Accessibility of Schools and Materials

To contribute to the development of inclusive education, the first primary needs are to make mainstream schools accessible and to have adapted materials for the children with special needs. In this way they can fully participate and be part of the inclusive practices.

Inclusive pre-school program: *First*, all parents must be given the opportunity to choose from among high-quality programs within the universal pre-school system. *Second*, all aspects of a system or program must meet families' linguistic and cultural needs.

Curriculum flexibility and Classroom Practices:

An inclusive preschool curriculum must be effective for all children. Where there is a flexible curriculum, all children have a chance to learn and benefit from education, and their achievements can be recognized. It needs developmentally, culturally, linguistically, and age appropriate. Be flexible in using accommodations and adaptations that will allow integration of children of varying abilities. It must promote individualized and differentiated instruction incorporate the goals and strategies written in a child's IEP.

Personnel development: An inclusive preschool program must employ, develop, and keep a workers that understands the importance of the relationship among children, family members, and staff and possesses the capacity and qualifications to serve, relate to, and advocate for a broad range of children. The program must integrate qualifications to serve children with disabilities and other special needs into the overall definition of qualifications and ensure that institutes of pre-school offer classes to reach this goal. Train education personnel in inclusion principles and practices, implementation of these principles and practices within the whole system, how to build partnerships with families and how to work with all the child's service providers. Training must: include a working knowledge of the relevant laws and regulations that applies to educating children with disabilities and other special needs. Include both "specialized" providers who also have knowledge of how to work in groups and general education teachers who know how to work with children with disabilities and other special needs. Include direct experience in inclusion settings. involve service providers and educators who work with children with special needs in planning preschool programs. Make ongoing support and joint training available to teachers, parents, and service providers to promote integration of all services and service providers into the preschool setting. Provide opportunities for the personnel to develop best practices for accommodating children with different abilities. Ensure that staff receives support from their supervision in their work with families including time for reflective supervision.

Screening: An inclusive preschool program must run screening every child who enrolls to school; identify and understand the child's overall individual needs as well as to identify disabilities and other special needs.

Assessment: An inclusive preschool system must ensure that children need not "fail" before receiving services. Undertake early assessment and appropriate intervention for all children

who may be at risk. Engage families in proactive assessment of their child's progress with existing supports in the current setting. Use multiple high quality assessment tools and measures that have adequate specificity, validity, reliability, and are aligned with curriculum goals; have been standardized on diverse populations, and are developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate. Ensure that accommodations are made available for children during assessments.

Financing: An inclusive preschool program must have sufficient financing in place to provide necessary services, facilitating buildings, instructional materials, out and indoor equipments.

Evaluation: An inclusive preschool program must evaluate its success on an ongoing basis to ensure that it is meeting the needs of all children. It must ensure that tools used to determine program quality or an individual child's progress includes measures of full inclusion of children with disabilities and other special needs. Ensure that evaluation integrates requirements from different systems (e.g., federal and state requirements). Ensure that overall program funding and contract decisions are based on the evaluation of the program and not the assessment of individual children. Ensure that program evaluation does not limit access for families with children with disabilities and other special needs. Use or develop evaluation tools that are appropriate for preschool programs. Ensure that families have opportunities to participate in ongoing evaluation. Ensure that programs have a process through which outcomes from evaluations can be incorporated.

Abirham Silesh, (2009) explained:

Inclusive education aims to restructure schools in order to respond to the learning needs of all children. Inclusion school, in the first instance, recognizes that special learning needs can arise from social, psychological, economic, linguistic, and cultural as well as disability factors. Second, it recognizes that any child can experience difficulties in learning, short-lived or long term, at any time during the school career; therefore the school must continually review itself to meet the needs of all its learners (Abrham Silesh, 2009, p. 10)

From the above explanation we can understand inclusion is the process of allowing all children to fully participate in regular class room activities regardless of disabilities, race, or other characteristics. It involves providing a variety of activities and experiences so that all students can participate and successful in regular classroom of their neighborhood school. Inclusion is a more comprehensive term and emphasizes the addition of specially designed activities that engaged all students collectively. Generally it is the way of teaching all students in least restrictive environment.

Eklindh and Brule Balescut (2006) stated:

Inclusion is about the children's right to participate and the school's duty to accept and ensure this right. It is thus about rejecting exclusion of learners for any reason maximizing the participation of all learners, making learning more meaning full for all children, and rethinking and restructuring school policies curricula and practices so that all learning needs can be met. (cited in Abrham Silesh, 2009, p. 11).

In the same way Ethiopian pre-schools should accept the rights of all children. Teachers should understand that everyone can learn in a place which is appropriate to his or her needs.

2.6 Early childhood inclusive education

There are essentially two crucial periods of brain development; the critical period and the sensitive period. Critical periods represent a time when a particular part of the body is most easily influenced or vulnerable to the lack of stimulation or to environmental effects. On the other hand a sensitive period refers to opportunity for certain types of learning. To provide these cognitive stages properly to children early childhood inclusive education is a vital activity. Because if children with disabilities learn with children without disabilities in early stage; they change their cognitive development and social interaction when compared to the later ages.

When we see inclusion in kindergartens, early childhood education is a support system for children with development disabilities or delays or children at risk for their families. Early childhood education refers to capturing learning

through early stimulation, guidance and arrange of development activities and opportunities. All young children must be nurtured in safe and caring environment that allow them to become healthy ,alert and secure and be able to learn. So, early childhood education is one intervention method for enhancing the later academic success of young children. (UNESCO, 2008, p. 56).

Early childhood education in inclusive setting creates a chance for an early inclusive society and inclusive community; and prevents discrimination. So identifying children before eligible and after school is important to make the learning environment which addresses the children individual needs.

Schroth, Mooraman and Fullwood (1997) defined inclusion “as the provision of educational services to students with a full range of abilities and disabilities in the general education classroom with appropriate in class support.” (as cited in Annual Edition, 98/99 Early Childhood Education, p. 98).

Stainback, Stainback, Jackson (1992) stated:

A community striving to practice inclusive education attempt to structure a school environment where the needs of every student are accommodated and success is fostered for all. All children regardless the type or intensity of their perceived educational, physical or psychological challenge are valued; and school personnel, family members and friends work together to develop and support caring learning communities that nurture friendships and commitments among their member. Inclusive education is seen as a process of operating a class room or school as supportive community. (as cited in Catherine Clark et al, 1995, p. 147)

From this we can understand to what extent the community, parents and teachers work to have an inclusive pre-school which addresses each child's need. But in Injibara pre-schools there is teacher's gap of understanding how to create welcoming school environment and collaboration of parents, teachers and experts.

For instance; Thomas and Webb defined inclusive school:

An inclusive school reflects the community as a whole. Membership of the school community is open, positive and diverse. It is not selective, executive or rejecting. It is barriers free an inclusive school is accessible to all who become members, physically in terms of the buildings and grounds and educationally in terms of curricula support system and methods of communication. It promotes collaboration; an inclusive school works with rather than competitively against other schools it promotes equality; an inclusive school is a democracy (as cited in Ababu Teshome, 2009, pp.25-26).

Parents, the community, the pre schools and the government are investing their money, time and manpower to educate children and make them good citizens. So as mentioned earlier by different authors, collaboration of community members helps to have inclusive early childhood education. It is important to the pre-school program being inclusive and welcoming environment.

Mather and Rekkas explained that:

Inclusive education demands that the teachers are innovative flexible, creative, ready to learn from the learners and capable of initiating active learning. These are some of the pedagogical challenges facing ordinary class teachers teaching students with diverse educational needs. (as cited in Abraham Silshi, 2009, p.18).

But many teachers of ECE in Ethiopia do not understand individual needs of learners; they are not well trained in active learning. They lack flexibility and creativity; they impose their thought to students instead of learning from learners. For instance MOE (2009) ECCE policy explained “*the situational analysis of 2007 ECE indicates that lack of proper training of ECE practitioners, lack of culturally relevant and appropriate teaching and learning materials as well as limited infrastructure and none of national curriculum affects ECE quality.*” (MOE, 2009, p.4.)

Radda Barnen (1996) explained

Studies have shown that children develop better physically, psychologically and socially if they learn together with other children. Similarly families have shown

preference to the acceptance of all children with in the same school and programs.
(as cited in ENAMRCY 2007, p.3).

The follow up of teachers and parents on children together with the events, places and the cultural context in which children grow up are of prime importance to their development. The social relationships children engaged in may cultivate development or constrain and damage it.

Spectrums work is based on the belief that each child exhibits a distinctive profile of cognitive abilities or a spectrum of intelligences. These intelligences are not fixed; rather they can be enhanced by educational opportunities, such as an environment rich with stimulating materials that support learning and self expression. (as cited in Roopnarine and James, 2005, p. 251).

The spectrum approach to early education emphasizes the identification of young children's areas of cognitive strengths and the use of this information as the focus for reflecting and evaluating the needs of individual children in the teaching and learning process. So as a teacher we should understand each child interest and guide them by following their intent interest which leads them to new creativity and exploration.

2.7 Challenges to implement inclusive early childhood education

Children with disabilities including pre-school aged children need to have individualized Education Plan (IEP) if necessary and decided by IEP team. As U.S. Department of Education my child's special needs a guide to the individualized education Program <http://www2.ed.gov/parents/needs/spced/iepguide/index.html#preface> explains "*pre-school child, who receives special education and related services, can get quality education and be participant in teaching learning practices.*"

Hallahn and Kauffman(1989) explained:

Students with complex disabilities typically require a wide array of related services as well as special education. The IEP for such students tend to be particularly specific and detailed. The instructional goals and objectives often include seemingly minute steps especially for young children with severe handicaps. (p.388, 390)

IEP must be designed for one student and must be a truly individualized document. The IEP creates an opportunity for teachers, parents, school administration related services personnel, and students to work together to improve educational results for children with disabilities. An IEP is important to provide quality education for each child with disability because based on the IEP the teacher and team can get solution to each child needs and interest.

Concerning this; Fields, 1995 in Joann Belk (2005) explained

There are some concerns that need special attention when including students with disabilities in the early childhood classrooms. When inclusion children are placed in the regular classrooms the teachers are required to provide individualized instruction for the inclusion children. This may take away time the teacher is able to spend with the other children. Placing the inclusion child in the regular classroom provides group interaction and feeling of universality for the child as the students accept each other, they recognize common problems and work cooperatively to solve those problems. It is also import for the teacher to model acceptance of the inclusion children in early childhood programs. It is the responsibility of all educators to increase their knowledge of early child hood education and develop an awareness of their responsibilities to all children. (Joann Belk, 2005, Para. 3- 4)

Early childhood educators need help in providing the best possible instruction for all children, including children with disabilities who will be placed in the regular classrooms. But when we come to Ethiopian ECE; in pre-schools, identification and assessing of children with disabilities is not implemented. For instance MOE (2009) policy of ECCE explains “as identified in 2007, study lack of proper training of pre-school teachers, lack of standard curriculum, non-existence of alternative care and education service for the majority the children population in the rural areas are main problems of ECCE.” (MOE 2009, policy of ECCE, p.11). Since there are no well trained teachers in SNE, without understanding students with disabilities there are a number of students in pre-school classroom. So there is no IEP which address the needs of each learner children are not getting necessary education.

Best, 2005; Romana, 2002 explained:

Educating children with hearing impairment in an inclusive class has a number of problems. Negative attitudes of adults such as special education personnel, community, early childhood program personnel or parents towards inclusion can create difficult in inclusive services delivery competing philosophies concerning effective education services for CWHI i.e. appropriate placement and curricular discipline also affect attitudes. The differences may among the early childhood educators and early childhood special educators (as cited in Hailemicale G/Takle, 2009, p. 23).

From these we can understand in pre-schools there is a wide gap to implement inclusive education. Lack of collaboration from administrators, policy makers, professionals and parents are also main problems; mean that local education sectors, teachers and parents don't cooperate with each other for the development of pre schools.

Turnbull and Carpenter (1991) (cited in Tirussew 2000) also identified a link between teacher's perceptions and those of students. *"Teacher's attitude not only set the tone for the relationship between teachers and students with disabilities, but also had substantial influence on the attitude of those students without disabilities."*(ENAMRCY, 2007, P.4).

Tirussew (2000) also stated:

the challenge towards inclusive education could emanate from difference directions such as negative attitude towards persons with disabilities, rigid school system, resistance to change, lack of clear educational guide lines inadequate resourced and fear of losing one's job on the part of special school teachers (Tirussew 2000, p. 301).

Providing education for all requires identifying barriers that hinder learning, and reducing or removing these barriers in early education and other educational levels is important. In line with international declarations, conventions and polices, Ethiopian Constitution (Article 41 and 91) established the universal right to education, allocate resources and provide assistance to disadvantaged groups.MOE,(2001) The Education and Training Policy

explained "*Expansion of quality primary education to all citizens is not only a right but also a guarantee for development.*"(MOE, 2001, P. 77)

But as MOE (2009) and other studies stated; when we observe practical implementation of the policy and strategies there is a wide gap. The provision of inclusive education in pre-schools is not well designed and organized. Teachers are not working in collaboration with family and other professionals. The training of special needs education teachers is the other problem.

As MOE (2009) ECCE policy and UNSCO (2008) mention employment of teachers on contract; receive below salaries and limited or no professional training make Progress towards the ECCE be slow. Especially as it relates to reaching marginalized populations.

From the above explanations it can be concluded that in pre-schools there are teacher who employed below salary that do not motivate them to do more to the development of pre-school education. This is a problem especially to the private pre-schools because the private pre schools employ teachers by negotiable salary which is profitable to the owners and the lowest salary scale in MOE profession is preschool teachers.

2.8 Importance of promoting inclusive education in pre-schools

Radda Barnen, (1996) explained inclusive education is an instrument for promoting human rights and promoting and reinforcing principles spelled out by international convention and other key documents such as the 1994 Salamanca Declaration referring to every child had a fundamental right to education and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning. Through researches as Radda Barnen's statement it has been proven that children develop better physically psychologically and socially if they learn together with other children (ENAMRCY, 2007, p. 46).

Smith et al. (1983), Gearhart et al. (1988), Heward and Ornlansky, (1988), Yesseldyk and Algozine, (1995), stated that in the inclusive setting the special support children with disabilities require in the classroom, may range from minor modification such as altering setting arrangement to major adaptation and considerable assistance. (as cited in Tirussew

Teffera, 2000, P. 299)

Pre-school inclusive education gives an opportunity to children with disabilities to share with their peers who are 'different' in one way or another and to learn to accept and respect these differences. Students with disabilities, on their turn have the opportunity to become part of the school community and get a realistic idea of what a multiform and competitive society looks like as well as their own possibilities and limitations. This indicates that the pre-school should be socially or physically appropriate to welcome in all children, approve equality. This might be assured by changing the school environment from minor modification to major ones.

2.9 Characteristics of inclusive education

According to Booth and Ainscow (2000) and Julka (2006) inclusive education has the following characteristics:

- *A dynamic process that is constantly evolving*
- *Part of wider strategy to promote inclusive society*
- *Valuing all students and staff equally*
- *Increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from the cultures, and communities of local schools.*
- *Restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in schools so that they respond to the diversity of students in the locality*
- *Reducing barriers to learning and participation for all students, not only those with impairments or those who are categorized as having special education needs*
- *Learning from attempts to overcome barriers to the access and participation of particular students to make changes for the benefit of students more widely.*
- *Viewing the difference between students as resources to support learning rather than as problems to be overcome.*
- *Acknowledge the right of students to education in their locality.*
- *Fostering mutually sustaining relationships between schools and communities.*
- *Emphasizing the role of schools in building community and developing values, as*

well as increasing achievement.

- *Recognizing that inclusion in education is one aspect of inclusion in society.* (as cited in [http://www.spannj.org/Basicrights/least restrictive- environment htm](http://www.spannj.org/Basicrights/least%20restrictive-environment.htm) retrieved 2010/12/21.)

Inclusive education is an ongoing process and strategy to promote inclusive society, pre schools must acknowledge diversity and accept all children. In order to implement inclusive education there should be great relation between preschools, community and the society. Children have right to learn in surrounding environment with no discrimination. So, identifying barriers to implement inclusive education and trying to solve these problems is the way to a step towards inclusive education

Peter, (2003) explained Key elements in the conceptualization inclusion. *Learning how to learn from differences. In this way differences come to be seen more positively as stimulus for fostering learning amongst children and adults.*

- *Inclusion involves a particular emphasis on those groups of learners that are statistically most 'at risk' are carefully monitored, and that where necessary steps are taken encourage their presence, participation and achievement in the education system.*
- *Inclusion is concerned with identification, assessment and removal of barriers. Inclusion is a process it has to be seen as a never ending search to find better ways of responding to diversity. It is about learning how to live with difference and collecting and evaluating information from a wide variety of sources in order to plan for improvements in policy and practice. It is about using evidences of various kinds to stimulate creative and problem solving.*
- *Inclusion is about the presence, participation and achievement of all students. Here 'presence' relates to how reliably and punctually they attend 'participation' relates to the quality of their experience whilst they are there end. Therefore, must incorporate the views of the learners themselves; and 'achievement' is about the outcomes of learning across the curriculum, not merely test or examination results. (as cited in Abrham Silesh, 2009, p.16)*

Inclusive education in early childhood needs identification of barriers continuously and give solution. It needs making ecological assessment mean assessing children's total environment to determine what factors are contributing to learning problems and giving encouragement to children with disabilities to support their strength. So we should understand each child strength and weakness, their presence should be their result of learning.

2.10 Consent of diversity needs

Students with diversity needs in pre-schools require a welcoming environment that celebrates differences, and provides appropriate assessment and supports to backup and maximize their potential valuing.

The goal of Ethiopian educational system is moving towards support provision for students with a diversity of needs and that have different background socio-economic levels, interests, disabilities, and abilities (MOE, 2006, MOE, 2009). From the education, whatever difference the students may have, all students have the right to attend their education without discrimination. In pre schools so there are limited resources, few well-trained teachers, and inaccessible school settings. To manage and meet the diverse needs of learners, it requires screening and identifying the students' characteristics (needs, preferences, backgrounds, potentials) and planning to address their needs and quality of education collaboration with stakeholders. Wood (2002) explained, *"Diversity should not be seen as problems to be overcome, but as rich resource to support the learning for all"* (Ainscow, Mel, 2006, p.25).

The variety of students in classroom can have positive benefits for all learners, as the learners have different experience, skills, knowledge and backgrounds; the teacher serves as a facilitator who provides the right environment and opportunities for all children to learn actively.

2.11 Provision of accessible and flexible pre-school curriculum

UNESCO's work on quality and relevance of education is based on the premise that educational quality and access are intricately linked (UNESCO, 2005). The concept

“education for all” thus question a large part of current schools ways of organizing teaching. Teacher often retain the perspectives gained from their own school experiences. According to the (UNESCO,2005) report Booth and Ainscow, (2000) explained

One way to move towards relevant, balanced set of aims is to analyses the curriculum in terms of inclusion. An inclusive approach to curriculum policy recognizes that while every learner has multiple need even more so invulnerability and disadvantage. Everyone should benefit from a commonly accepted basic level of quality education (as cited in Abrham Shileshi, 2009, p .20).

But when we see the exiting pre-school curriculum it lacks cultural relation to the society and lacks consistency. The curriculum can be handled flexible which can address all children needs. It is necessary to have integration to the community culture and to the environmental real surrounding world.

Booth and Ainscow (2000) explained:

Before inclusive education is practiced; it should be made sure that the special needs of students with disabilities are well understood. Schools often have general common goals regarding what is desirable in terms of pupil's achievement. An inclusive approach seeks to discourage teaching which is based on a criterion of average meaning that some pupils will not be able to keep up while: others will find it 'too easy' and consider the teaching boring. They also explained Instead education for all places the pupil at the center of teaching and learning based on an appreciation of his or her differences in understanding, feeling, social and perceptual skills, etc. These result, all pupils having optimal opportunities for becoming motivated and activated. (as cited in Abrham Shileshi, 2009 , p.22).

However, to implement inclusive education for students with disabilities effectively, easily reached and flexible early childhood education curriculum can serve as the key to creating 'school for all' it is important that the curriculum is flexible enough to provide possibilities for adjustment to individual needs and to stimulate teachers to seek solution that can be

matched with the need and abilities of each and every pupil.

Therefore, the existing curriculum must take into consideration the various needs of students with disabilities to ensure "access for all" the following supportive strategies to be taken in to consideration:

1. Provide a flexible time-frame for students studying a particular preschool.
2. Allotting time for additional assistance for classroom based work.

Together with flexible curriculum, flexible teaching learning methods should be introduced. The success of an inclusive system, which serves all children, depends on the flexible and relevant curriculum that can be adapted to the needs of each learner.

Pre-school curriculum should follow and incorporate play as teaching method as Chazzan (2002) explained positive view of the functions of play.

Playing and growing are synonymous with life itself; playfulness bespeaks creativity and action, change and possibility of transformation. Play activity thus reflects the very existence of the self, that part of the organism that exists both independently and interdependently, that can reflect upon itself and be aware of its own existence. In being playful the child attains a degree of autonomy sustained by representations of his inner and outer worlds. (as cited in Wood and Attfield, 2005, p. 2)

Here allowing children to play helps them to explore their immediate environment. They develop self confidence and it evokes creativity, relaxing. So early childhood education should base teaching by play. Concerning the practice of play Meckley (2002) has drawn definition of play:

1. **Play is child-chose:-** Before children play, they have ideas what they want to play and who they want to play with . They chose materials, activities and other players. They control their own play.
2. **Play is child invented:-** children are always creating something new when they play whether it is a new constriction or a new ideas, or group of ideas.

3. ***Play is pretend but done as if the activity were real:-*** children learn a great deal in pretending with activities and ideal that are like real events but are not real. They develop understanding of cognitive social and emotional concepts by playing with these concepts.
4. ***Play focuses on the doing (process not product)*** play is a basic activity of childhood. The activity of play is where the learning occurs communication is essential to play.
5. ***Play is done by the players (children) not the adult teachers or parents):*** play is something children not only chosen to do but prefers to do. Because children learn through the process of playing, they need plenty of time, materials and other players. Adults cannot plan children play, but can help to plan for the children's play and to support children's own plans.
6. ***Play requires active involvement:*** children's bodies and minds are active in play. Research tells us that the maximum learning occurs when children interacts and co-operate with the environment materials and with others (peers and adults). Play is where the activity of childhood is occurring.
7. ***Play is fun:*** play is fun and enjoyable children choose their activities and playmates, and draw on their own motivator and ideas (cited in Wood and Attfield, 2005, p.4-5).

Preschool teachers should realize what the children want to play and give opportunity to play with safe environment and materials instead of over controlling them, teachers should follow and let them to actively involved in doing playing. Because for children doing is playing. So if the curriculum focuses on the child's need to play the child can understand and recognize what they are learning easily and actively.

2.12 Classroom environment

As Montessori (1870-1952) & Joann Belk (2005) explained, the physical environment of the class room may need to be modified to the welcoming of all students. Furniture may need to be re-arranged to provide more space for pathways for children in wheelchairs. Teachers should be active mobilizes to the settlement of safe class room environment. The environment should let them play unreservedly. In the inclusive classroom students are

doing different things, independently and with others. They are moving from one learning environment to another. The classroom needs to be arranged to allow freedom of movement. Learning centers should be used. These should be used in small groups or with other partners learning centers provide academic and social skills. The classroom should be student-centered. Students should have the opportunities to make choices. This helps develop responsibility. The children should consider the classroom as community in which each student is important and contributes to the success of the community. Generally the classroom environment should fit all children; not the child fit the classroom. Mutual benefit of all children should be approved in inclusive pre-school classroom

2.13 Roles of pre-school teachers in an inclusive classroom

Initially, teachers need to be prepared to deal with children with disabilities Schnailberg (1996) described some ways to help teachers:

- *Organizing in service training for the teachers*
- *Working with a special education consultant to help develop the curriculum for the children.*
- *Providing released time for teachers to attend inclusion conferences*
- *Involve parents in the program*
- *Conferences should be held with parents regularly*

Once the child is placed in the class, one of the first concerns is letting group members get to know each other as away building trust and acceptance. As trust build, group members feel more accepted by the group. To a student with a disability, acceptance is a constant issue (Belk, para. 6)

The school community, educational experts and other stakeholders have responsibility to train pre-school teachers in pre- service and in-service training programs. If they train in conferences and seminars they develop their skill and knowledge how to help children with disabilities and make child centered teaching learning condition.

Stusman (1997) explains after describing his experience of life being special need students and succeeds as a college degree and has a successful career as a technology coordinator. "Do not limit children if children do not perceive barriers, they will amaze you with what they are capable of doing" (as cited in Belk, para. 7).

Limiting children to do what they want has unconstructive effect on children to develop their confidence and exploration. Mean that we teachers and parents better to let children to play and practice. It is better to attend them to play free and guide them to the direction which is important to positive development and carry on them safe.

Smith and Dowdy (1998) stated:

A first grade teacher, Anita .F. Miles,(1998) described how her nephew began to reach many of the important milestones in his life due to the modeling he saw from peers after being placed in a regular classroom. Miles (1998) stated that studies have shown that the development of social skills is often linked to future occupational success or failure .Being placed in regular classrooms allows inclusion students to learn social skills through interaction with their peers. (as cited in Belk, para. 7).

Based on the above explanations through simulations, classroom discussions, and modeling, teachers can help children develop awareness and understanding of their immediate environment.

As Drew, et al (1984) reported:

The classroom teacher is responsible for any adaptation that may be necessary for student's success in the environment; consequently, this teacher must have the skills to develop and adapt curricula to meet individual needs. Necessarily skills for classroom teachers include an understanding of how handicapping condition can affect the ability to learn academic skill or to adapt in social situation. (as cited in Abrham Silesh, 2009, p. 31).

Moreover, Safford, Spodek and Sarach, 1994 explained; "the concern is not merely how a good education can be ensured for students with disabilities, but for all students." (cited in Abrham Silesh, 2009, p.31).

Inclusive early childhood education should not only focus on children with disabilities it should address the needs of all children. The challenge is to find ways to help teachers in pre- schools responding to the diversity of the children in their classroom, accommodate their different styles and rate of learning, meet their specific needs and ensure quality of education for all.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology and Research Design

3.1 Design of the study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate a step towards inclusive education for children in pre-schools. The study has been undertaken by using qualitative research method with descriptive study design.

Because (Bogdon & Biklen, 1992) explained:

Qualitative study design enables the researcher to study a small sample of target group in depth in its natural settings, from the perspectives of participants and observation of the situation in which the researcher is going to describe deeply what s/he observes. (Bogdon & Biklen, 1992, pp. 46-48)

3.2 Population and sampling

3.2.1 Setting of the study

The area which has been chosen to conduct the study is Injibara sub city, Enat Pre-School which is found in AwI zone Amhara region in the direction of North West of A.A at 460 Km in town of Injibara. The reason that the researcher selected this area is the researcher has lived for 18 years these helped him to get available information about the practice of this pre-school.

3.2.1.1 Vision and mission of the pre-school

The pre-school has the vision of:

1. All the community children learn without discrimination of language, ethnicity, colure, sex, culture, religious and disability back ground and assuring cognitive, social, physical, language, emotional and motor developmental change.

With the **mission** of

1. Making the school physical environment accessible to all children.
2. Making the teaching learning practice based on the children interest and individuality
3. Fulfilling the pre-school personnel with qualified teachers at the level and special needs teachers.
4. Involving parents and other stakeholders to participate in children's learning.
5. Making the curriculum flexible and appropriate to each child individual need.
6. Having horizontal and vertical relation with sectors and responsible bodies for experience sharing.
7. Creating the pre-school environment socially accessible to all children and teachers and building well done social interaction.
8. Fulfilling school facilities which are relevant to teaching learning process. (Enat pre-school, 2003, strategic plan,)

Thus the school has been selected purposefully because of the following reasons.

1. The available number of the students and teachers as reported by the school principal compared to other pre- schools as much as necessary in Injibara town.
2. The advantage of getting enough information about the move to inclusive education from the class room teachers because the trained preschool teachers have more than two years of experiences in teaching.
3. The willingness of the school principal and class room teachers motivated the researcher to observe the efforts of including all children of the community and practice of the school towards inclusive education.

3.2.2 Data collection instrument and procedure

In order to obtain adequate information about the school practice, it was very essential to evaluate multiple domain of functioning and obtain the perspectives of informants such as teaching learning process, physical environment, interaction of teachers with students, with parent, attitude of teachers and parents towards inclusion of children with disabilities, curriculum modification, experience sharing, community participation and so on. The participants of the study had been selected purposefully; so as to examine the target

programs of pre-schools to implement inclusive education across its natural context. The main characteristic of qualitative research study design is to focus on the intensive study of specific cases of a phenomenon in depth. Therefore, the researcher has identified one pre-school, three children, three teachers, three parents, one supervisor, two community members and two educational experts at woreda level in Injibara town for the study.

3.2.3 Criteria of selecting the sample

The sampled participants had been selected using purposeful sampling strategies for qualitative studies. Purposive sampling is convenient in the situations when the sample selected is very small and the researcher wants to get same ideas of the population characteristics in a short time. Such a sample is arbitrarily selected because there is good evidence that it is representative of the total population. Canella (1998) explains: "*The most critical voice that is silent in our construction of early childhood education is the children with whom we work our constructions of research have not fostered methods that facilitate hearing their voices.*" (as cited in Amos, 2007, p.168)

So the researcher has selected the samples based on the following criteria.

- Out of the selected teachers, one has pre-school certificate.
- The children who are selected as the samples are CWD and CWOD. So the researcher can get information in both sides.
- The parents who are selected are from different socio economic background so they represent the parents and community members.
- The supervisors and educational experts gave information to the researcher about different supports of these pre-school towards inclusive education.

3.3 Instruments

Employing triangulation approach is highly recommended in qualitative research. Because this approach enables the research to obtain adequate data about the research problem and it also helps the researcher to crosscheck the truth fullness of the data obtained through different data gathering instruments (Mertens, Malaughlin, 1994).

Therefore, in this study observation, interviews and document analysis has been used for gathering data.

3.3.1 Observation

Observation allows a researcher to gather first hand information natural and reliable data in its natural setting and using this method is important to get first hand information. In addition, if used properly, observation methods avoid the inaccuracy and bias of self report data obtained from interviews.

Due to the above mentioned reasons, direct observation had been chosen to gather the necessary data about practices, the step up towards inclusive education of pre-schools in the classroom and playground.

After gathering the necessary preliminary information from the selected teachers concerning the activities step up on towards inclusive education the researcher conducted the class room observation in order to cross-check the truthfulness of the teachers information.

The classroom observation had been conducted from KG one and KG two, class, in three sections for a month and once a week for each class for about 45 minutes totally 180 minutes.

To increase the reliability and validity of the data and to reduce the impact of external factors, the researcher had continuously observed and recorded the occurrence or non occurrence of the situation during each interval/during each observation session. The researcher had employed observation checklist that consists of points that indicate inclusive setting of class room, such as teaching methods, feedbacks, assessment (either formative or summative), physical environment, curriculum modification, instruction materials social relation of students to students, students to teachers (see Appendix E).

The researcher also observed the students' relation among each other in the play ground during their rest time by using another observation checklist that has been used for observation outside class (see Appendix F).

3.3.2 Interview

In order to confirm or prove the data that has been obtained through observation semi-structured interviews had been held in Amharic language with the sampled students, teachers, parents, community members, supervisor and experts.

The researcher also developed open ended questions because these questions give opportunity to the respondents to express their views, beliefs and perspective. After developing interview questions, the interview format had been given to the advisor for correction and further improvements. Then, the semi structured interview which had been prepared in Amharic, conducted with the key informants following the observation. This had been done so as to cross check the truthfulness and consistency of the data obtained through observation.

The interviews were conducted depending on convenience of time and place for both each interviewee and the researcher. The interview with each selected students has been held in class on their free time; the interview with each selected class room pre-school teachers had been held in his or her classroom the interview with each parent who are selected as a sample had been done in the pre-school and the interview with each sample expert and supervisor was conducted in their offices.

By asking the willingness of each respondent, the researcher used tape recorder to record the interview from participants.

3.3.3 Document analysis

Lisa A. Guion (2002) explains Triangulation is an approach to research that uses a combination of more than one research strategy in a single investigation. Triangulation is a powerful technique that facilitates validation of data through cross verification from more than two sources. The idea is that one can be more confident with a result if different methods lead to the same result. By combining multiple observers, data and methods researchers can hope to overcome the weakness or biases and the problems that come from single method or single-observer. The purpose of triangulation in qualitative research is to

increase the credibility and validity of the results. Triangulation is the use of multiple methods of data gathering and using different methods helps to build an in depth understanding of meaning, allowing different analysis to formulate theories and/or code texts independently (and then come to agreement as a group) adds firmness to findings.

So in order to triangulate data from different angles, the researcher also analyses available documents in the school such as children portfolios, rosters, TPA documents, supervisor and educational expert's suggestion documents, and parents comment documents to apply early childhood inclusive education.

From these documents, the researcher gets information about measures taken to make inclusive school in terms of playground, classroom arrangement, instructional materials, curriculum modification etc.

3.4 Methods of data analysis

The data which is collected in the field was not analyzed as soon as it is collected by data collection instruments.

Miles and Huberman, (1994) *explained*:

Qualitative data which is based on observation, interview and documents, are not usually immediately ready for analysis. It rather requires the same processing in that raw field notes need to be corrected, edited, typed up tape recordings need to be transcribed and corrected and documents need to be reduced, organized and categorized (as cited in Birhanu Mekuria, 2010, p. 41).

Therefore, in order to make the data accessible for analysis, the following activities have been done. The result of observation raw field notes had been coded edited and categorized as classroom observation and outside classroom observation and which data is related to which research question. Interview results tape recordings had been transcribed from the recorded tape as stated and then translated from Amharic to English version and categorized as in the list of appendix A-D and reduced, and the data from documents had also been verified, and reduced as what documents are related to environment change or touch

physical barriers and which document talks about children learning process and social progress.

Based on the data of observation, interview and document analysis, each case had been analyzed deeply by integrating according to the research questions, which informant answer relates to which research question, which observation data relates to which research question and which document analysis integrates to which research question. Generally in order to enhance deep understanding and explanation and to see the similarities and difference between each gathered data, cross case analysis mean that the researcher try to integrate parents' teachers, experts and children interview results had be employed.

3.5 Ethics

Ethics is one of the most crucial areas of the research. In this research there was strong positive interaction between researcher and population sample. First of all there was permission of the preschool where study is implemented. The willingness of sample children parents, sample teachers, parents, supervisors and experts had been assured and reached consensus. The researcher mentioned the advantage of the study to the pre-school, educational office, to the students, teachers, and parents and to the whole community. Generally the aim of this research should always be to benefit people. The researcher applied the study based on this ethical principle.

CHAPTER FOUR

Finding analysis and discussions

4.1 Observations

4.1.1 Outside classroom observation of the pre-school and its facilities

An inclusive preschool facility and surrounding environment must meet inclusion goals a priority in allocating funding for facilities development and reformation. It must be accessible to children with varied disabilities and other special needs. It should facilitate the inclusion and promotion of creative, interactive, dramatic social play between children of all abilities and developmental stages. Provide children with diverse opportunities to be creative, to learn, and to grow with structures and supports to encourage collaboration that is safe, fun and educational. Be sensory rich, diverse, and developmentally appropriate for children of varied abilities and include a variety of textures and tactile materials. Incorporating best practices for accessible facilities in all stages of planning and implementation is necessary.

In relation to this Enat pre-school has two compounds at half kilo meter distance of each other. The compounds are near the main roads of Addis Ababa to Bahr Dar and Addis Ababa to Chagni. The compounds are neat. But the compounds are small to the proportion of students; each has about 300 squares meter while the number of students is 100 and 154 total 254 pre-school children. Since the school is near by the main roads, it is exposed to high sound disturbance and exposed to accidents when children go to school and home. The school playground is exposed to high sun shine reflection. It makes them tired easily. No trees around it hinder children from high temperature to play unreservedly. The playground is not with adequate outdoor equipments when it compare with the number of students and in type. The school has fences which protect the preschool children from outdoor exposition. The fences door is mostly locked and there are guards which keep the school throughout the day. The school has toilets which are appropriate to all students, since the steps are flat to ground and the gate is wide enough, the child with wheelchair can use the toilet easily and it is clean.

This pre-school was built in 2000 E.C. The compound was rented from private owners. Now there are two compounds but still the school didn't build on its own site. In the school there

were children who were attending their education from KG one up to KG two 127 girls and 127 boys. From these children with disabilities and children at risk are 16; from these there are twelve children which are helped by an NGO in feeding, clothing, education fee and instructional materials that are at risk, one boy with physical disability, one girl with physical disability, one boy with learning disabilities, and one girl with learning disability because learning disability means significant disorder in attention, memory, comprehension, reasoning, expressing perception, or particular motor coordination caused by neurological dysfunction which results in significant difficulties on listening, speaking, reading, writing, and calculating. The disability may be caused by disability or environmental factors it is difficult to decide on causes. But so they are not able to count numbers of basic mathematics and write letters of Amharic in the level for a semester and long time when compared to the age group we suggest they have learning disability.

Here, although it is difficult to accept the reliability of the screening mechanisms, researcher believes that it can be used as a starting point for promoting the move towards practicing inclusive education.

There were two buildings and 6 rooms which holds KG 1 and KG 2 pre- school children; from these two are offices, the other four are classrooms. The classrooms are furnished with plastic self chairs. There is a big round table which serves children. The height of chairs and tables are proportional to the children. In the school there are no enough classrooms. There is lack of offices and the existing offices are joint with the classrooms sound can pass through easily which is made from the local material. In the school there is light but lack of water supply. Generally the building is not fulfilled minimum requirements. It is not implementing the mission which says making the pre-school physical environment accessible to all children.

As Maria Montessori explained, the environment has to be ready and beautiful for the child that it invites them to work, freedom of movement and choice. Even if the school environment is not ready in all aspects which are necessary to children, in this pre-school there is sleeping room when they are tired and feeding class for lunch even it is not fulfilled, because there are no enough tables and chairs.

Here the corridors of the class rooms are not accessible for students with physical impairments. For instance, in the room that was used for teaching KG 2, a student with

wheelchair has difficulty to get in the school and the class room; so the steps are high at the gate, the mobility assistance of her family and the teacher lift her together to pass through.

The outside activities of children such as playing volleyball, rope jumping, and running were done in cooperative and group. They help each other. For instance, children were tying the shoes of children with physical disability in the play ground and teachers also work cooperatively to show how children play in the field.

4.1.2 Classroom observation

Next to the outdoor observation, the classroom observation was employed to explore what was going on in the classrooms. Similar to the outside environment, the interaction of teachers and students were interesting and motherly. The class room observation was started on 10/01/2011; the class is KG 1 section A 3rd period. The subject was Amharic; in the class room there were 65 children; each child sit on self chair and the table number of all students using was only 4; the children didn't use their exercise book and pen at a time they were memorizing the size of letters one, two, three leg letters in that period.

The class room discipline was good. Children give good greeting to the guest and they pay attention to the lesson. The teacher controls all children towards the lesson but one child was sleep, he is not attending the lesson. The teaching learning process was teacher centered. The teacher explains and asks the size and shape of letters with related pictures. The children were answering together. Students' whole participation and individual participation was very good but group and pair work activities were limited. The sound of lorries and the neighborhood class sound penetrate to the class. The teacher is not teaching by play and practical activities like writing, drawing and etc.

The class room size is too large; the number of children in the classes is 65. It is difficult to implement student centered teaching learning activities. It is difficult to arrange the number of students in group work; so the teacher was not using any teaching aid except drawing the picture on the black board and starting letter of the picture. The methodology may not motivate all students. While she was teaching, some were playing and one child was sleeping this indicates how the teacher was controlling the children.

The other observation sessions are mathematics, physical education and kinesthetic and English periods. In mathematics period the teacher punishes children and doesn't motivate

individual child .In English period the teacher doesn't use well prepared daily lesson plan and teaching aide. I have observed these classes for a month and generally I have observed above 50 students in each class. This great number of children in a class is not easily manageable for inclusive teaching learning class practices. Encouraging and motivating all students as whole group is good, but most teachers teach in a lecture method, they demonstrate and children memorize and repeat. Of course some teachers tried to help children to have experience of writing and follow in table how to hold pen, keep lines when writing.

Most teachers do not use related teaching aids to the lesson except drawing pictures on the black board. For instance in physical education and kinesthetic class, children were jumping on a big wide tyre which all children's leg can't stand on it. But it was possible to have model or real teaching aids which fit to all children's need. In this period the march was sex based, in one row boys and in other row girls. There is no heterogeneous grouping in all classes. Here even if the pre-school vision and mission states the practice of inclusive education teaching learning process to be child centered it is not implemented.

Schnailberg (1996) explains:

Once the child is placed in the class, one of the first concerns is letting group members get to know each other as a way building trust and acceptance. As trust build, group members feel more accepted by the group. To a student with a disability, acceptance is a constant issue. (as cited in Joann Belk, Para. 6)

But I observed all class room setting arrangement is to the front of the black board. This indicates the absence of group learning and peer work in the class. There are no enough tables. Even if teachers have potency to help students, the real helping of students who has difficulty in each period is rare. So the teaching method is lecturing. Equal participation is not given for children. Any children, those who follow the teacher were participating. Those who are slow learners have no chance to participate in the class. Children have no chance to discuss their work equally during the lessons. In mathematics period, I have observed the teacher was punishing students. MOE (2009) ECCE policy states "*school regulations prohibit it any form of Corporal punishment and emotional punishment against children.*" (MOE, 2009, p.10). The teacher should be ready to understand the child's problem and try to find solution.

Textbooks, teacher guide and other supportive books are inadequate. Sub city education office does not provide these curricular materials. Generally, readiness of the teacher, preparing the daily lesson plan and classroom control are problems in order to implement inclusive education. The class room size is too large; the number of children in most classes is more than 50 to implement student centered teaching learning activities. It is difficult to arrange the number of students in group work. Generally, from this classroom observation, the researcher understood that the teachers seem not ready to manage each children interest and individual need because while they were teaching, some were playing and others were sleeping. The number of children in the class is not related to the standard of education bureau which state the number of children in per school should not be more than 20-30. This affects to implement ECE in inclusive setting but the vision and mission of the pre-school says making the curriculum flexible and appropriate to each child individual need and implementing it practically.

Chazzan (2002) explained a positive view of the functions of play. *"Playing and growing are synonymous with life itself. Playfulness increases creativity and action, change and possibility of transformation."* (as cited in Wood and Attfield, 2005, p.2)

Children learn more through playing and practical activities but when researcher observes class room learning, children were ordered to put their hands on their chest and repeat what the class room teacher said. Some teachers gaze at children who want to do their best. This impedes or restricts the interest of each child individual learning and creativity. Teachers tried to give continuous assessment and measure children's progress. Based on the results of continuous assessment they do not give back up to those who have learning disabilities.

To summarize: teaching strategies that I observed were mostly teacher centered i.e. demonstration, lecture, and question and answer teaching techniques. However, in some sections for example in KG 2 section the teacher invites students to work out the questions of basic mathematics on the blackboard which can be arouse the competitiveness of students. Indeed, this might diminish the interest and motivation of children, those students with special needs particularly; students with learning disability and with wheelchair cannot compete to students without disabilities in writing words and calculating basic mathematics on the black board as CWOD. Participative child Mirtinesh said "I know the answer

when the teacher asks; but I can't stand and do on the blackboard as others do always. If I learn in group it was nice to give the answer quickly". Thus, as the pre-school mission explains creating the pre-school environment socially accessible to all children and teachers and building well done social interaction, it might be better to allow children to be individual, in peers and in groups which enable both children with and without disabilities learn together and share their experiences. Consequently, they would develop self-confidence and worthiness, particularly those children with special needs.

4.2 Interview

4.2.1 Discussion of participant's interview

The participants were interviewed in one on one basis. All the names of the participants which are used in this research were pseudonyms for the purpose of privacy and confidentiality. I quoted all their direct sayings and connotations.

In the school there were 7 teachers. Among them, one teacher at KG certificate level, four elementary school certificate level. One teacher has diploma and one teacher has degree. There were also 5 supportive staff members.

Teacher participants of the study were three, two with teaching certificate, one has a degree, two teachers had taken SNE course in three credit hours in pre-service training program and the others have never taken any course in SNE and participated in any workshops in the field. Teacher Yeshi who serves as principal and teacher mentioned that:

Even if the pre- school has class rooms which are clean and with enough light, the corridors are not suitable to children with physical disabilities and the school hasn't any resource room which helps children with special needs. In the same way, the play ground is narrow and the gates of the school are not accessible to wheelchair user child. (Yeshe, personal communication, February 7, 2011)

In terms of training, she said that "I didn't have any long or short time training in SNE." Even if teacher in the school share experience each other and work cooperatively, there is no experience sharing programs of pre-schools. She said "since private pre-schools have competition of marketing, we don't have positive relation and we lack experience sharing instead I took experiences from Addis Ababa pre-schools".

Yeshe explained at the very beginning they didn't realize most problems of children with special needs; however, through time in the teaching learning process they understand their problem and began to seek solution which didn't go beyond the scope of the school in accordance with their unique needs. They help children by understanding their need as far as possible academically or socially.

The other participant Fikir explained:

As far as my knowledge is concerned nothing was done either by the sub city education office or kebele education board in relation to changing the education system. There is no more educational supervision and support to step up towards inclusive education. The existing pre-school curriculum lack flexibility, well organization. Long and short term training programs about SNE are not practical in sub-city education office. (Fikir, personal communication, February 7, 2011)

Here, it is possible to say that principals, teachers and the nearby education experts seemed to lack awareness and readiness to promote the practice of early childhood inclusive education. For example, due to absence of a resource room and well trained teacher, special basic skills are not given. But there might foster the inclusion of children with disabilities in poorly furnished educational setting. Children with special needs need to be trained with pre skills before joining inclusive classes. But the vision and mission of the pre-school planned to address fulfilling school facilities which are relevant to teaching learning process.

Booth and Ainscow (2000) explained:

Hence, curricula in inclusive education system needs to place children at the center of teaching and learning by appreciating individual differences in understanding feelings, social and perceptual skills, etc. Consequently, all children will have optimal opportunities for becoming motivated and active to learn up to his /her maximum potential, (as cited in Abraham Shilesh 2009, p.22).

The other participant teacher Kidist explains the teaching method mostly used in Enat pre-school is teacher centered. They demonstrate what the children are going to do and follow

up, but they do not provide group activities and pair work in a bench. Actually, all the participants repeated this method of teaching. They do not employ teaching strategies that motivate and involve students in self learning and enable them to explore and understand their environment in playing. They do not evaluate progress, supply and expose students to relevant and meaningful material, practical activities and experiences. As document review indicates and participants explain there was no pre-schools experience sharing and with other related organizations teaching by practical activities and visiting is less.

The other participant, the supervisor of sub-city education office, Ayana mentioned that the school compound is narrow and the physical environment of the school is not much conducive to children with disabilities. He said that the schools he supports are more than sixteen in the sub city. So, he is not able to support this pre- school constantly.

In the same time he explained, including him, other educational experts are not aware of the existence of children with disabilities in this preschool. Since there is no trained person in SNE in the education office as well as in Enat pre-school, children with physical disabilities and children with learning disabilities are included with out more help.

Education expert Belew said:

The school is opened in rent houses which are found in crowded area. It is difficult to say the school is conducive to children with disabilities. Even if the school has neat and bright class rooms, including the school compound, the classrooms are narrow in proportion to the number of students. The school has a good trial towards inclusive setting, because it has included children with wheelchair, other physical disabilities and children with learning difficulties but we the sub city education experts are not ready to help the school to develop to step towards inclusive education. We did not prepare training programs to these school teachers. We didn't design strategies to exchange experiences with other pre-schools so we should be standby to support the school in every aspect (Belew, personal communication, February 4, 20011)

The other participant Birhan expert described the situation as follows:

Experts do not support teachers those who have been teaching in inclusive classrooms either in training and experience sharing to the neighborhood pre-school teachers. He said

Here, I personally believe, we have to think over it and learn, that we didn't pay due attention for these issues. We have to have budget for training, for fulfilling supportive instructional materials etc. if we were ready to do so, we could get NGOs that would sponsor such capacity building trainings of teachers. But the problem is we didn't emphasis for the issue (Birhan, personal communication, February 4, 2011)

At this time the pre-school is teaching children at risk in relation to one religious organization (NGO). It is an interesting practice of the pre-school but it should be widen to the other NGOS which serve in capacity building of teachers and parents and should propose a project in building facilities and fulfilling indoor and outdoor instructional materials

Participant teacher Kidist explained in this area as follows

I have never supported children with SNE. Even I don't know how to support them. So I don't have any training with sign language and Braille writing and reading respectively. If children with visual and hearing impairment come to this school, I place them near to the blackboard and preventing them from being provoked and teased by children without disabilities. I will support them to backup socially and to develop self confidence. (Kidist, personal communication, February 7, 2011)

From the above participants points of view we can deduce that lack of awareness and relevant knowledge and skills about how to support and manage students with special needs in class room impeded teachers to take a leading role in their profession regarding the issues of ethical principles that allow learning in the nearby pre-school without discrimination with their individual difference.

In addition to the above problems, lack of advocates that promote the step towards inclusive education contributes its own negative impact to develop inclusive setting in Enat pre-school. In new strategy of ECCE, MOE (2009) says there should be a responsible body up to Kebele who facilitate inclusive education in pre-schools. But in Injibara sub-city nobody is responsible for the development of inclusive early childhood education. Starting from the cluster supervisor he mentioned that he can't supervise the pre-school continuously so the

number of schools he helps is above sixteen. Also other educational experts mentioned as they did not help the preschool. So nobody is ready to support private pre-schools.

4.2.2 Interactions among students

As far as the evidence obtained from interview, the interaction among students was as mutual and harmonious. A teacher participant Fikir reported "As far as I know, since children are free from any prejudice and discrimination there is good relationship between children with and without disabilities in the class and in the play ground." (Fikir, personal communication, February 7, 2011)

Participant children Mirtinesh who is with wheelchair appreciated the relation,

My classmates help me to do my homework properly and appropriately. Since I am being with quadriplegia, I can't write as fast as others. At this time, children help me to read what they write and I copy slowly. (Mirtinesh, personal communication, February 10, 2011)

The participant teachers, children explanation and playground observation results indicate that children have developed positive attitude towards students with disabilities. Thus, they didn't discriminate students with disabilities.

The other participating children, Aelias, explained he plays with children with disabilities unreservedly in the play ground and in classroom. He mentioned, he goes home and to school by helping child with orthopedic and during lunch time he has lunch with him in the school.

The participating child, a child with orthopedic material explained that he plays and learn with children without disabilities unreservedly. He mentioned as far as possible he participates in the class and out of class without any indication of discrimination and to the side of his classmate. This indicates that early childhood inclusive education illuminates discrimination and prejudice and creates inclusive society.

The child also mentions that his partners carry his bag when they come to school and go home. In the play ground, children without disabilities encourage him when he tries to play volleyball with a small ball. One thing he mentioned is, in the class room groups are not formed in heterogeneous way and it is problem to form social interaction to all classmates and help each other. In the same way, he explained that sometimes he didn't go home during

lunchtime, so it is difficult to return back to class after lunch in this time interval. When his partners go to lunch and he stay in the school, he feels discomfort and sad.

During lunch time, barriers should be avoided by either all children should bring their lunch to school and teachers better to have lunch time with their students or the child should have transport service to eat lunch at home like partners. In the same way the teacher should create heterogeneous groups in the class to create good social interaction.

4.2.3 Parent's and community members' perspective

Throughout the child's preschool experience, involving parents in service planning, including participation in developing IEP is important. Effective education and service planning should include all appropriate family members and service providers. In relation to this the participating parent, Goshu, explained he helps his child after school. He sings his child exercise book and helps her to do her homework neatly and easily. He explained as he follows the overall development of the child from time to time. Goshu also explained he helps the school in supporting ideas and if there is lack of budget he asked the school principal to add the educational fee in order to add the quality of education.

Goshu mentioned that teaching children in inclusive setting develops each child is equal each other and develop no discrimination and prejudice through their life. So he is happy about the fact that his child learning in the class room with children with disabilities.

Gushu mentioned that the relation between the school community and the parents must be organized well and disciplined. He said "We should fill the gap between the parents and the teacher in order to shape the life of our child". Even if the school is built in a ground floor and is to some extent favorable to physical disabilities to learn and the awareness of the school to accept all children is appreciable, but for the future the school should do more in teachers training, building designs and teaching aids. To have good inclusive setting, first the school should have its own site, instead of renting houses which is in difficult site and environment.

The other participating parent Feleku explained that as far as possible she tried to help her child when he does his homework at home. She said that due to her child is learning with children with disabilities, he realizes to actual condition of the environment or the society he

lived and develops positive behaviors which is important to him. So I am happy because my child is learning in inclusive classrooms.

Feleku mentioned that she is not aware of how to collaborate to the school community to develop inclusive education, and she doesn't have knowledge in what aspects the government body supports the private pre-schools. She said, "I don't participate in contributing ideas and money to help the school, for the future we parents and the community should take responsibility to the development of this pre-school to inclusive setting." (Feleku, personal communication, February 15, 2011).

The participating parent Ehitnesh explained at the beginning parents of Mirtensh, a child with wheelchair, were not aware about her learning. They think that she is not able to learn and they want to set in the house inactive; but her sister, Ehitnesh, convinced her family and brought her from rural village to the sub city and sent her to this preschool. Ehitnesh also mentioned "After Mirtinesh entered this pre-school she become more active and participate as her partners and study at home. Her hands become quick to write from time to time." (Ehitnesh, personal communication, February 15, 2011)

Finally she described we should work cooperatively with pre-schools and stakeholders to have conducive inclusive setting pre-school greater than this condition. Educational experts should do awareness rising practices to the society.

A question was also raised to the educational experts and the teachers about parents' participation. They replied that most families of children visit the school and interact with teachers of their children individually, but since there is no teacher parent association, there is no constant meeting to improve the school.

Community member participant Tazash explained.

In the first time when we see a child with wheelchair who is learning in this pre-school, we were gazing at her and expect she is not able to learn and instead she should set at home and keep house, but now we understand that everybody can learn if the environment is favorable to these types of children (Tazash, personal communication, February 15, 2011)

From the interview results observations and we can understand the attitude of the community is on the way of changing; so the practice is evidence to change their

thought. She explained "To have an inclusive school in our community, we should work cooperatively with the government and other stakeholders." She also mentioned the community should not expect only the government to build inclusive setting schools and it needs all members' participation and support.

The other community member participant Alemu mentioned,

Mostly after school, we don't help our children to follow their learning. We abuse their labor and time. We do not follow up our children where they stay after school. They go outside home to play and go to unnecessary areas which affect children's life. In educational meetings, we parents don't participate and give suggestion about teaching learning process. For instance, the private schools are opened in rented houses which the surrounding is noisy and high traffic accident to children to pass though main roads. (Alemu, personal communication, February 15, 2011)

He also explained that "In previous time I didn't expect children with disabilities can learn but now I realized they can learn more as children without disabilities; because I saw children with different disabilities in the town when they are going to school."

He mentioned that if the community members' work in terms of contributing money, labor, skill and knowledge to children's learning they can do more to the development of this pre-school towards inclusive education. The pre-school environment can be changed and be attractive. Training of parents, community members about education should be planned and implemented.

4.2.4 The interaction of teachers with students and parents

Most teachers are afraid of and feel unprepared to teach children with disabilities in an inclusive classroom. Thus, they feel that they did not receive adequate training in how to adopt instruction, facilitate socialization, and manage diverse needs of children and to use technology to accommodate special learners. Consequently, these perceptions of teachers may affect the relationship between teachers and children with special needs as well as their parents.

This indicates that teachers were not ready to consider the unique needs of children in the classroom either in groups and/or individually by applying strategies that encourage children participation in learning. Teachers who taught currently were not supportive and

encouraging to children with disabilities. This might be because they didn't have training, enough knowledge and skills that enable them to support these children. Teachers have interest to help CWD; internal feeling of humanity but the problem is the skill to teach children with disabilities. The school administration is not well organized. The principal works both as a teacher and manager this condition can't create ways to help teachers to have short and long term training of SNE and to implement and revise the plan of the school as far as possible.

In terms of teacher and parents relation about pre-school children learning, all participant teachers mentioned mostly parents interact with teachers to help the teaching learning process. But some parents, especially those parents of children with learning disabilities do not come to school and talk about their children regularly. So some are grandparents or care givers they are not able and interested to help the children to do their homework after school. But strategic operation plan for early childhood care and education (2009) states parents are responsible bodies of ECCE and should train in parental education. Parental education should be continuous long term activity that focuses on awareness –raising and training on the roles and responsibilities in bringing up children and development as well as the roles of parents in fostering the realization of children's full potential. TPA meetings are ways of teaching parents.

Teachers reported that despite of their limited effort to develop good relationship among parents of students with special needs; parents were not ready to disclose their children's problems to their respective teachers. One participant teacher reported that, parents didn't want to expose their child's problem. Because they might be afraid of other students teasing, on the child that can diminish the child's moral and motivation of learning.

4.2.5 Interaction of principal with teachers, parents and educational experts

In Enat pre-school, participant teacher Yeshe works as principal and teacher, she is not trained in educational planning and management. Even, if she has good interaction with teachers; to mobilize parents by formulating kebele educational board and making strategies to have training for teachers and interaction with sub-city education experts is very limited.

From this we can understand that this pre-school administration system may impede the step towards practicing inclusive education. The school didn't deliver any training and any experience sharing program for teachers who teach students with special needs and buy any tailored educational materials for children with disabilities.

4.2.6 Lack of coordination and experience

Constraints might be emanated from various sources that hamper the overall betterment of education in general and the educational support services for children with special needs in particular. Mather 1992 and Rakkas, 1997 explained that

Inclusive education demands that the teachers are innovative, flexible, creative, ready to learn from the learners with diverse educational needs and capable of initiating participatory learning. Inclusion needs the teachers' skill and knowledge besides their positive attitude.(as cited in Abraham silesh, 2009, p.18)

In this issue, a teacher participant Fiker reported that the major problem is lack of training and experience sharing how to support and handle children with special needs.

Participants of the research have underlined problems that include: lack of responsibility or focal person for special needs education, lack of commitment among major actors to support children with disabilities and low expectation for children with disabilities and lack of coordination. The pre-school has not prepared report system about special needs education to the sub-city.

From this, we can understand that there were no responsible authorities that could take initiatives in promoting the step towards practicing inclusive education since there was no constant communication between supervisor, preschool principal and sub-city education experts.

All participant teachers and experts mentioned that even if they are clear that everybody has right to learn, they are interested to help them and to implement **education for all**. Lack of training in special needs education in relation to how to support and handle students with special needs in pre-school class room instruction might be great barriers to hamper the teaching-learning process of pre-school. Participant teachers complained that they didn't take short or long term training, either in per-service or in-service training time about SNE except few. Thus, they left these children without support in the class room as they

developed hopelessness about children with special needs. On the other hand, some teachers complained that although they had taken special needs education course as a common course, the training focused only on knowledge and awareness rising rather than skill development like Braille and sign language, so now they failed to support children with disabilities. A teacher participant Fikir reported:

I personally, believe that the training was not enough to develop confidence and appropriate skills of the KG teachers. That is why most of us become fearful to deal with children with special needs. Thus, the training had to be better and be specific to the appropriate knowledge and skills which are most importantly relevant to the KG teacher who teaches students with special needs in inclusive classroom. (Fikir, personal communication, February 7, 2011)

Other participant teacher and principal Yeshi explained that as she understood, they dealt with these students with the feelings of humanity. Otherwise, they don't have any knowledge and skills. She said that she has read the strategy prepared by MOE (2009), but no one debriefed her how to go through and there is no implementation plan for this strategy and they didn't discuss with the local education authorities i.e. the sub-city.

4.2.7 Awareness of teachers, parents and the community

Concerning the attitude of teacher, parents and the community; all participants of the interview described, beside lack of short and long term training limited or none advocating programs of sub-city experts and stakeholders affect the awareness raising practice of teachers, parents and the community. Even if it is minimized, the negative attitude of parents and some teachers towards persons with disability is the reflection of the community. For instance during observation session, a shoe shine boy near the road a child with wheelchair pushed up said "look that 'shiba' !" insult in Amharic by pointing to a child with wheelchair; this indicates that there is negative attitude towards children with disabilities. One of the teachers replayed; "Even if most of the teachers have positive attitudes, thought of humanity towards children with disabilities and accepts the inclusion of them in ECE classrooms, we teachers do not have the same attitude towards children with disabilities and their inclusion in ECE classrooms."

All participating teachers, experts, supervisor, community members and children explained that inclusive early childhood educational settings are important for social relation, to share experiences, to develop self confidence and to understand differences. But practically each stakeholder has different practical implication, some do not think that children with disabilities learn in inclusive class rooms and some teachers refuse to teach such children in inclusive classes as it is time consuming and make them exhausted.

4.2.8 Utilization of material resources in Enat pre-school

As Montessori believed that:

The learning environment was just as important as the learning itself. The optimal conditions around children allow for and support their true natural development. Enrolment must be prepared with particular series of scientifically developed materials, the kit that are consistently organized by subject degree of difficulty and complexity. All materials displayed should be on open shelving and are available for free, independent use, to stimulate their natural instincts and interest for self directing. (Montessori by Tarraugh Flahery <http://www.montoessori.edu/maria.htm>)

The participant teacher of KG 1 has explained the teaching aids help to make the teaching learning process real and understandable. On the contrary, most of the teachers do not use teaching aids. The reason is that there are no resource rooms and not enough teaching aids. In classroom observation the researcher also observed most teachers use talk and chalk methods. The teaching aids even used by few teachers are not prepared well. These teaching aids are not smart enough to get each child's need.

4.2.9 The support system of teachers and the school administration

In the pre-school there is no well organized support system of children with disabilities to back up and to participate as children without disabilities in the school. But these children are included in the class.

A question was raised to the teachers whether they prepare individual educational plan (IEP) if necessary. All teachers replied that they are not preparing any IEP for children who need

IEP, especially to children with wheelchair and with quadriplegia. The findings of observation and document analysis showed that there is no teacher and others stakeholders who prepared an individual educational plan; because they do not have awareness about IEP.

Special supports are very necessary for children who have educational problem. During interview, teachers said they give some additional support for children who are slow learners. But the support is not planned and programmed. Actually, most teachers encourage and motivate all students to participate by asking and answering questions. They have also potency to help those students who have some difficulties in learning. As the researcher observed the roster and continuous assessment documents, all teachers gave continuous assessment. But due to lack of training, collaboration of stakeholders and educational experts, it is difficult to say the support system is well organized

4.3 Document analysis

In order to cross analyze the data, which is obtained in observation and interviewee, the researcher observed the following documents. Researcher saw the continuous assessment documents which are done by classroom teachers. The continuity of assessing children's progress is not constant. They tried to fill a maximum of three tests and activities in a semester.

The other document analyzed is the parental discussion document; parents discussed about the teaching learning process of Enat pre-school individually. The school sent a discussion format to each parent and they give suggestions what the school should improve and what should keep it up as it is. These three years suggestion documents are filled and used as improving the school plan from year to year.

There is the supervisor and educational experts' suggestion document in the school. These experts give some suggestions that the school compound should be clean and wide to the number of children and the school site should be selective and far from traffic accident and sound disturbance. They also give suggestion that curriculum should be relevant to the ability of children. It should be related to the local culture which expresses AWI people culture such as music, language and other material cultures. But the follow up of these experts is less. They tried to visit the school from 2000-2003 maximum of two times.

The other document is personal card each children academic result are filled in the personal card and parents see it and give suggestion about the child progress. But in the school there is no IEP team document. There is no portfolio of each child to attend his/her progress.

Generally, from the document analysis we can understand that school tried to file some important documents which give hint to revise its plan from time to time. For instance, parent suggestion document gave more information to the school community. But in the school there is consistent problem to document the progress of children and follow up of educational experts to support the school. The other deficiencies that exist in the school is: There is no document which gives hint about teachers, parents and community members meeting discussion in the school to the development of Enat pre- school to step towards inclusive education except the suggestion format which is collected from each parent individually.

4.4 Principles of inclusive education in the pre-school

Inclusive education is a concept that seeks to embrace all students in the school community. It ensures that students with learning disabilities are able to study and interact with all teachers, students and administration on an equal basis.

But the pre-school didn't develop its principles. As National statement of principles and standards for more culturally inclusive schooling in the 21st Century (2000) www.curriculum.edu.au/mceetya explains: Principles must be described in terms of the right of all children to high quality schooling and the rights and responsibilities of parents as the first educators of their children. So for the future the pre-school principle of inclusion better to acknowledge:

1. The pre-school should acknowledge the capacity of all children to learn by:
 - 1.1 providing a climate that welcomes and values all children and that expects and supports them to achieve equitable and appropriate educational outcomes;
 - 1.2 Establishing effective teaching/learning relationships between the teachers and the children.
 - 1.3 Providing a curriculum which is flexible and which is free from the negative forms of discrimination based on sex, language, culture and ethnicity, religion or disability background.
2. The pre-school better to acknowledge the role of parents as the first educators of their children by:

2.1 Providing a climate that welcomes parents and caregivers as valuable members of the school community.

2.2 Actively increasing community confidence in education through a process of explicit involvement of parents/caregivers and community in the achievement of equitable and appropriate educational outcomes.

2.3 supporting parents and caregivers of students in their responsibilities to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

3. The pre-school better to acknowledge close relationship between other pre-schools, government body, NGOs to have experience sharing.

4. The pre-school should acknowledge training of teachers. Teachers need training about inclusive principles and the basics of disability. To ensure that their attitudes and approaches do not prevent children with disabilities from gaining equal access to the curriculum training should be ongoing, provided in short term and should take place within a local school environment on their own school. Training should take place at both pre-service and in-service stages. Problem-based, on-the-job training is more effective than theoretical pre-service training. Encouraging teachers to meet on a regular basis to discuss their problems, and develop confidence in their own abilities, is the most effective form of staff development.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion and recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Early childhood inclusive education is a component of high quality education program, but it is not sufficient by itself.. Inclusive education is a process of increasing the participation of all children in inclusive pre-schools. It is a dynamic process, because it addresses all aspects of child development. It is about celebrating diversity and changing the rigid school system in order to meet the needs of all children.

Based on these concepts the research findings of this study were concerned with a step towards inclusive education and its implementation at Enat pre-school. An attempt has been made to discuss the current class room practice and over all activities in the school. According to the research findings and related review literature, researcher has attempted to suggest the possible implication of the findings of the study that has been undertaking so far. The principal purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to develop an understanding about ongoing practice of inclusive education in Enat private pre-school.

In accordance with this, the study showed results in a step towards practicing inclusive education on this pre-school which might have served as a footing step for the future inclusive pre-school. Among the major issues raised in the study, the physical environment of the pre-school, experiences, understandings of children, constraints and current assets, pattern of interaction and affecting steps inclusive education were explored theme to signify the whole study.

The results of the study shows that even if the pre-school didn't employ special need teachers and many gaps, trying to accept children with special needs and children at risk who are helped by NGO, indicates that pre-school is starting on a step towards inclusive education.

The existing teacher's activities to help the children with disabilities, including them in the class, instead of leaving at home is an indication of the pre-school trail to a step up towards inclusive education.

As we can see from the results of the study the participant teachers, experts, parents and students showed a positive attitudes towards the enrollment of all children in the pre- school. They explained that it is the right of children to join in surrounding pre-school. This indicates that the negative attitude of the community is minimizing to implement inclusive education in the next future in the area.

The research finding indicate that children at KG age level are free of discrimination and prejudice because observation and interview of participant children response that, socially they don't have problems they play freely at the play ground and help each other.

As it is revealed by the study, even there is relationship between the school and parent. They discuss about their children learning. Even the pre-school mission states involving parents and stakeholders to create inclusive school setting but due to the absence of TPA, there is no meeting in the school to discuss about the school over all progress and change towards inclusive education.

The results of the study show that most teachers use lecture method, this indicates that employing not trained teacher in that level and the training of pre-school teacher had a problem of providing relevant knowledge to the age of children through playing, practice and exploration. Five of seven teachers of the pre-school are not trained in pre-school teaching. In addition teachers don't have in service training which in turn hampered the practices of pre-school education.

The result of the study showed group and peer work hardly practiced in the pre-school. But the mission of the pre-school says making the teaching learning practice based on the children interest and individual need. Mixed grouping creates great opportunity to children to make friendship to all classmates and develop social interaction very well and easily .this helps their development and change.

In the pre-school the small compound and crowded class room environment are problems for practice inclusive education. As obtained from observation results and all participants explained that the pre-school compound is not conducive for all children. It has many physical barriers, such as the play ground is small and with inadequate outdoor materials, the gates of the class and the compound gate is narrow to a child with wheelchair. The site

of the school is exposed to lorries sound and high traffic accidents. Generally it contradicts to the mission of the pre-school which says making the school physical environment accessible to all children.

The findings also indicate that most problems of the preschool to implement inclusive education emanated from lack of awareness (perception) on the objectives of pre-school education, unavailability and inappropriateness of the curriculum materials and physical problems. For instance, educational experts and principal of the pre-school didn't arrange experience sharing between preschools and teachers of pre-schools in relation to identifying local services: delivering instruction, giving feedback and generally following up children with disability in inclusive setting. The supervisor and other educational experts give less support to the private pre-school. This indicates to what extent the government body supports the private preschools in training and experience sharing activities.

The findings of this study also show that teachers do not use IEP. In the school there is no IEP team. There is no resource room in the school. Except few teachers drawing a picture on the black board, most teachers do not use model and real teaching aids.

The result of finding indicated that the teaching learning process is not child centered. If the methodology is diversified and changed based on children's interest, children develop self confidence and self esteem, especially CWD. Teaching by playing is the main method of teaching in ECE. But this is not implemented in this pre-school; instead teacher centered learning are practiced.

The research findings also show that there is SNE training gap. Most teachers are not trained in special needs education except two teachers trained the theoretical part of SNE in 3 credit hours. The majority of pre-school teachers do not have in service training in conferences or short terms training on pre-school education to develop their profession. Training should have been given to all teachers to have an inclusive pre-school which accept all children.

The finding result indicated that the class size of this pre-school is 63; it is too large. So, it is difficult to address the individual needs of each child and making learning attractive to each child.

To alleviate the challenges of the pre-school to a step towards inclusive education, the school management activities would be properly managing and running to the school programs with regard to CWD. Designing school policy that accommodate all children, identifying the challenges of the school and arrange them in their priorities can be done. But the results show that the school principal is working as a teacher, a principal and owner of the school, without any training of Educational planning and management. This overload task to one person, affects the activity of the school as a whole.

Moreover, the research finding indicated that lack of awareness about inclusive education of educational experts, supervisor, parents and community members affect a step to words inclusive ECE. No advocacy of the program, lack of responsible or focal person for SNE in zone and sub-City education officers and lack of commitment among major actors to support CWD are great barriers which should be alleviate.

The absence of curriculum materials (text book and teacher's guide) while syllabus and other related materials were not available in enough amount. The existing curriculum materials do not reflect children's cultural environmental.

The document analysis conducted by the researcher show that there are no children portfolio documents, TPA document, rosters and not organized.

The accessibility of the learning environment is crucial for all children to participate equally, and be fully included. Families, and the children themselves, need to be closely involved in discussing accessibility issues. These could include: mobility and transport issues, the physical accessibility of buildings, attitudes, teaching methods, the language of instruction, the relationships between teachers and children. But the pre-school building requirements such as enough water supply, outdoor playing equipments, offices and class rooms are not much relevant to implement inclusion. The adequacy of teaching aids either it is teachers made or not are in negligible amount in the school. Outdoor and indoor play materials are necessary to children. Because children can express their felling, practice and learn with these materials. But materials were not sufficient available in the pre-school. The inadequate available indoor materials and equipments were not well organized in the classrooms. This all affects the practice of pre-school education.

Generally, for the future to alleviate the problems of attitudinal and physical barriers, the respondents forwarded their opinions as the need to focus on identification and screening, followed by proper support, collaboration among NGOS, other stakeholders, full filling the pre-school facilities such as play ground, class rooms, offices, corridors and steps and training of teachers in short and long term training, creating good social interaction of pre-school environment, applying flexible curriculum and experience sharing are important activities to implement, to apply inclusive education in pre-schools.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the finding, the following suggestions are recommended.

- ❖ Enhancing the pre-school collaboration vertically with sub-city Education office, zone education office and horizontally with teachers, parents, private pre-schools, NGOS and other stakeholders in order to create a welcoming pre-school environment.
- ❖ Enhancing the pre-school to conduct strength, weakness, opportunity and threat of the school program and planning the vision and mission of the school critically.
- ❖ Encouraging the pre-school to have resource rooms, educational resources such as adaptive learning materials, adaptive devices.
- ❖ Encouraging the pre-school to build its own building on its site and size in order to have peaceful and accessible school environment that address all children need.
- ❖ Giving emphasize on capacity building of teachers, parents and employing teachers who are trained in SNE and pre-school certificate. In-service training is one way to improve the professional competency of teachers. Hence zone and sub-city education offices and other stake holders might organize intensive trainings on the inclusive pre-school education. Especially for teachers in form of seminars, workshop, conferences and experience sharing programs.
- ❖ The supervisor and educational experts support the private pre-school as government schools.
- ❖ Pre-school that has well organized class room equipments and materials highly attract the attention of children. Therefore, pre-school teachers and principals need to organize the classrooms.

- ❖ Generally, the children should be provided, be encouraged to participate in curricular and extracurricular activities. The pre-school should be accessible and comfortable for all children and it should have its own inclusive education principles.

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APPENDIX A

Data collection instruments

The instruments were prepared based on from ideas of literature review. Semi-structured interviews and observation check lists are organized based on research questions and related ideas explained in review in chapter two. Semi-structured interview questions and observation check lists of Ababu Teshome, 2009; Bizuneh Kebu, 2008 and Abirham Sileshi, 2009 were read and some interview questions and observation check lists which are important for the topic and related to literature were modified. Finally I developed my own instruments. I have constructed these instruments in priority set-up from general towards specific interview questions.

Addis Ababa University

School of Graduate studies

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1. SEMI- structured interview questions for pre-school teachers.

The objective of these interview questions is to assess the developing inclusive education in Pre Schools; to create opportunities for your child to learn in inclusive setting and to assure the development of quality education. The information you are going to give is granted by the researcher to keep securely and the data is used for this research only. Thank you for your voluntary participation to give clear and precise information!!

1. Is the school compound conducive for every child to learn academically and socially?
 - Are the classrooms soundproof? Do they have enough light?
 - Is there a ramp for children with physical disabilities to go the classroom by help of mobility?
 - Is the playground appropriate to all children is there a running rope for children with visual impairments?

- Is the latrine comfortable for all children?
 - If the above facilities are not accessible; how do you solve such difficulties?
2. If there is any resource room in the school do you think it is important? Why? If there is none how can you construct resource room?
 3. Have you got training on special needs education?
 4. Do you encourage the enrollment of all children in the school? How do you use?
 5. Do you use teaching aids that address all children in class? How do you use?
 6. Do you give group work, class work and assignment for your student? How was the group formed?
 7. How are you encouraging all students to ask questions and to give answer? Would you give examples? Whom do you motivate most?
 8. How is the co-ordination and co-operation happening among your colleagues?
 9. How is the school cooperating with other Pre- schools to share experience?
 10. First of all special support means helping each student based on their individual problem and back up children without disabilities; How do you give special support? To whom?
 11. How do you solve each child personal problem? (such as educational, social, etc)
 12. What might be the benefits if all children are included?
 13. What are the challenges if you include all children in your school?
 14. Are you ready to meet the needs of all children; with or without disabilities? Do you think that you fulfill their needs?
 15. Do parents cooperate with the school regarding the education of their children? How?

16. What are the teaching methods that you commonly employ in a classroom?
17. What measures do you think should be taken to improve the practice of inclusive education in the school?
18. How can you create conducive environment for inclusive education in the school?
Who are responsible?
19. Do you want to add any information?

APPENDIX B

2. SEMI-structured interview questions for educational experts about the pre- school.

The objective of these interview questions is to assess the developing inclusive education in Pre Schools; to create opportunities for your child to learn in inclusive setting and to assure the development of quality education. The information you are going to give is granted by the researcher to keep securely and the data is used for this research only. Thank you for your voluntary participation to give clear and precise information!!

1. Is the school compound conducive for every child to learn?
 - Are the classrooms free from high external sound? Do they have enough light?
 - Is there any resource room in the school? Do you think, is it important? Why?
 - Is there a ramp for children with physical disabilities to go to the class room, library, toilet, and staff office?
 - Is the toilet fitting for all children? Can children with wheelchair use with no reserve?
 - If the above facilities are not accessible; how do you support the school to overcome such difficulties?
2. In what ways the government supports the pre-school?
3. What material and technical supports do you give as educational expert?
4. What kind of academic problems do you think the students face? How do you overcome such difficulties?
5. Do you encourage the enrollment of all children in the school? How?
6. How is the co-ordination and co-operation work among teachers?
7. How do teachers motivate their students in the classroom?

8. Do teachers give special support for students with special needs? In What ways do they support?
9. What are the difficulties if the school includes all children?
10. How is the school cooperating with other schools to share experience?
11. Are teachers interested to include children with disabilities in his or her class?
12. Do parents cooperate with the school in relation to the education of their children? How?
13. What problems have teachers faced while teaching in regular class? How do they face it?
14. How can you create conducive environment for children in the school? Who are responsible? Do you want to add anything?
15. What good practices or benefits do you observe in the inclusion of students with special needs in regular classroom?
16. What measures do you think should be taken to improve the practice of inclusive education in the school?

APPENDIX C

3. SEMI- structured interview questions for parents about the pre- school

The objective of these interview questions is to assess the developing inclusive education in Pre Schools; to create opportunities for your child to learn in inclusive setting and to assure the development of quality education. The information you are going to give is granted by the researcher to keep securely and the data is used for this research only. Thank you for your voluntary participation to give clear and precise information!!

1. Do you help your child after school at home with his/her preschool homework?
2. Do you contribute to the school your child is learning financial or academically?
3. In what way the government supports the school?
4. What do you feel when your child learns in the school with children with disabilities and without disabilities?
5. What changes do you see after your child starts learning with all children?
6. Do you have continuous meetings with the teachers about education of your children?
7. Do you give full information about background of your child to the IEP team and participate in IEP planning about your child learning situation?
8. Do you think that this school is a convenient place to learn for students with disabilities? Why? Do you have any knowledge about conducive place?
9. How can you create conducive environment for children in the school? Who is responsible?
10. What measures do you think can be taken to improve the practice of inclusive education in the school?
11. Do you want to add any information?

APPENDIX D

4. SEMI- structured interview questions for pre-school children about the pre-school.

The objective of these interview questions is to assess the developing inclusive education in Pre Schools; to create opportunities for your child to learn in inclusive setting and to assure the development of quality education. The information you are going to give is granted by the researcher to keep securely and the data is used for this research only. Thank you for your voluntary participation to give clear and precise information!!

1. Do you play with your partner without any obstacle?
2. What do you feel if you play with children with disabilities and without disabilities?
3. Do you work with peers or in groups?
4. Do you help your partner with disability in the class, play ground, and after school? How?
5. Do you act as children with disabilities in the school? What do you feel then?
6. Is the playground appropriate to all children? Is there a running rope to children with blindness? Do all of you play together?
7. Is your grouping different?
8. If there is resource room do you use it if it is necessary?

APPENDIX E

5 Observation checklist

Data -----

Grade -----

Subject -----

period -----

5.1 Classroom observation

1. Number of students in the class

below 20 ☐ between 20 and 30 ☐ > 30 ☐

2. Encouraging and motivating all students

excellent ☐ good ☐ not good ☐

3. Teachers use of teaching aid that meet each students need (critical observation) -----

4. Teacher willingness to help students

excellent ☐ good ☐ not good ☐

6. Preparing individual educational plan for students who need IEP

yes ☐ no ☐

6. Teachers divide the classroom group in heterogeneous grouping

always ☐ sometimes ☐ not ☐

7. Teachers help students

always ☐ sometimes ☐ rare ☐

8. Giving continuous assessment

frequent ☐ sometimes ☐ not ☐

9. Students participate equally with no discrimination in the classroom

v. good ☐ good ☐ not ☐

10. Students equally discuss their work during the lessons

always ☐ sometimes ☐ not ☐

11. Students sitting arrangement helps for active learning

yes ☐ no ☐

12. Teachers giving group work

frequent ☐ sometimes ☐ not ☐

APPENDIX F

5.2 Out of class observation

1. Co-ordination and cooperation work among teachers

v. good ☐ good ☐ not good ☐

2. Students helping each other

frequent ☐ sometimes ☐ not ☐

- 3 Availability of barrier free play ground

available ☐ not available ☐

- 4 Students equally play in play ground during break

always ☐ sometimes ☐ not ☐

5. Comfortably of the school for students with physical impaired (critical observation) -----

6. Comfortably of the school for students with visual impairment (critical observation) -----

7. Is the toilet *for* students with visual impairment suitable?

v. good ☐ good ☐ not good ☐

8. Whether there is a need for a ramp and whether a ramp is helpful. (critical observation)

9. Light in the classroom reflects more

enough ☐ not enough ☐