

## Implementation Of Inclusive Education In Somalia

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### Abstract

Inclusive Education (IE) is a new approach towards educating the children with disability and learning difficulties with that of normal ones within the same roof. It brings all students together in one classroom and community, regardless of their strengths or weaknesses in any area, and seeks to maximize the potential of all students. It is one of the most effective ways in which to promote an inclusive and tolerant society. It is known that 73 million children of primary school age were out of school in 2010, down from a high of over 110 million out-of-school children in the mid-1990s, according to new estimates by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). About Eighty percent of Somalian population lives in rural areas without provision for special schools. It means, there are an estimated 8 million children out of school in Somalia (MHRD 2009 statistics), many of whom are marginalised by dimensions such as poverty, gender, disability, and caste. The university management should come up with a strategic policy that will ensure the provision of all resources/facilities, employ more resource room personnel and have different resource rooms to cater for each group of SSN, university management should provide training for the lecturers to improve their knowledge and skills in teaching students with special needs through workshops and seminars and inter-departmental approaches, The university management should have a strategic plan for continuous maintenance and increase of all the physical accessibilities to the facilities, transportation and accommodation and the university management should provide awareness of their students with special needs through seminars/ workshops, creating a university common course on inclusive education and increase programmes on disability sensitization so as to enhance inclusivity for all persons in the university

## INTRODUCTION

According to United Nation Children's Education Fund (UNICEF, 2003), it is worldwide estimated that 70% of children with disabilities, including those with mild mental retardation, can attend regular schools provided the environment is designed to be easy to get to and the institution is willing to accommodate them. UNICEF believes that, the goal is to enable all children to have full participation in the development of their community which is achievable through inclusive education. To meet this goal, all structures and community-based services are to be accessible to all members of the community without discrimination.

Seamus et al (1990), affirmed it was 40 years after the nations of the world meeting through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that everyone has a right to education. They summed up the situation when they stated that those with special needs, who ironically have the greatest need of education are the least likely to receive it. Students with special needs and others who fail to achieve satisfactory progress in school learning are usually excluded from the mainstream education system or receive less favourable treatment within it than other children. This is further supported by Stainback (1996) who reiterated that inclusive schooling is the practice of including everyone irrespective of talent, disability, socioeconomic background, or cultural origin in supportive mainstream schools and classrooms where all students' needs are met. In inclusive schools, the philosophy of caring, honouring and celebrating the diversity is apparent. Cooperation of each individual, principal, lecturer, student or parent is accepted in the community. When The Americans Act for persons with special needs was implemented in 1990, buildings were changed in terms of

accessibility. Mace (1997) alluded that universal design was coined by an architect who dreamt that new structures and spaces could be made accessible by design from the beginning.

According to Orkwis and McLane (1998), universal design in learning situation means; the design of instructional material and activities that allow individuals with wide differences in their abilities to see, hear, speak, move, read, write, pay attention, organize, engage and remember to achieve in the classroom. The challenge of establishing inclusive education is occurring within a context of economic and social change. It is closely linked to civil society's vision of equitable development and eradication of poverty for society's most marginalized groups. World Bank (1988), argues that the goal of eradicating poverty is not possible when society's most vulnerable groups remain marginalized from actively participating in the process of economic change.

Elwan, (1998) explains that, poverty experienced by people with disability is tied to lack of access and opportunities to education and employment. Indeed, low levels of education deny people the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills necessary to integrate in the formal labour market where pay benefits and working conditions are typically more advantageous than informal economic sector. The universal design understands inclusion to mean that people with disability must be provided from the outset with resources and structures they need to be fully contributing members of society. Inclusion generally means changing society to become welcoming to the participation of people with disabilities each according to his or her abilities and interests.

The World Education Forum Meeting in Dakar in 2000, also recognized the rights of children with disabilities to be included in mainstream

education. A more recent Arab Regional Conference held in 2001 by United Nation Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Islamic Organization for Education and Culture (ISESCO) named it „Education in the formal educational system for students with special needs“ which placed an emphasis on the inclusion of students with special needs in the mainstream educational system. World Bank report (1999) said that chief among these is the commitment of the world community, Somalia included, to providing basic education to all Somalis. This significant move was clearly expressed by the World Conference on „Education For All held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990.

The 1948 United Declaration of Human Rights (UHDR) on the rights to education of every individual was reaffirmed in UNESCO report of 1994 which came up with Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs. It further renewed the pledge made by the world community at the 1990 Jomtien conference – to ensure human rights regardless of individual differences. Engelbrecht and Booyen (1999) asserted that an inclusive philosophy is central to the educational policies of large developed and developing countries and has emerged as an important aspect of international discussion, about how best to respond to learners who experience difficulties in schools/institutions like Somalia. In recent years, there has been a significant development internationally in the education of learners with special needs. The transformation of integration movement into inclusion movement is a shift of emphasis in an attempt to overcome some of the perceived limitations of integration. The former term is increasingly seen as referring to a limited attempt to accommodate and support learners with special needs in regular schools.

In this respect, commissions on education which were set up in Somalia since independence came up with varying recommendations on the special needs education. For example, Gachathi Commission (1976) suggested several ways through which special education could be improved and expanded. The report specifically stated the need of having special needs students with special educational needs to be educated in special schools. The report of the presidential working party on education manpower for the next decade and beyond also known as Kamunge report (1988) disagreed with the earlier report. They stated that students with special needs in schools had similar goals of education with those students without special needs.

In addition the Government constituted Somalia Institute of Special Education (KISE) which is a semi autonomous government agency of the Ministry of Education, Somalia which was to establish linkages with national and international institutions on inclusive education and also to offer consultancy services in special needs education and related areas.

### **IMPORTANCE AND CURRENT TRENDS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

According to UNESCO (1994), inclusion is a growing phenomenon in Africa. Low (1983) affirmed the importance of inclusion as students with special needs can achieve the fullest educational progress and social integration within inclusive settings while separate socialization breeds negative attitudes and prejudice, intolerance and selfdenigration.

There have been efforts internationally to include children with disabilities in the educational mainstream. In order to achieve truly inclusive education, we need to think about and incorporate children with special

needs into regular schools. Especially, because these kids face some sort of barriers to learning and participation in the classroom. As general education classrooms include more and more diverse students, teachers realize the value of accepting each student as unique. In effective inclusive programs, teachers adapt activities to include all students, even though their individual goals may be different. We have learned that inclusive education is a better way to help all students succeed. Researches show that most students learn and perform better when exposed to the richness of the general education curriculum. The growing body of research has shown that children do better academically when in inclusive settings and Inclusion provides opportunities to develop relationships. Some of the benefits include: friendships, social skills, personal principles, comfort level with people who have special needs, and caring classroom environments.

The most important function of friendships is to make people feel cared for, loved, and safe. In an inclusive educational setting, low-achieving students are able to get extra help even though they did not qualify for special education. Classmates of students with disabilities also experience growth in social cognition, often can become more aware of the needs of others in inclusive classrooms. An interesting side effect is that these parents report that they also feel more comfortable with people with special needs because of their children's experiences. Students with disabilities can create longlasting friendships that would not be otherwise possible, and these friendships can give them the skills to navigate social relationships later on in life.

In Somalia, people with disability not only represent a critical segment of the marginalized population, but also face special problems. As a result of their disabilities, most of them have no

access to education, health, employment or rehabilitation services. According to UNESCO (1997) the majority experience hardships as a result of in-built socialcultural and economic prejudices, stigmatization and more often, ostracism and violation of their fundamental human rights.

According to Karugu (1984), much has been done since independence by voluntary organizations, government and international agencies, such as UNICEF and UNESCO to create awareness among all students in respect of the unique position of people with special needs in the society including Somalia that opened a resource room in 1981, for students with visual impairment who included students with albinism. The physically handicapped students were provided access to all areas of the library through the use of an elevator which would accommodate wheelchairs but students with hearing impairment were to provide their own hearing aids and sign language interpreters.

Government of Somalia (1992), the call for education for all was echoed in light of Jomtien conference recommendations. The government realized there was a great concern to ensure various disadvantaged groups hitherto students with special needs are not denied education by all kinds of factors and are assisted to access education in both basic and tertiary institutions. The major objective was to ensure educational opportunities for the full development of individual talent and ability are availed to all through an open door system so that no Somalis are denied the chance to learn. Government of Somalia, (1999), stated that the recent development in improving access to educational provisions for learners with special needs is seen in terms of including them in the mainstream education and training. This call for inclusion has attracted increased involvement of governments and interest groups in seeking to

improve access to education for majority of those with special needs still unreached. It is from these foregoing that when these learners complete their basic education can advance to their higher level of education. Inclusion of students with special needs to train with their regular peers in Somalia offered a sufficient proposition to implement inclusive education for students with special needs.

The first recorded case of implementation of inclusion in Somalia was in July 1981, opened by the Honorable Charles Njonjo which was called the Dean of Students Affairs Disability Service Centre. This was a resource room that provided and maintained Braille equipment and transcription of

Braille to print for the lecturers and, print to Braille for the Visually Impaired (VI) and students with albinism who required the services. Physical handicapped students were provided with some level of access to university facilities while the hearing impaired required hearing aids and sign language interpreters.

With increased knowledge of inclusive education it did not only mean a resource room but also adaptations in teaching methodology, access to the lecture halls/accommodation, resources, equipment, attitudes of students with special needs and a collective awareness in the institution. In fact, on 26th February 2010, Somalia inaugurated the first Somalia Disability Day on their calendar and also opened a Disability and Awareness Centre which was a centre of information on disability.

Mwaura, (1999), said that the right to education does not imply inclusion. The right to inclusive education was initially stated in the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action in Special education in 1994 which emphasized that the

school need to change and adopt the diverse needs of all learners.

According to Commission of Higher Education (2007), lack of proper inclusion plan, resources and teaching methodology remains a greater challenge to the inclusive education. According to UNESCO (1994), with the fundamental goal of the inclusive education movement to protect the rights of students with special needs and to widen access to educational opportunities to them. Hence, Somalia has been admitting students with special needs for more than two decades under this guideline with no study showing how inclusive education has been implemented. Further, there is no evidence in other higher education institutions in Somalia if they have programs for inclusive education e.g. a study by Songe (2004) showed that Somalia polytechnic has no program to accommodate students with special needs.

It is for this reason that a study was carried out to gather information on the current state of the implementation so as to be able to provide the educators and administrators with strategies to plan for the inclusive education of the students with special needs in Somalia.

## **RESOURCES REQUIRED IN IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

Johnson et al. (1994), states that the philosophy of inclusion called for the provision of equal opportunities and access to all resources, services and responsibilities to all. Inclusive education works towards the elimination of all physical and invisible difficulties encountered which reduced the access to provision of education to students with special needs in education in the ordinary classroom.

Students with special needs sometimes require specialised resources/facilities when they are learning in an inclusive environment. For example:

V.I will require resources such as brail machines, brail paper, computers with adaptive soft wares, white canes, brail books, tactile diagrams, book reading machines, resource rooms, adaptations in the curriculum and silent reading rooms. The students with albinism will sometimes require these resources depending on their degree of visual impairments. In addition they require soft copy and large print text.

The students who are physically handicapped might not require any adaptation in terms of curriculum content and teaching instructions because their impairments do not affect their visual and hearing capacities which are mostly used in regular education setting, but this orthopaedic impairment according to Public Law 94-142 severely affects a student's educational performance. Kennedy (1990) states that these are the students who will require aids such as, wheelchairs, prostheses, helmets, book readers, page turners, writing aids, rest equipments, special tables and desks. Apart from this they function well provided that some vital equipment and accommodation are provided. Mostly for this disability is to have a barrier free access which means the buildings must be accessible to those who use wheelchairs, crutches and callipers and also pavements and other physical or structural environment need to be accessible.

Langley (1979) states that: "Architectural barriers make students dependent, limit opportunities for experience, and lower self-esteem. Therefore care must be taken to ensure that programme accessibility and building accessibility go hand in hand.

According to Clark (1984), everyone who is learning to understand and use sign language needs a sign language interpreter, hearing aid, resource room, quit classroom, avoid food in the mouth when talking, rephrasing statements using different words and using a normal speech rate. Even if a student with hearing aids can hear and speak, that student is still deaf. Ndurumo (1993) says that oral method in teaching instructions should be de-emphasized in favour of a combined method of communication. An inclusive method that uses all possible cues simultaneously from the very beginning, that utilizes the deaf person's strengths, his normal intelligence and vision, is the only sound procedure.

In fact Mba (1979) says that studies have shown that hearing impairment students gain greater improvement educationally, psychologically and socially when total communication is used with them.

JamieBerke, (2010), states that, lecturers should use oral/aural techniques and sign language methods. This is the best way of imparting information to the students and reduces challenges in communication between them. Therefore it is very important for the students to follow the curriculum of the institution because they only require more visual teaching methods but the content remains the same as their peers.

#### **FEW MEASURES FOR IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

Inclusive education helps the disabled child to develop a sense of pride in their work because they actually fill like they accomplished something. We know that Albert Einstein was learning disabled but still managed to become the greatest mind of the 20th century. Educating children with disabilities alongside their non-disabled peers is considered one of the better

ways to provide education to the population in Somalia (Shah, 2005, Shah et al., 2014). The Government of Somalia needs to bridge the gaps in their education system to build a strong system of inclusive education in the country. So, there are following measures for better implementation of Inclusive Education in Somalia.

1. The preparation of teachers for rural special education programmes should be planned differently, as the aim of these programmes would be to integrate disabled persons in their own environment and community.

2. As a system, inclusive education should be flexible. Its flexibility must be reflected in the methods and materials used to give these children the widest possible access to the regular curriculum.

3. A school-based support team should develop strategies for the whole school to meet the needs of learners with special educational needs. This team should also be a resource for teachers experiencing problems in their classrooms.

4. The school has the primary responsibility for helping children learn alongside their typically developing peers. An inclusive school must enable education structures, systems and methodologies to meet the needs of all children,

particularly those who face the greatest barriers to achieving their right to education.

5. Parents have a right to be involved in all decision-making concerning their child. They should be seen as partners in the education process. Where there is such cooperation, parents have been found to be very important resources for the teachers and the schools.

6. Bringing special children into mainstream requires adjustments that schools need to make in advance. Transport facilities should be altered, so that these children can move around with relative ease. Architecturally, there should be ramps and wheelchair access constructed in service areas such as toilets.

7. Student-oriented components, such as medical and educational assessment, books and stationery, uniforms, transport allowance, reader allowance and stipend for girls, support services, assistive devices, boarding the lodging facility, therapeutic services, teaching learning materials, etc should provide according to need of the students.

8. Differently abled children should be treated equally as the normal children and instead of looking them in sympathy their talents and abilities should be recognised for their self-respect and welfare of the society.

9. Necessary school supplies such as audio learning or textbooks in Braille should be made available. Suitable modification to examination

system may be required, so as to eliminate pure mathematical and logical assessments.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The study was used descriptive survey and co relational designs. In descriptive designs, the study explains the variables by conceptualizing them. In co relational design the researchers was tried to correlate the two variables studied to see if they relate and or impact one another.

give chance to the respondents to read and understand questions and get time to answer it while interview is intended to target the key individuals who have no chance to fill questionnaire and collect important information obtained from nonverbal communications. These two tools enable the researcher to obtain the required information from the respondents under study.

### **RESEARCH POPULATION**

The target population of this study was 51 among the Visual Impaired, Physically Handicapped and Hearing Impaired students; while the sample size of the study was 45 respondent.

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

The collected data was analyzed critically by using (SPSS VERSION 20) and excel sheet and put it in Tables and figures. The tables and figures were clearly translated and was .Table 1: Groups of Special needs students meaningful, reliable and accurate information was generated from them. Quantitative data will be analyzed through mode and means and as well as frequency tabulations to arrive a valuable conclusion. In an interview guide data was analyzed basing on the chagement of the researcher to subjects responses

### **RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

The researcher was used questionnaire and interview as a research instrument to collect data from the field. Questionnaire is intended to



Group	Number	Percentage (%)
Hearing Impaired	26	57.8
Physically Handicapped	10	22.2
Visual Impaired	9	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

**TABLE 2: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS**

Descriptive Statistics						
	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
The teaching methodology used by lecturers is appropriate	45	3	5	4.78	.560	Very Effective
The special needs students always need to encourage	45	3	5	4.71	.589	Very Effective
Inclusion in education refers to all students being able to access and gain equal opportunities to education and learning.	45	1	5	3.60	.889	Effective
The curriculum content is suitable for special needs students	45	1	5	3.56	1.035	Effective
The pedestrian walk to the classroom is ok	45	1	5	3.49	.968	Effective
<b>Average</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4.028</b>	<b>0.8082</b>	<b>Effective</b>

The above table 2 indicates that this study examined the Implementation of inclusive education in Somalia. The current Implementation of inclusive education in this study was investigated as regards to economic intervention, political intervention and social intervention. Mean values and standard deviations were used to determine the current Implementation of inclusive education. Mean ranges from 1.00-1.79 indicated that majority of the respondents strongly disagreed with the items investigated under inclusive education, thus, the current inclusive education in Somalia is very ineffective; mean ranges from 1.802-59 show that majority of the respondents disagreed with the items investigated under inclusive education, thus, the

## CONCLUSION

Right to Education Act 2009 ensures education to all children irrespective of their caste, religion, ability, and so on. It is essential to build an inclusive society through an inclusive approach. In doing so, we have challenged commonly held beliefs and developed a new set of core assumptions. Inclusion is more than a method of educating students with disabilities. It stresses that each child, regardless of the intensity and severity of his or her disabilities, is a valued member of society and is capable of participating in that society. A good inclusive education is one that allows all the students to participate in all aspects of classroom equally or close to equal. To meet the challenges, the involvement and cooperation of educators, parents, and community leaders is vital for the creation of better and more inclusive schools. The Government of Somalia is trying to improve its education system focusing on the inclusive approach. The challenges can be overcome by raising

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current inclusive education in Somalia is ineffective; mean ranges from 2.60-3.39 indicate that majority of the respondents were neutral about the items investigated under inclusive education, thus, the current inclusive education in Somalia is moderately effective; mean ranges from 3.40-4.19 show that majority of the respondents agreed with the items investigated under inclusive education, thus, the current inclusive education in the Somalia is effective; and lastly; mean ranges from 4.20-5.00 portray that majority of the respondents strongly agreed with the items investigated under inclusive education in the Somalia, thus, the current inclusive education in the Somalia is very effective.

awareness of human rights in communities and publicising positive examples of disabled children and adults succeeding in inclusive education and in life beyond school as a result. We need to develop an inclusive design of learning to make the education joyful for all children so that the education for them is welcoming, learner friendly and beneficial and they feel as a part of it not apart from it. Therefore, Inclusion arose as a good solution to the question of how to educate these children more effectively.

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