CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter closes the whole work of the study. It summarises the entire study focusing on the objectives of the study. It also presents the main points drawn from the study as a conclusion and recommendations evaluating from the findings of the research.

6.1. Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the practice of inclusive teaching in addressing the needs of VISs in ELT settings. The study embraced teachers’ beliefs, attitudes and instructional behaviours. It also dealt with VISs opinions with regard to their attitudes towards learning in inclusive settings and the strategy they use to compete with other students. Other related issues such as opportunities and challenges in the process of implementing inclusive teaching were also examined in the study. This study was conducted in the three metropolitan cities of Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia, targeting schools in the second cycle (Grade 5-8) of primary education.

Studying the practice of inclusive teaching with the consent of VISs emanated from various reasons. To the knowledge of the researcher, there are very limited empirical studies which illustrate the past and the current practice of inclusive teaching in schools at national and/or regional level in Ethiopian context. Even at global level, many of the research studies conducted on inclusive education tended to focus on disabilities and subjects in general, without giving due attention to specific disability, for example VISs
in this case and subject area like English. Consequently, issues associated with VISs in the ELT context have not got due research attention. Hence, this research would have a positive outcome to fill this gap in.

In Ethiopia English language is currently used as a foreign language which is solely applied for academic purposes, as a subject and as medium of instruction. It is also used for communication purposes in government and non-government organizations. With the consent of these English language has prominent roles in Ethiopian education system and is one of the components of national curriculum at various levels.

Realizing the prominent requirements of providing universal primary education by 2015 taking the motto’ Education for All’, the government of Ethiopia through MOE has designed ‘Special Needs Education Program Strategy” (SNEPS) for implementation in the education system at national level. In the light of this, strategic priorities of this program have been identified (MOE, 2006).

In the process of implementing SNEPS, the question of inclusive education has attracted researchers' attention to deal with what it means and how it is implemented in various contexts. In this case, an examination of literature and practice of inclusive education shows that there is no universally agreed definition of the term inclusion. It is context specific which varies from country to country, from school to school.

In some cases inclusive education has a broad concept which refers to place a classroom in regular school building…a change in the school climate….a diverse learners welcomed and accommodated by their teachers (Pijil, Mijier and Hegarty(1997).
In another context inclusion means different things in different schools and among different professionals. Hence, inclusion is understood involving various ranges of levels (See 3.1.1.) (Dyson and Millward(2000). It is also associated with the concerns about the children with disabilities (Singal, 2005); and sometimes seen as a ‘political strategy’ which advocates human rights and democratic principles (UNESCO, 1998). This implies that inclusion in education is a human right as stated “Everyone has the right to education.”(UNESCO, 2005)

In relation to VISs the concept of inclusive education implies that VISs in schools should be taught and examined in the same manner and get equal opportunities in order to sit for a similar examination that would be marked and graded similarly (Wamae and Kang’ethe-Kamu (2004). Inclusive education could also be seen from educational, social and economic perspectives in terms of its importance (See 3.1.3).

There are various factors which directly or indirectly influence the success of inclusive education. These factors may be internal and external and their degree varies from country to country. In the light of these different scholars and researchers (for example, Alahababi(2009), Mitchel(2008), Berhanu (2011) elicited factors such as class size, negative attitudes, lack of support, inadequate resources lack of adapted curriculum, lack of (inadequate) training, rigid teaching methods, inappropriate assessment methods and lack of coordination and integration.

Inclusion in the context of English language teaching will be effective” if teachers are able to respond to a wider range of needs and this could be achieved through greater differentiation of tasks and materials, that is, school-based intervention( Davies, 2004).
Disability can be defined following traditional model, medical model and social model (See 3.2.1). This conceptualization, in turn, indicates how the question of disability is treated or approached in education. In the same way the term visual impairment is classified and labeled as educational definition, medical definition and legal definition (Mangal, 2007). In this case, the educational definition of visual impairment signifies the relationship between vision and learning and shows the challenges associated with this. Hence, a child with visual impairment needs special attention from the teacher in order to learn effectively and meaningfully.

In this study data triangulation and methods triangulation were employed to collect data using quantitative and triangulation methods (See 4.1.). By employing these methods the following outstanding results were found.

The target schools selected were characterised by admitting VISs in the regular classroom. Among these three schools run two programmes, namely special units and inclusion while the other three run only inclusion. This entails a difference in organization and exposure to SNE and IE practice.

Teachers’ attitudes in relation to their demographic characteristics were examined to see whether teachers promote inclusive teaching positively or not and identify the factors which influence their attitudes. In the light of this teachers seemed positive towards inclusive education in addressing the needs of disabled and visually impaired students. Among the factors which influence teachers’ attitudes their qualification, training and experience of teaching VIS were found to be statistically significant.
Teachers’ beliefs on disability/visual impairment, inclusive education, taking its benefits and requirements for making it successful were assessed in the study. The results in this regard showed that teachers claimed they have a strong belief in these three aspects.

As mentioned in the objectives of the research the major concern of the study was to investigate the practice of inclusive teaching in the second cycle in ELT settings. In this case teachers’ instructional behaviours were examined. The results in this case revealed that teachers claimed encouraging VIS to participate in co-curricular activities such as language club, devoting their time out of class to support VISs, considering VISs when planning and delivering English lessons, assigning able students to read materials for VISs, allowing VISs to attend extra classes during math and chemistry classes which they never learn these, following up the participation of VISs in class, and assessing their performance during class hours or exams.

Though teachers claimed doing all these as observed from statistical data, findings based on classroom observations and responses from VISs’ interview depicted that some of their claims are found to be inadequate (See 5.3.5). With regard to strategies teachers follow in inclusive classes, the findings showed that teachers claimed they allow low vision students to sit in front, and use large fonts while writing on the chalkboard, read what they have written on the board, assign sighted students to help VISs by reading textbooks, use concrete examples while presenting the lesson, and use multi-sensory approach in lesson presentation. But from lesson observations it was found that there was a gap between what teachers claimed and what they actually did in the class. This was
also seen in Table 14 that negative non-significant correlation was observed between teachers’ belief and their practice in inclusive teaching.

In the process of teaching and learning English language in inclusive settings assessing how the four language skills are perceived by teachers and VISs was the concern of this study. With regard to this the findings showed that both teachers and VISs were more or less in a similar position that reading and writing are the (most) serious problem in their own perspective. They also considered speaking as a minor problem while listening is not a problem at all. The main reason for stating reading and writing as the (most) serious problem was that teachers and VISs never use common medium of communication while reading and writing. This is to mean that teachers depended on English alphabets while VISs depended on raised dots on Braille.

The role of parents in inclusive education is considered as one of the requirements for successful inclusion. But as indicated in Table 14, referring to demographic characteristics of VISs, 68% of VISs were living without parents and 28% with guardian. Because of this there seemed no parent involvement in schools. This implies that VISs are to be responsible for their own learning.

From the overall survey results it was found out that there was no collaboration and coordination between SNE units and IE activities in schools where these two programmes are functioning. This implies that it was not possible for teachers in both cycles (1st cycle and 2nd cycle) to share available resources such as materials, teaching aids and so on, and share experiences. This was very important especially for teachers who were involved in inclusive teaching with inadequate or no training in SNE and IE.
In the study it was investigated that the target schools which were running inclusive teaching by enrolling VISs had limited or no resources for this purpose as compared to SNE units in the 1\textsuperscript{st} cycle. The most demanding questions were no budget to support IE, scarcity of materials like text books and supplementary materials converted to Braille, stationary materials such as stylus, and paper, tape recorder and cassettes.

\textbf{6.2. Conclusions}

Based on the findings, the following conclusions could be derived:

1. Both teachers and VISs seemed to have positive attitudes towards inclusion. However, teachers in particular tend to vary in attitude in relation to their qualification, training and experience of teaching VISs. This could be taken as a favourable condition for implementing inclusive education. It also implies that due attention should be given to teachers’ qualification, training and experience of teaching VISs when assigning teachers in inclusive classes.

2. Teachers claimed they had a belief that the disabled / visually impaired students need to be taught in inclusive settings by considering this as a right. They also believed in inclusive teaching as beneficial and the requirements must be fulfilled. In this regard teachers seemed in a position to a clear view on the relationship between disability and inclusive teaching.

3. Teachers’ instructional practices in relation to adapting materials / lessons to fit VISs, following up and assessing the performance of VISs, and employing group work and cooperative learning to benefit VISs in class activities were not properly managed. This
might have been caused due to various factors such as lack of training, experience, and resources. Consequently, non-significant correlation was observed between teachers’ belief and their practice in inclusive teaching. This implies that there is a gap between what teachers believe and what they practice.

4 Though MOE has made SNEPS for implementing in the education system there was no organizational structure functioning to support inclusive education from region to school level. This led schools not to be effective in running the program due to lack of resources, guidelines and training for the staff.

5. Inclusive education would be effective as long as minimum requirements are fulfilled. In this respect, the target schools observed admit VISs without having any essential preparation to support students with SNE. Because of this they faced problems of budget and materials.

6. There was no coordination and collaboration between SNE units and inclusive education teachers in schools which were running the two programmes in sharing experiences and available resources. This could be taken as a focus area which demands an integrated measure to make inclusive teaching effective.

7. Since most of visually impaired students reported living alone and they attended schools regularly without any family support, this would lead to many dropouts unless enough economic support is given. This in turn will not make inclusive education sustainable in each school.
8. Though certain preconditions such as SNE policy and strategy were declared in favour of the practice of inclusive education in schools, the actual implementation of inclusive education is far from the set objectives due to various constraints such financial, organizational, certain misconceptions about what inclusion means and how it is implemented, and lack of due attention.

Generally from the overall study it would possible to conclude that the practice of inclusive education in the study areas is in its infant stage fulfilling on the one hand essential conditions such as having a positive attitude towards inclusion by both teachers and VISs (VISs also have positive self-image), enrolling VISs in regular classes without discrimination regardless of the absence of parents, giving economic support from the Regional State and limited facilities at school level. On the other hand, various challenges were reported and observed from the study that the target schools were not in a position to fulfill the requirements of inclusive education in the process of addressing the needs of VISs.

6.3. Recommendations

Based on the challenges identified in the process of implementing inclusive education in addressing the needs of VISs, the following recommendations could be made.

1. **Organize/strengthen resource centers**: All schools which practice inclusive teaching should organise resource centers to accommodate the diverse needs of learners. Other schools which have already started delivering some support materials in the SNE units should be in a better position to support inclusive program as well.
2. **Make collaborative and coordinated work:** To integrate and unify the works of teachers in the SNE units and teachers in the general education program (inclusive classes) a collaborative and coordinated work should be in place. These will make schools cost effective in utilizing resources and do continuous professional development (CPD) activities to make teachers effective in handling inclusive teaching.

3. **Provide appropriate materials:** This includes transforming text books and other supplementary materials into Braille, designing a project to get recording materials such as tapes, cassettes, CDs, Braille and assessor materials like paper and styles.

4. **Search for budget allocations or funding to run inclusive program in a better way:** Since schools are deficient on this, special attention should be given to search various options. This requires joint efforts from government bodies, donors which support SNE/IE and schools which run inclusive program.

5. **Provide training to teachers:** Without training teachers never do what they are supposed to do. In this case teachers need to get training on SNE in general and IE in particular on how to address the needs of learners in their subjects, English language in this case. This implies that they have to vary their method of teaching to meet different learning styles such as visual, auditory and kinesthetic type of learners. In the training special attention should also be given to enable teachers adapt materials for teaching and design appropriate activities which make VISs actively involved in the lesson. Teachers should also be trained how to teach, the four language skills based on their level of difficulty, how to assess VISs’ work and give feedback by being exposed to appropriate medium of communication.
6. Consider VISs when designing activities in a syllabus: Design activities in the syllabus appropriate to VISs’ learning experience to increase their involvement in the lesson.

7. Create better opportunities for VISs: VISs do have a lot of queries which require special concern and actions. In the light of these the following were reflected by respondents as a priority.

   a) Make teachers and other students aware of the needs of VISs.
   b) Present some lessons using alternative ways instead of pictures, diagrams and symbols.
   c) Give attention to group formation in class. VISs prefer to sit at least with one student who could support them by reading the notes written by the teacher on the board, the reading passage and exercises from the text book.
   d) Assign responsible person during tests and exams to read questions and write answerers effectively and give extra time while they are taking exams.
   e) Set test/exam questions in a form that will be unbiased to visually impaired students.
   f) Give access for feedback at least orally referring to the work VISs do like others.
   g) Provide support to VISs from SNE teachers.
   h) Say out every word the teacher puts on the board.
   i) Make textbooks, handouts, and other materials available in an appropriate form (e.g., regular print, large print, Braille, or cassette).
j) Consider alternate activities/exercises that can be utilized with less difficulty by the student, but has the same or similar learning objectives.

k) Set test/exam questions in a form that will be unbiased to visually impaired students.