

Policy and Practice of “Inclusive Education” in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: An Analysis from the Perspectives of Teachers and Parents of Children with Disabilities

YOSHIKO TONEGAWA

Waseda University

Especially since the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), agreed to internationally in 2015, have comprised inclusive education, many developing countries formed inclusive education policies. Ethiopia started implementing inclusive education relatively earlier than other developing countries and formed the “Special Needs Education Program Strategy” in 2006, revised in 2012 as the “Special Needs/Inclusive Education Strategy.” In order to practice inclusive education, stakeholders in education need to understand its philosophy (Lipsky & Gartner 1999). Therefore, this study aims to examine the current state of inclusive education in Ethiopia from the perspectives of parents/guardians of children with disabilities and teachers of inclusive classes at primary schools. This research is based on case study methods and explored three public primary schools in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia. The main data collection methods of this study were semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. This study revealed that teachers and parents/guardians of children with disabilities have contradicting views on inclusive education for children with disabilities. Although teachers and parents understand the advantages of inclusive education, they perceive that learning in regular school is not necessarily the best path for children with disabilities. This study also underlines that children with disabilities do not often have a choice in terms of school selection of either regular school or special school under the one-track policy in Addis Ababa.⁽¹⁾

Key words: inclusive education, children with disabilities, teachers’ perceptions, parents of children with disabilities, Addis Ababa

1. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has garnered international attention, especially since the fourth goal of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agreed to in 2015 comprised the idea of inclusive education (UNESCO 2016). Many developing countries have also formed inclusive education policies (e.g., Kawaguchi 2014; Polat 2011). The idea of inclusive education was promoted by the Salamanca Statement adopted at the World Conference on Special Needs Education in 1994 (UNESCO 1994). Its Article 2 demonstrates the basic idea of inclusive education, stating that “every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning,” while “those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs” (UNESCO 1994: viii). Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons

with Disabilities also guarantees an inclusive education system (UN 2014). Furthermore, the fourth SDG is to “(e)nsure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning” and to promote inclusive education (UNESCO 2016: 35). This promotes international agreement regarding the importance of inclusive education.

Ethiopia is one of the countries that implement inclusive education. The “Special Needs Education Program Strategy” was formed in 2006 and revised in 2012 as the “Special Needs/Inclusive Education Strategy.” Based on this policy, the purpose of special needs/inclusive education in Ethiopia is “(t)o build an inclusive education system which will provide quality, relevant and equitable education and training for all children, youth and adults with special educational needs (SEN) and ultimately enable them to fully participate in the socio-economic development of the country” (MoE 2012: 12). Therefore, the establishment of an inclusive society is one of the goals of inclusive education in Ethiopia.

To create an inclusive society, people need to understand inclusiveness, in addition to establishing formal policies and systems. From the perspective of the sociology of education, cultural Marxism indicates that teachers’ attitudes unintentionally affect their students (Yamada 2005). Thus, the understanding and attitudes of stakeholders such as teachers and parents are significant for inclusive education. Lipsky and Gartner (1999) also address the idea that all stakeholders in education should understand the philosophy of inclusive education in order to practice it. However, many previous studies on teachers’ attitudes and parents’ perceptions of inclusive education have been conducted in developed countries, mainly using quantitative research methods (e.g., Avramidis & Norwich 2002). In addition, inclusive education in Ethiopia has not been studied sufficiently from the perspectives of stakeholders’ perceptions. Therefore, this paper aims to examine the current state of inclusive education in Ethiopia from the perspectives of parents of children with disabilities and teachers of inclusive classes at primary schools. This study conducted qualitative interview research to further understand respondents’ perceptions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW: INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND PERCEPTIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

2.1. Definition of inclusive education

Various studies have discussed the definition of inclusive education. Lipsky and Gartner (1999: 15), for instance, define it as “a unitary system that has educational benefits for both typical students and students with special needs” and “a system that provides quality education for all children.” Polat (2011) also states that inclusive education is a process of changing values, attitudes, policies, and practice. Therefore, inclusive education does not mean simply offering classroom settings for all children together but practicing child-centered quality education that meets individual needs and thus ultimately brings change to society.

At the practical level, there is no single model of inclusive education that suits all countries. Practices and adoption of inclusive education vary depending on the country (Dyson 1999; Lipsky & Gartner 1999). Regarding the practice of inclusive education for children with disabilities, there are one-track, two-track, and multi-track systems (e.g. Göransson, Claes, & Karlsson 2011; Ochiai & Shimada 2016). The one-track system comprises a complete inclusive education system in which all children learn in regular classes. In the two-track system, both regular school and special schools co-exist. Multi-track systems are varied and broad, lying somewhere between one- and two-track systems. As observed in the Salamanca Statement and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the one-track system has been suggested. However, even most developed countries have multi-track systems. One of the issues discussed is whether the multi-track system is closer to the one- or two-track system.

Although one-track inclusive education is promoted internationally, the importance of special schools/classes has also been discussed. For instance, the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD)

(2016: 7) has raised a concern about too much emphasis on inclusive education in which children with and without disabilities study together in the same classroom. While education in special schools/classes is considered negatively as segregated education, the WFD (2016) has outlined the importance of special schools/classes for children with hearing impairment, since these children can learn sign language skills and meet their role models in special schools/classes. The importance of special schools/classes has been discussed in relation to inclusive education.

2.2. Perception of stakeholders in inclusive education

As mentioned above, different scholars have discussed the importance of stakeholders understanding the philosophy of inclusive education in order to practice it (e.g., Lipsky & Gartner 1999). This study focuses on teachers of children both with and without disabilities in the same classroom, as well as parents of children with disabilities as stakeholders in inclusive education. This section reviews the existing literature and studies, discussing the perceptions of these two stakeholders.

Teachers' perceptions of inclusive education

While various studies have been conducted on teachers' attitudes, many are based on developed countries and mainly use quantitative research methods. Boer, Pijl, and Minnaert (2011) comprehensively reviewed 26 studies that discuss teachers' perceptions in developed countries. According to them, these studies do not demonstrate clear positive attitudes toward inclusive education by teachers; instead, teachers have either neutral or negative perceptions thereof. However, a meta-analysis by Avramidis and Norwich (2002), based on data from 1984 to 2000, indicated that teachers' perceptions of inclusive education were positive and supportive. Although studies of teachers' perceptions in developing countries are limited, some do exist: for instance, Kuroda, Kartika, and Kitamura (2017) and Ocloo and Suddey (2008) examined the cases of Cambodia and Ghana, respectively. Kuroda, Kartika, and Kitamura (2017) addressed that the idea that inclusion of children with severe sensory impairment is negatively perceived by teachers in Cambodia. Ocloo and Suddey (2008) show that teachers' negative perceptions in inclusive education are the result of a lack of training and necessary facilities in Ghana.

Although many studies are based in developed countries, teachers' perceptions vary depending on the country's situation. These studies often discuss three factors that influence teachers' perceptions: teachers' skills, the educational environment, and relationships between children with and without disabilities. One of the major factors related to teachers' perceptions is teachers' skills, particularly training for teachers. Some studies conducted in Cambodia and certain African countries have addressed the lack of training and support for teachers of children with and without disabilities in the same class (Eleweke & Rodda 2002; Kuroda, Kartika, & Kitamura 2017).

The second factor is the basic educational environment. Those who teach smaller classes tend to have positive attitudes (Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert 2011). One study in Ghana addresses the issue of large class sizes hindering inclusive education (Ocloo & Suddey 2008). Although the issue of class size is not discussed much in studies in developed countries, it more seriously affects classroom management for inclusive education in developing countries. Furthermore, studies on inclusive education in developing countries often focus on the facilities required for children with disabilities (Eleweke & Rodda 2002).

As the third factor, several studies have demonstrated that teachers observed the isolation of children with disabilities, who are sometimes teased and bullied by children without disabilities in the same class (e.g., Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert 2011; UNESCO 2009). This might lead to teachers having negative perceptions of inclusive education. Ring and Travers (2005) interviewed children with learning disabilities in a primary school in Ireland and found barriers for interaction between children with and without disabilities. One report by the European Commission (2013) also mentioned that children with autistic spectrum disorders tend to be teased and bullied by their classmates because of their behavior. These studies suggest that children with certain types of disabilities might face similar situations in regular schools.

Parents' perceptions of inclusive education

The number of studies regarding the perceptions of parents of children with disabilities on inclusive education is limited in comparison to those regarding teachers' perceptions of inclusive education. In addition, studies on parents' perceptions are often conducted in developed countries. According to Boer, Pijl, and Minnaert (2010), who reviewed various studies on parents' perceptions, the majority do not demonstrate clear positive aspects of inclusive education.

One of the major motives for parents of children with disabilities in sending their children to regular classes is the expectation that their children will interact socially with their classmates without disabilities (Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert 2010; Scheepstra, Nakken, & Pijl 1999). They also expect that their children's social interaction and integration in regular classes will lead to their social participation in the future (Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert 2010; Scheepstra, Nakken, & Pijl 1999). This motive forms part of parents' positive perceptions of inclusive education.

On the other hand, negative perceptions consist of different perspectives. Parents are concerned about isolation, rejection, and/or bullying in regular class and do not prefer regular class (e.g., Bailey & Winton 1987; Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert 2010), an idea that is shared by teachers in the aforementioned studies. Other concerns about inclusive education discussed in various studies comprise inadequate teachers' skills owing to a lack of teacher training and support for teachers and a lack of resources to educate children with disabilities (e.g., Bennett, Deluca, & Bruns 1997; Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert 2010). These studies indicate that, because of such concerns, parents may hesitate to send their children with disabilities to regular schools in developed countries.

Based on these existing studies, the current situation of inclusive education from the perspectives of stakeholders' perceptions in developing countries remains unclear. Therefore, based on the perspective suggested by previous studies in developed countries, this study attempts to examine the perceptions of teachers and parents of children with disabilities in Ethiopia as a case study.

2.3. Overview of inclusive education policies in Ethiopia

This section briefly explores policies related to inclusive education in Ethiopia. The Education and Training Policy (ETP) was formulated in 1994 as the first education policy under the current federal democratic rule. In ETP, special education is briefly mentioned (Federal Democratic Republic Government of Ethiopia 1994). Based on ETP, an Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) has been developed for each subsequent year. While ESDP I (1997/98–2001/02) and ESDP II (2002/03–2004/05) did not mention special education at all, ESDP III (2005/06–2010/11) was the first to recognize the needs of special education and indicate the importance of inclusive education (MoE 2003; MoE 2005). ESDP IV (2010/11–2014/15) is the first to have a section on special needs education/inclusive education (MoE 2010). ESDP V (2015/16–2019/20) has "special needs education (SNE)/inclusive education" as one of its cross-cutting programs and shows the current situation and plan with respect to special needs education (MoE 2015a). These transitions indicate that the idea of inclusive education has gradually attracted attention in the education sector in Ethiopia.

As mentioned above, the "Special Needs Education Program Strategy" was formulated in 2006. This strategy is subtitled "Emphasizing inclusive education to meet Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Education For All (EFA) goals." This subtitle shows that the formulation of this strategy has been influenced by the international trend toward inclusive education by UPE and EFA. This strategy was modified as the "Special Needs/Inclusive Education Strategy" in 2012. This renewed strategy clearly states that inclusive education in Ethiopia aims "to build an inclusive education system which will provide quality, relevant and equitable education and training for all children, youth and adults with special needs and ultimately enable them to fully participate in the socio-economic development of the country" (MoE 2012: 12). This means that Ethiopia aims to create an inclusive society by implementing inclusive education.

The Growth and Transformation Plan II (GTP II) (2015/16–2019/20), which is an overall development plan including different sectors in Ethiopia, decided to improve the gross enrollment ratio of primary education for children with special needs to 15%. In 2015, the gross enrollment ratio in primary

education for children with special needs, including children with disabilities, was only 4.4% (NPC 2016). The policy transition indicates that inclusive education has been promoted in Ethiopia overall.

2.4. Implementation of inclusive education: inclusive education resource centers

As an implementation strategy for inclusive education, inclusive education resource centers (IE resource centers) have been established based on the existing cluster system in Ethiopia. The cluster system has been formally applied to all public primary schools in Ethiopia. All schools are categorized as either core schools or satellite schools. A group of three to 35 satellite schools belongs to one core school. In core schools, educational materials are prepared, which the satellite schools can then borrow. Teacher trainings and teacher meetings for experience sharing are also held in the core schools for teachers teaching at both the core and satellite schools (Jennings 2011; MoE 2002).

Based on this existing cluster system, the “Special Needs Education Program Strategy” formed in 2006 includes the establishment of IE resource centers and the placement of itinerant teachers in core schools (MoE 2006). Additionally, the “Guideline for establishing and managing inclusive education resource/support centers” formed in 2015 explains the details of responsibilities and activities in IE resource centers (MoE 2015b). IE resource centers prepare educational materials for children with disabilities, to be used by teachers in both core and satellite schools. Itinerant teachers, who have degrees in Special Needs Education (SNE), support education for children with disabilities in both core and satellite schools. For instance, itinerant teachers identify the types of disability children may have, the level of disability they have, and the needs of children with disabilities (MoE 2015b). According to ESDP V, there are 113 IE resource centers established in Ethiopia (MoE 2015a). In Addis Ababa in March 2017, only nine schools had IE resource centers, and two schools were at the stage of preparing IE resource centers. This indicates that the conditions of the 113 IE resource centers may be varied.

These inclusive education policies and implementation structures indicate that the Ethiopian government has facilitated inclusive education for children with disabilities. However, the practice of inclusive education at the school level has not been well studied. Therefore, this research aims to understand the current practice of inclusive education at the school level from the perspectives of stakeholders: teachers and parents of children with disabilities.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1. Objective of the study

Given international attention to inclusive education and related discussion, this study aims to examine the current state of inclusive education in Ethiopia, particularly education for children with disabilities, by analyzing stakeholders’ perceptions. As mentioned above, Lipsky and Gartner (1999) also address the idea that stakeholders in inclusive education need to understand the philosophy of inclusive education in order to practice it. Although the number of studies of inclusive education in Ethiopia has recently increased (e.g., Asrat 2013; Brittany & Joshi 2017), studies of stakeholders’ perceptions in Ethiopia are limited. Therefore, this study will contribute to our understanding of inclusive education in Ethiopia.

3.2. Data collection

The data collection methods of this study included semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document reviews. Three public primary schools in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia, were selected as the research samples for the study. These three selected public primary schools actively include children with disabilities in their schools based on an interview with an officer of the Addis Ababa Education Bureau. This study mainly conducted semi-structured interviews with a director and two vice-directors, 22 teachers, and 34 parents/guardians of children with disabilities at the three selected schools: Schools A, B, and C.

In cases in which children with disabilities did not currently live with their biological parents, guardians of children with disabilities such as grandparents and elder siblings were also selected for the sample. In terms of the selection, this research confirms that the selected parents/guardians currently lived with the children with disabilities enrolled in the selected schools. Tables 1, 2, and 3 provide information about the selected primary schools.

As limitations of this study, differences in accepting children with disabilities in regular classes based on types and level of disability has not been analyzed. Different types of disability have different educational needs, and this aspect is not included in this study. In addition, the perceptions of parents of children without disabilities are not included in this study. These two perspectives should be examined in further study.

Table 1. Number of students in the sample primary schools

School	Total number of classes	Number of regular classes that have CwDs*	Number of special classes for CwDs	Total number of students	Number of Cw/oDs**	Number of CwDs	Number of CwDs enrolled in regular classes with Cw/oDs
A	29	17	4	1,319	1,226	93	37
B	17	8	0	988	968	20	20
C	32	17	0	1,576	1,437	139	139

Source: Created by the author

Note: *Children with disabilities (CwDs)

**Children without disabilities (Cw/oDs)

Table 2. Number and type of children with disabilities

School	Hearing	Visual	Physical	Intellectual	Multiple	Other*	Total
A	0	14	1	62	5	21	103
B	6	7	2	3	2	0	20
C	14	28	9	4	0	84	139

Source: Created by the author

Note: **"Other" includes developmental disabilities and learning disabilities.

Table 3. Information related to inclusive education in the sample primary schools

School	Established year	Year when started accepting CwDs*	Existence of special class for CwDs	Cluster system Inclusive education (IE) resource center
A	1931	1992	Three special classes for children with intellectual disabilities One special class for vocational training for children with intellectual disabilities (since 1990)	Core school with IE resource center (since 2006)
B	1978	2013	None	Core school with IE resource center (since 2016)
C	1958	2010	None	Satellite school (belonging to a core school without IE resource center)

Source: Created by the author

Note: *Children with disabilities (CwDs)

4. RESULTS: INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN ETHIOPIA

4.1. Inclusive education for children with disabilities in Addis Ababa

As mentioned above, three sample public primary schools are recognized by an officer of Addis Ababa Education Bureau as schools promoting the acceptance of children with disabilities (Table 3). The number of enrolled children with disabilities in all three schools has increased annually. According to the directors and vice-directors of the three schools, they were informed in approximately 2014 that all public primary schools must accept children with disabilities unconditionally. Due to this notification, no school can reject any child for any reason, even if they are not prepared to accept children with disabilities. In practice, about 25 out of 221 public primary schools in Addis Ababa are recognized as schools accepting children with disabilities by Addis Ababa Education Bureau in 2019. All selected directors and vice-directors addressed the fact that they do not have enough teachers with pre-service teacher training on Special Needs Education (SNE) and who have obtained SNE diplomas/degrees (hereinafter, SNE teachers) (Table 4). In addition, the selected directors and vice-directors mentioned a lack of necessary education materials and school facilities for children with certain types of disabilities. For instance, since School A has a long history of specializing in children with intellectual disabilities in special classes, they do not have much experience with children with other types of disabilities. The vice-director of School A mentioned that they were not confident about addressing other types of disability because they are not prepared for it. With this situation, the one-track inclusive education proposed by the Salamanca Statement has not been implemented in Addis Ababa.

4.2. Teachers' perceptions of inclusive education for children with disabilities

This study focuses on the perceptions of inclusive education by teachers and parents/guardians of children with disabilities to understand the current state of inclusive education in Ethiopia. First, this section examines teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward inclusive education. The author interviewed teachers who have experience of teaching children both with and without disabilities together in one classroom. Table 4 provides information about the teachers in the selected schools.

Although there are SNE teachers in the selected schools, they are normally responsible for special classes only.⁽²⁾ Therefore, other teachers without SNE diplomas/degrees teach regular classes, including children both with and without disabilities. This study found that the selected teachers have mixed and contradicting perceptions about inclusive education from different points of view. It found that the selected teachers of classes including children both with and without disabilities positively perceive inclusive education in terms of social skills of students. The teachers perceive that inclusive education gives children with disabilities the opportunity to improve their social skills, especially. The following two interview extracts are such examples.

Inclusive [class] is better because it is very important for their [students'] social development—the importance of social skills. When they (children with disabilities) are learning in special classes, their

Table 4. Information about teachers in the selected schools

	Total No. of teachers			No. of SNE teachers*		
	male	female	total	male	female	total
A**	28	34	62	5	4	9
B	21	20	41	1	2	3
C	41	43	84	0	6	6

Source: Created by the author

Note: *SNE (Special Needs Education) teachers received pre-service teacher training on special needs education and obtained SNE diplomas/degrees.

**All SNE teachers in School A are responsible for special classes only.

social development is very poor; they have a very homogenous experience with the same type of disabilities. But here (in regular class), because there are diverse learners, their social skills will improve. (Teacher in School A with three years of teaching experience in total and one year of experience teaching children with disabilities in regular class, February 24, 2017)

Peers without disabilities socialize with disabled children. It will facilitate development of children with disabilities and contribute to their learning. Also, they (children with disabilities) don't feel isolated from society. (Teacher in School C with seven years of teaching experience in total and two years of experience teaching children with disabilities in regular class, March 7, 2017)

The interviews above address the idea that socialization between children with and without disabilities promotes social skills and development for children with disabilities. In other words, parents of children with disabilities expect improvement of non-cognitive skills,⁽³⁾ especially interpersonal skills. Also, the second interview specifically indicates that children with disabilities can adjust to society more easily through experiences socializing with children without disabilities. In addition, the selected teachers also addressed the positive influences on children without disabilities that occur from learning with disabled children, since children without disabilities can also learn how to communicate with disabled children.

On the other hand, owing to the practical difficulty of teaching children with and without disabilities in the same class, the selected teachers also have negative perceptions of inclusive education for children with disabilities. There are four principal reasons why they negatively perceive inclusive education.

First, the educational environment is not well established for teaching children with disabilities in regular class. For instance, since the number of students per class is large (e.g., more than 60 students per class), teachers have difficulty paying attention to children with disabilities. In Ethiopia, the number of students per classroom tends to be large due to the lack of teachers and classrooms. The selected teachers complained about teaching children with disabilities in a large class. This mirrors the findings from a case study in Ghana (Ocloo & Suddey 2008). In addition to a large class, teachers were having difficulty managing many students, particularly at lower grade levels. For instance, the author observed teachers expending energy and time trying to get students to be quiet and seated in two Grade 1 classes at School B. This is not only because of care for students with disabilities but also because of students' age. Young Grade 1 students often need time to get used to school life, which requires collective behavior and longer attention spans. Grade 3 in School B and Grade 5 and 6 in other schools observed by the author were more organized and controlled. This may be because of students' age and teachers' experience and skills.

Furthermore, the interviewed teachers mentioned that the time duration for one class, which is 40 minutes, is not long enough to teach based on the curriculum with special attention to children with disabilities. The amount and contents of the curriculum need to be modified for inclusive education for children with disabilities. In addition, teachers' evaluation and promotion are based on their students' test scores. Due to this evaluation system, teachers are unwilling to teach children with disabilities, since they tend to perceive children with disabilities as having lower grades and/or even repeating the same year.

Second, there is little opportunity for teachers to receive advice about teaching children with disabilities. Except for School B, in Schools A and C, there seems to be distance between SNE teachers and regular teachers. This is partly because they have been teaching different types of students in different classroom settings: children with disabilities in special classes for SNE teachers and children without disabilities in regular classes for regular teachers. Since special classes often finish earlier than regular classes, their working time is also different. This provides less opportunity for SNE teachers and regular teachers to communicate with each other. In addition, their pre-service education training comes under the separated track; teachers recognize that the professions of SNE teacher and regular teacher are different from each other. Based on this school system and background, SNE

teachers and regular teachers do not collaborate in teaching or support each other in many cases, even after children with disabilities begin to be educated in regular classes.

According to the interviewed teachers, one itinerant teacher in School A is often absent. This might be because the itinerant teacher has to visit satellite schools, but regular teachers do not know when the itinerant teacher is available in their school. On the other hand, in School B, there are good relationships between the itinerant teacher, SNE teachers, and regular teachers. In the school, teachers often receive support from the itinerant teacher and SNE teachers. In School B, SNE teachers teach regular classes, so they often communicate with regular teachers. Also, the location of an IE resource center may affect their relationships. On the one hand, in School A, the IE resource center is located in the back corner of the school compound, which is also far from the teachers' office. On the other hand, School B has its IE resource center in the school building closest to the main school gate. All teachers and students always pass in front of the IE resource center, so regular teachers may easily communicate with the itinerant teacher.

The third reason for the teachers' negative perceptions about inclusive education is the lack of teachers' skills in teaching children with disabilities. This is also related to the second reason. In the interviews, the teachers mentioned that they are not trained practically in how to teach children with disabilities. The following interview extract indicates the difficulties they face.

I have received a lot of courses in special needs education, and I believe that students with diverse abilities and characteristics can learn together. The problem is, with the existing situation, we don't have teachers' expertise on that level ... The current situation doesn't allow teachers to practice inclusive education. (Teacher in School B with 34 years of teaching experience in total and 10 years of experience teaching children with disabilities in regular class, March 6, 2017)

The interviewed teacher above also complained about the lack of practical training in braille, sign language, and behavior management skills. Other teachers who were interviewed also mentioned that the in-service trainings they received mainly comprised theories of inclusive education and did not include practical skills. A study of teachers' attitudes in Cambodia also addressed the lack of support and training for teachers (Kuroda, Kartika, & Kitamura 2017). This study found that the contents of training do not match teachers' needs, although teachers at the selected schools have some opportunities to receive training.

In addition to the three reasons above, the final reason for teachers' negative perceptions of teaching children with disabilities in regular classes is the relationships they observe among students in the same classroom. The interviewed teachers addressed the observation that children with disabilities do not necessarily have intimate relationships with their classmates without disabilities in regular school. This contradicts the supposed improvement of non-cognitive skills, which is addressed above as a positive perception of inclusive education. From this perspective, these interviewed teachers even perceived that special school is better since children with the same type of disability can easily develop friendships. In fact, some of the interviewed parents/guardians of children with disabilities also recognized that their children had friends with the same type of disability only, despite learning in regular class. Based on this study, there were no informant address bullying and teasing as previous studies in Europe indicated (e.g., Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert 2011). However, disconnection between children with and without disabilities may cause negative perceptions toward education in regular schools for children with disabilities. This suggests that there are practical difficulties in building close relationships among children with and without disabilities, although teachers are aware that, in theory, learning together with children without disabilities has a positive effect on non-cognitive skills for children with disabilities. This might also indicate a lack of understanding of disabilities by children without disabilities, as well as a mutual understanding between children with and without disabilities. In addition, disconnection between children with and without disabilities may also come from a lack of teachers' skills to promote understanding about disabilities and/or to create a friendly atmosphere for mixing students in the class.

Based on these four reasons—an unprepared educational environment for teaching children with disabilities, a lack of advice for teachers about teaching children with disabilities, a lack of teachers' teaching skills, and disconnection among students—the selected teachers often demonstrated negative perceptions of inclusive education for children with disabilities. Owing to such negative ideas about inclusive education, the selected teachers believed that special classes/schools could offer relevant and necessary support for children with disabilities at the individual level; therefore, children with disabilities benefit more from learning that is specially provided for them. This perception indicates that the current “inclusive education” for children with disabilities lacks teachers' skills and teachers' understanding of disabilities.

Based on their interviews, many selected teachers perceive the current state of inclusive education for children with disabilities to be ineffective for them, from the perspectives of both cognitive and non-cognitive skills. This is because teachers are not well equipped to teach children with disabilities and cannot provide education that takes children with disabilities into consideration. Teachers are also aware of the importance of inclusive education, which positively influences children both with and without disabilities, particularly from the perspective of non-cognitive skills. This means that teachers understand the philosophy of inclusive education proposed in the Salamanca Statement. Although teachers recognize the importance of education in regular class for children with disabilities, they perceive that children with disabilities in their regular classes often do not have an acceptable level of learning that meets their needs in the current situation in selected schools in Addis Ababa.

4.3. Parents/guardians' perceptions of inclusive education for children with disabilities

This section examines the perceptions of parents/guardians of children with disabilities related to inclusive education for such children in selected schools. Approximately two-thirds of these parents/guardians had not heard the term “inclusive education.” Approximately one-third were aware of the term, simply from teaching children both with and without disabilities together in the same classroom. Several informants mentioned that they had learned about “inclusive education” from their school meetings and government radio programs. They often do not know that inclusive education means providing every child with education that meets their individual needs. This shows that most of the selected parents/guardians do not fully understand the philosophy of inclusive education.

In comparison with special schools, the selected parents/guardians also addressed both positive and negative perceptions of education in regular school for children with disabilities. Regarding positive perceptions of inclusive education, several informants mentioned the attainment of non-cognitive skills for children with disabilities. The following interview extract illustrates the improvement of social skills and communication skills for children with hearing impairment through learning with children without disabilities.

When they (children with hearing impairment) are learning in separate education, they only use sign language. All the students are deaf, and learning with deaf only in special classes is not beneficial for my sister. When they came to this regular school, in addition to sign language, the deaf students started to develop some verbal language. Even if it is not well developed, they can at least attempt to use verbal language. The attempt to use verbal language will help them to be more functional in greater society ... If they (children with disabilities) learn and live with the same type of people, it will be very difficult for them to function in outside society. (25-year-old elder sister of child with hearing impairment in School C, March 7, 2017)

The same idea of a positive effect on non-cognitive skills for children with disabilities learning at regular school was also addressed by other parents/guardians of children with other types of disabilities such as visual and intellectual impairment. This also matched the perceptions of the selected teachers, as mentioned in the previous section. Additionally, some of the informants simply showed happiness because their children with disabilities were accepted in public primary schools on an equal

footing with children without disabilities. This psychological satisfaction of parents/guardians, derived from inclusive education, also needs to be addressed, as many parents/guardians suffer from traditional beliefs. For example, in the interviews, several parents/guardians mentioned that many Ethiopian people traditionally believe that having a child with a disability originates in the parents' sin. Therefore, parents often hide their children with disabilities at home. Although these traditional ideas are changing, many people still hold such beliefs.

There are also negative perceptions regarding learning at regular school. There are three principal reasons for negatively perceiving education for children with disabilities at regular school: the lack of understanding about children with disabilities; the lack of support for children with disabilities; and the lack of special skills for teaching children with disabilities.

The teachers don't support [my son]. They didn't provide any special support. ... Even when he (my son) complained about his eye, and a teacher told him not to come to school. He was absent for one day. ... so he (my son) missed one test. ... None of them (teachers) were ready to accommodate (my son). (Mother of child with visual impairment at School A, February 22, 2017)

As noted in the above interview extracts, several parents/guardians complained about a lack of consideration and support for their children with disabilities at school. One mother of a son with a behavioral disorder at School A also noted that teachers did not understand her son and did not give him special consideration. Another mother was also disappointed with the school, as no teacher called her when her child with disability was absent from school for two weeks. These interviews indicate that the parents/guardians of children with disabilities were not satisfied with regular schools owing to a lack of consideration and support for their children. The selected parents/guardians were disappointed by regular schools and would prefer special classes/schools that might show better understanding. The following interview extract also stresses how the current regular school did not offer support for the informant's child's needs.

If it was available, I would like to choose a special school, since the nature of support in the special school is more or better than the support given here (School B). In addition to the support they give at home, if she (my daughter) gets extra support from a special school, her improvement would be far superior to that of the existing one. Actually, this school is also doing its best to support her, but if there were special schools, those schools might contribute more than this school to her improvement. (Guardian of child with intellectual disabilities at School B, March 1, 2017)

In addition to the lack of consideration and support, the selected parents/guardians addressed the needs of special skills such as sign language and braille for their children with disabilities. Some parents/guardians of children with intellectual disabilities also mentioned that they would like their children to have vocational training for the future.

This study also found that most children with disabilities do not have any other choice than the current regular school, although many informants indicated that they would prefer a special class/school. One reason is because the number of special schools and classes seems to have decreased as a result of the government one-track policy to make every school in Addis Ababa an “inclusive school.” For instance, one public school in Addis Ababa, which used to be a special school, now accepts children without disabilities and has become a regular school. This school case indicates that choice for children with disabilities is limited to regular schools only. In other words, the current inclusive education policy narrows school choices for children with disabilities. Even in schools that have special classes for children with disabilities, parents of such children do not always have a choice of learning style.

For instance, one mother of a child with intellectual disabilities enrolled in School A complained that her child could not register in any special class in School A, contrary to the mother's wishes. She addressed the fact that an itinerant teacher in School B had made the decision to send her child to

regular class. However, the mother complained that her child was not learning at all and spent the whole day in the classroom not doing anything. This situation indicates an assumption that learning in regular school is preferable to special school for all children with disabilities, according to the one-track policy in Addis Ababa. This study revealed a lack of school/class choices for children with disabilities in the selected public primary schools in Addis Ababa.

In addition, the lack of school/class choice is partly because special schools/classes that are available are far from home. The number of special schools/classes have decreased owing to the one-track inclusive education policy. Even if such schools are accessible by bus, most of the selected parents/guardians of children with disabilities are economically poor and cannot afford the travel cost. In many cases, parents/guardians come to school with their children and pick them up after school. Since many parents work, it is difficult for them to send their children with disabilities to schools far away. This indicates that the choice of schools for children with disabilities is limited to nearby regular schools only.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study has revealed the reality and challenges of inclusive education for children with disabilities based on a case study of three public primary schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The one-track policy in Addis Ababa allows children with disabilities to enroll in any nearby public primary school. IE resource centers have been established to implement inclusive education, although the number of centers remains limited, and IE resource center management and the work of itinerant teachers seem to be unorganized to date. This situation has surely enhanced access to education for children with disabilities.

However, interviews with teachers and parents/guardians of children with disabilities indicated contradicting views of inclusive education for such children. On the one hand, teachers have a relatively high recognition of the philosophy of inclusive education, particularly from the perspective of non-cognitive attainment. This study revealed that the selected teachers and parents/guardians of children with disabilities regarded studying together with children without disabilities as benefitting children with disabilities. Teachers are also aware of the benefits of the same for children without disabilities.

On the other hand, both teachers and parents/guardians of children with disabilities are frustrated by the current state of inclusive education at a practical level. This derives from different factors: the education system, poor class management due to a lack of teachers' skills, a lack of teacher training, understanding and acceptance of children with disabilities in school, particularly at the individual level, and other issues mentioned above. This study also found that training for teachers mainly focuses on theories and is not practical, although the selected teachers have opportunities to receive training in inclusive education. Therefore, although teachers and parents/guardians understand the advantage of inclusive education, they perceive that learning in regular school is not necessarily the best path for children with disabilities. The results of the study indicate that the current "inclusive education" for children with disabilities in Addis Ababa faces difficulties in terms of offering education that meets the needs of each child with disabilities, as agreed upon by the Salamanca Statement adopted at the World Conference on Special Needs Education in 1994.

The findings from this study share with existing studies in developed countries to some extent, although the situations in selected schools in this study are more severe than the cases in developed countries. As findings particular to this study, they underline that children with disabilities who learn in regular class do not necessarily choose regular class/school over special class/school. Although children with disabilities can access a nearby public primary school under the one-track policy in Addis Ababa, they often do not have a choice in terms of school selection of either regular class or special class/school. Children with disabilities and their parents/guardians do not have a chance to think about and decide on their preferred learning style. This may also cause parents/guardians' dis-

satisfaction with regular classes and aspirations for special class/school.

To realize the one-track policy, the varied needs of children with disabilities must be met within the class and school. Simply learning in a regular class is not enough to provide the education that children with disabilities need. As the philosophy of inclusive education in the Salamanca Statement suggests, education in regular school must respond to the needs of every child, including children with disabilities. The current status is that such education cannot be provided in regular schools, and the results of this study underline that special schools and classes can play an important role in education for children with disabilities. Furthermore, outside institutions, which offer necessary skills for children with disabilities, may need to be organized if schools face difficulty in responding to the various needs of children with disabilities. For instance, one public school in Addis Ababa has a good practice whereby children with visual impairment receive braille training in an outside institution before they enroll in regular class. This could be one option. These possible collaborative networks among regular schools, special schools, and private institutions need to be examined in further studies.

NOTES

- (1) This article modified and improved the research note by Tonegawa, Y. (2017) "Ethiopia Addis Ababa Inclusive kyoiku no seisaku to jittai: kankei tojisya no ninshiki kara saguru inclusive kyoikuno yobiteki kousatsu [Policy and Reality of 'Inclusive Education' in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Preliminary Analysis from the Perspectives of Teachers and Parents of Children with Disabilities]," *Africa Educational Research Journal* 8: 103–116. This article is supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP26257112 and Waseda University Grant for Special Research Projects (Project number: 2017A-057, 2018B-314).
- (2) According to an interview with a primary school teacher in Addis Ababa in March 2017.
- (3) Non-cognitive skills include critical and innovative thinking; interpersonal skills; intrapersonal skills; global citizenship skills; media and information literacy (World Education Forum 2016: 13).

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