

Inclusiveness In Higher Education: Learning Experiences Of Students With Disabilities At Ambo University

Ibsa Negash.^{1*}, Dr. Pavan Kumar Yadavalli²,

Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the learning experiences of students with disabilities in Ambo University main campus. The study employed phenomenological design and explored the experiences of students with disabilities regarding learning experiences, assessment methods and access to facilities at Ambo University. Data was gathered through semi-structured interview from 7 undergraduate and 1 postgraduate students with disabilities from different departments who were purposively selected from 17 total students with disabilities. Thematic analysis was employed for the data analysis. Findings of the study revealed that students with different types of disabilities were experienced several physical and academic barriers that inhibit their inclusive learning in the institution. The major barriers are that the institution did not give full attention in re-designing and constructing new buildings, dormitory, classroom were not arranged at ground floor, and provision of financial, educational and special services was not appreciable. On the other hand, minimal awareness on the university teachers in addressing the diverse learning of the students with disabilities, limitations in facilitating special educational consideration, the teachers have no any special consideration for students with different types of disabilities based on their needs and interests, in some places poor ramp design and absence of ramps in some buildings, inaccessible pathway to offices/classes, and no counselling services at all were the major findings that hinder the inclusiveness of students with disabilities in Ambo University main campus. The researcher recommended that more research should be conducted with a larger sample from various campuses of Ambo University higher education. It is further recommended that concerned bodies such as University management, faculty members and department staffs, Special needs education professionals, gender office, and counsellors should work collaboratively to improve teaching and learning system and learning experiences of students with disabilities to promote inclusion in the university.

Key Words: Students with disabilities, Higher Education, Inclusion, Learning Experiences

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

Inclusive education is concerned with the inclusion of students from different linguistic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds (Hehir & Katzman, 2012). Thus, inclusive education is an approach intended to support and welcomes all learners, including the ones who have been traditionally excluded from educational opportunities (UNESCO, 2001). Educational inclusion is the biggest challenge facing school systems throughout the world (Ainscow & César, 2006). Worldwide, the concept of inclusion in a social context has a long history.

The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) reminds us of how inclusion is a question of human rights. As the Statement affirms, necessary provision should be made to ensure the inclusion of young

¹*Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Ambo University, Ethiopia. Email: ibsanegash2017@gmail.com

²Associate Professor, Department of Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Ambo University, Ethiopia. Email: drpavan09@gmail.com

people, guaranteeing equality of opportunity, access, and retention in an integrated setting, through particular attention to tertiary education (Article 19). It also invites the universities to actively involve people with disabilities in their research and training in order to ensure that their perspectives are taken fully into account (Article 47). Disability is a broad term that includes both mental and physical aspects. However, for the purpose of my investigation, SWD are limited to those with physical disabilities, specifically mobility and hearing impairment. This is based on the findings of Fuller, M., M. Healey, A. Bradley, and T. Hall. (2004) who concluded that it is erroneous to treat disabled students as a single population given their diverse experiences, attitudes, perceptions, and needs. Therefore, this study was designed to deal with the issue in a better detail by focusing on learning experiences of SWD at Ambo University main campus.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Learning experiences can determine the success of the education of students with disabilities and it influences students with special educational needs and their school life. The reason I interested to conduct a study on Learning Experiences of students with disabilities at Ambo University will be, to find out Learning Experiences of students with disabilities, because it may determine the success of the implementation of inclusive education, to fill gaps in the research involving the learning experiences of students with disabilities in higher education (Ambo University).

According to Crosling et al. (2009) as cited in Yohannes Gebretsadik (2015), the quality of students learning experiences, student retention and success are becoming increasingly challenging issues with the increase in the diversity of the student population. Thus, to address the students' diversity, the methods of teaching and learning should be designed to be more relevant to students' needs, interests, and previous experiences. Access and accessibility problems that emanate from the learners' diverse background, lack of educational resources in alternative formats, lack of institutional tools (policy, procedure, guidelines, etc.) to bridge the gap between law and practice, and the digital divide were among the problems identified and discussed, Wondwossen Muluaem Beyene , Abraham Tulu Mekonnen & George Anthony Giannoumis (2020) cited in Yohannes Gebretsadik (2015). According to Yohannes Gebretsadik (2015), the students with disabilities were not assigned to the departments based on their interest; the curricula of the HEIs were highly inflexible and did not consider SWD needs; there was limited access to curricular materials in assessment formats; there was limited use of assistive technology; assessment practices were largely unfair to SWD; the learning environment was less friendly to SWD; the support SWD get from their institutions was inadequate and disorganized; and instructors made little effort to accommodate the learning needs of SWD during class teaching. My study makes different from the previous one in filling gaps in the research involving the learning experiences (teaching and learning process, assessment methods, to identify educational supports and identifying educational challenges that faces them in the implementation of inclusion and learning practices) of students with disabilities in Ambo University.

As a result, the university was expected to reconsider or diversify the current range of support structures for students with disabilities as a basis for a wider institutional approach to support learning in general. Therefore, as one of a higher education institution and from researcher practical experiences, Ambo University is not free from the majorities of indicated barriers; there is also need to carry out research on identifying the level of services and barriers related to learning experiences, placement, provision of services and resource.

1.3. Research Questions

The study was based on the following research questions:

1. What are the learning experiences of students with disabilities at Ambo University main campus in relation to the teaching and learning approaches offered to them?

2. How current support arrangements are facilitated in their learning and in what ways inclusive learning and social experiences for students with disabilities can be promoted within the university?
3. What are the major challenges that the students faces in their learning experiences?

1.4. Research Objectives

1.4.1. General Objectives

Objective of the study was to investigate the learning experiences of students with disabilities at Ambo University main campus in relation to the teaching and learning approaches offered to them.

1.4.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of study are the following:

- To identify the suitability of learning and assessment methods used in the institution for students with disabilities
- To analyse the current support arrangements facilitated in their learning.
- To identify the ways in which inclusive learning and social experiences for students with disabilities were organized within the university.
- To identify the major challenges that the students with disabilities face in their learning practices in ambo university main campus.

1.5. Significance of the study

The results of the study will provide empirical data on how students with different types of disabilities experiences in learning and access key facilities in the University. The findings will help the University management to take practical measures for improving learning experiences and to make key facilities in the university accessible to students with disabilities. In addition, the results of the study will help the students with disabilities and others who enroll in the future would be have access to key facilities and learning practices in the university. This was enable them to participate successfully in learning to earn good grades as well as enjoy their studentship and feel that they are valuable members of the university community as a whole.

1.6. Scope of the study

Conceptually, the study was delimited to exploring the learning experiences of students with disabilities in terms of learning and gaining access to key facilities at Ambo University main campus. Ambo University main campus is found in west shoa zone, Ambo town. In terms of study participants, the study focused on the students with disabilities who are learning in the main campus. Ambo University is also implementing inclusive education where all students are supposed to be educated under the same condition without discrimination. The participants of the study were the third year students with different types of disabilities in the main campus.

2. Review of related literature

Experiences of students with disabilities inclusion in higher education

Drawing on the social model of disability, studies of the experiences of SWD in HE worldwide have stressed the need to address several issues to make HE inclusive, such as: expanding variety and flexibility in all aspects of teaching and learning (Fuller, M., M. Healey, A. Bradley, and T. Hall. 2004); cited in Ayse Collins, Fara Azmat & Ruth Rentschler (2019) ensuring quality, as well as parity of provision, in comparison with NDS (Fuller, M., M. Healey, A. Bradley, and T. Hall. 2004); providing access to information and building networks of communication (Fuller, M., M. Healey, A. Bradley, and T. Hall. 2004; Redpath, J., P. Kearney, P. Nicholl, M. Mulvenna, J. Wallace, and S. Martin. 2013); and improving staff effectiveness (Gale, T. 2002; Fuller, M., M. Healey, A. Bradley, and T. Hall. 2004; Redpath, J., P. Kearney, P. Nicholl, M. Mulvenna, J. Wallace, and S. Martin. 2013), cited in Ayse Collins, Fara Azmat & Ruth Rentschler (2019).

Recent research has suggested that while SWD confront barriers of access in their learning and assessment, most of the challenges they face are also faced by NDS (Madriaga, M., K. Hanson, C. Heaton, H. Kay, S. Newitt, and A. Walker. 2010; Redpath, J., P. Kearney, P. Nicholl, M. Mulvenna, J. Wallace, and S. Martin. 2013), cited in Ayse Collins, Fara Azmat & Ruth Rentschler (2019). Lombardi, A., C. Murray, and B. Dallas, (2013), cited in Ayse Collins, Fara Azmat & Ruth Rentschler (2019) highlighted the need for staff to receive disability-related training to ‘promote universal design for student participation and success without extensive individualised accommodations and support’, and for staff to focus on SWD on a case-by-case basis.

In line with the social model of disability research is increasingly highlighting the need to ‘inform inclusive policy and practice for the benefit of all students, disabled or non-disabled’, gradually moving away from individual ‘reasonable adjustments’ towards inclusive education for all (Madriaga, M., K. Hanson, C. Heaton, H. Kay, S. Newitt, and A. Walker. 2010; Redpath, J., P. Kearney, P. Nicholl, M. Mulvenna, J. Wallace, and S. Martin. 2013), cited in Ayse Collins, Fara Azmat & Ruth Rentschler (2019).

Global perspectives of students with disabilities

Students with disabilities in HEIs have a variety of experiences in the learning and teaching process. According to (Healey, M, Bradley, A, Fuller, M & Hall, T, 2006), some encounter significant barriers, others are not aware of any; some find the support they receive highly praiseworthy, others find it does not meet their needs. Students with different types of disabilities differ in the way they experience the curriculum.

Challenges facing students with disabilities

Literature suggests that students living with disabilities are faced with numerous challenges in HEI, which include access to infrastructure, flexibility of programmes, assessment procedures, functionality of systems as well as the culture and attitudes that negatively impact on them (Howell, 2006; Healey, Pretorius, & Bell, 2011).

3. Methodology

Description of the Study Area

The study took place at Ambo University main campus. Ambo University is located approximately at 119 kilometres west of the capital city. Ambo University is one of the first generation and well-established Universities in the country. It was established in 2011 G.C at the premises of the former Ambo Agricultural Institute, which was established in 1949 G.C.

Research design

The phenomenological design of qualitative research approach was used in this study because it provides rich textual descriptions of people’s feelings, values, experiences and perceptions of a phenomenon under investigation in their natural setting, (Cohen, Mannion and Morrison 2007). Data collection involved individual interviews with students with disabilities chosen in Ambo University main campus. The participants were selected purposively. Data collected was thematically analysed. The goal of this approach is to collect in-depth information.

Study population, sampling technique, and sample size

Study population

In this study, the general population comprised 17 students with different types of disabilities in Ambo University main campus.

Sampling technique

It was important in this study to select the participants purposively in order to gather in-depth knowledge, expertise, and experiences about the topic being explored.

Sample size

Participants in the present study were students with different types of disabilities in Ambo University main campus. In this study, 8 students with disabilities (7 males and 1 female) participants were the sample size of the study who selected purposively for the interview from the total number of 17 Ambo University students with different types of disabilities. All 8 participants were third year students with disabilities. Out of these 8 students with disabilities, 2 deaf students (1 from Special needs education and 1 from economics) department and 6 of them with physical disability were from Cooperative, Accounting, English, Midwifery, Physics and Biology (one from each) department were the study participants.

Table 1 Category of study participants from Ambo University main campus

S.N	Name	Sex	Type of the disability	Part of the affected body	Department	Number of participants
1.	AK	M	Physical Disability	Right leg	Cooperative	1
2.	AF	F	Physical Disability	Left leg	Accounting	1
3.	NA	M	Deaf	Both ear	Special Needs Education	1
4.	TCH	M	Physical Disability	Right leg	English	1
5.	TK	M	Physical Disability	Left leg	Midwifery	1
6.	GA	M	Deaf	Both ear	Economics	1
7.	GD	M	Physical Disability	Left side paralysis	Physics	1
8.	ED	M	Physical Disability	Both legs	Biology	1
Total number of participants						8

The above listed participants with different types of disabilities are third year students from different departments. Except one participant who studying his MA degree, all are undergraduate students at Ambo University main campus. Why the researcher left first year students with disabilities and only focus on the third year students with disabilities was, by expecting that the third year students know the learning practices and have experiences in the university. There are no participants from second year students with disabilities because of covid-19 in 2012 E.C.

Data sources and data collection methods

Data sources

The Primary data can be obtained through face-to-face interviews with students with disabilities in a research environment.

Data collection methods

In the process of collecting data, the researcher asks a series of questions using interviews.

Face-to-face interviews

Semi-structured interviews were developed by a researcher and characterized by limited use of predetermined questions that allow flexibility in the order of the questions during the session. Also, they permit wording changes and the provision of explanations. 8 students with disabilities were interviewed and each individual participant interviewed for 20 minutes. The researcher developed the interview questions which relate with students' learning experiences, supports and major challenges

may they face. During the interviews, the interview questions asked by a researcher and the responses from the interviewee were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. All participants gave feedback that their ideas were correctly interpreted, but in certain cases participants provided additional information that came to their minds when they think about the issues.

Method of Data analysis

Data analysis is the stage at which sense is made of the gathered information in qualitative study. Thematic analysis method is one of the most common forms of analysis in qualitative research. The data obtained through interviews have been qualitatively analyzed in the form of paraphrasing and interpretation considering the context in which the records are developed. Hence, the method of content analysis has been mainly employed. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Ethical considerations addressed in this study

Most qualitative research involves key informants, and as such there are ethical concerns that must be addressed. Here, I was discuss aspects related to site access, the data collection process, informants in general, informal events, privacy, confidentiality and anonymity.

Results

The researcher interviewed eight students having different disabilities. During the interview, the students were asked to describe their experience on their learning. By listening to the students with disabilities narrate their own experience on their learning.

Students with disabilities' learning experiences

Since it is a higher institution, Ambo University receive both the students with and without disability who have taken grade twelve national entrance examination and complete the criteria of the ministry of education.

“Since the teaching and assessment method was the same for the whole class and the lecturers do not know how to accommodate the teaching methods based on the students' interests and needs, we students with disabilities have to work hard as the whole class without any learning accommodation. The lecturers do not know how to accommodate the assessment method based on the students' interests and needs. The continuous assessment (such as individual and group activities, quiz, mid and final exams) was employed for the class. As a result, we may fail or success in our academic achievement and some of our lecturers do not understand the concept of disability and concept about diverse needs” (almost all the participants).

The above participants view shows that, the teaching methods delivered were the same for the whole class. As they stated there was no learning accommodation by lecturers based on the students' diverse needs of learning. In the perspective of students' learning methods, lecture methods, individual learning methods and collaborative learning methods were employed in the institution. Collaborative learning approaches, which involve discussions, group activities between group members, were more often used to facilitate access to skills and knowledge. The following is an extract from an interview with a student who explained how discussions were beneficial and important. The majority of the participants have explained as they use different learning strategies, such as studying hard, writing notes, and reading them repeatedly. Although the view of students with disabilities about group discussion was positive, some difficulties were also mentioned (majority of the participants). The experiences of the students with disabilities demonstrated that groups developed by the students themselves were more productive than those created by teachers (almost all the participants).

The participants with physical disabilities stated that:

“If a classroom instructor calls us on G^{+2} , G^{+3} . . . , we must have the responsibility to go there. With the big challenges and tiredness to move with crutch through the building until reach the classroom, I have no chance to front seat that I prefer. If the room is full I would still sit at the back. However some lecturers tried to consider or accommodate students living with disabilities, according to the majority of the participants: . . . there are some lecturers that understand our condition and try to adjust the classroom on the ground” **“Barsiisaa nuuf nahe qofatu kutaa jalaatti mijeessaa nu barsiisa malee irra caalaan barsiisotaa bakkuma fedhanitti barsiisu”** (participants with physical disability 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 and 8).

Furthermore, most of the participants mentioned that the majority of the lecturers were not knowledgeable about disability, they do not know how to teach students with diverse needs and the challenges students living with disabilities faced; hence they paid inadequate attention to the needs of students living with disability. The concerned bodies did not adjust the classroom by considering their physical disability in the institution. Due to this the majority of the lecturers do not adjust the classroom on the ground floor and they taught us in the classroom they get/want.

The two of the deaf student participants stated: *“we have big challenges in our learning in the institution. The teaching and assessment method was the same for the whole class and the lecturers do not know how to accommodate the teaching and assessment methods based on our interests and needs. Another thing is that almost all lecturers do not understand that the deaf students would need a sign language interpreter and need lip reading during lecture. The instructors use general teaching method, the classmates support us after the class by sharing the information”* (deaf student participants 3 and 6).

In the teaching and learning process, evaluation is important for determining progress. But this process should be depends on the learners’ individual needs and interests with necessary accommodations.

Training and trained manpower

The interviewees said that *“the lecturers who still taught us were lack of trained manpower in teaching the students with diverse needs, basic skills such as Braille, Sign Language and others”* (the majority of student participants).

Since the training and trained manpower on the area of inclusive education contributes for the educational success of children with special educational needs, the lecturers should have to train how to teach those students with disabilities to address the diverse learning in inclusive classroom.

Support provisions facilitated for Students with disabilities’ learning

“During first year the gender office of Ambo University started to give 200 birr as a pocket money for students with disabilities. The gender office sometimes also helps the female students with disabilities by giving money for soap, and for modes. But this supports automatically stopped after first year. My peer support was good in the campus than teachers and my classmates support me in the teaching learning process, sharing information, work activities, washing clothes” (majority of the participants).

The students with disabilities were asked the question; do your peers support you in your education and throughout the campus life? In what ways do they support you? The majority of the respondents replied that their peers support them in many ways, such as in teaching learning process, by sharing information, work activities and by washing clothes.

What are the major challenges that you faces in your learning experiences?

Access to the required facilities

The students with physical disabilities stated that: “we had the challenges of using crutches to climb or move on the slip floor. In some cases when we reach to the class on time, the class could be on the second or third floor (G^{+1} or G^{+3}). This was difficult for us to move up with crutch. Sometimes even the teacher may change the class which further worsens our problems and crutch users face the worst difficulty. With these constraints, some students with physical disability are struggling to complete and to be competent with students without disabilities” (the majority of the participants with physical disabilities).

People living with disabilities require specialised facilities to ease learning; however many of the participants mentioned they encountered different challenges while trying to access the facilities required. The interview with student with disabilities indicates that they faced the challenge of using the facilities in the institution.

“There was one library on the ground floor for students with disabilities. But the library is with no reading materials/books needed. The Books present in another library rooms. When the student needs the book, they inform the library worker as they find the book and bring it for the students. Regarding dormitory, among the existing buildings the dormitory given from ground floors to students with disabilities. As the participants stated that, the dormitory allowed the students with physical disabilities as the live separately in one dorm. These students were not feeling good psychologically with living in a separate dorm that different from students without disabilities. If something will happen to us (i.e. sick) we all are students with disabilities, so we can't help each other by taking to the clinic. Since the participants with physical disabilities move with crutch, the floor of the cafeteria is slip (mucucaataa). Due to this problem, the students fall down because the floor is not accessible to move with crutch and sometimes we missed to go to the cafeteria for eat” (the majority of participants with physical disability).

There were many issues that came up from the interview with the student regarding accessibility to the bathroom facility. The students with physical disabilities said: *“There was no separate bathroom built for the students with disabilities. Since we move with crutch, the floor of the bathroom is slip and too smooths (mucucaataa). Due to this problem, we fall down because the floor is not accessible to move with crutch. The bath rooms also don't have handrails that will support us that decrease to fall. It is very challenging us in using the bathroom in the campus, especially for those with leg problems and cannot stand alone” (the majority of participants with physical disability).*

Discussions

The interview of the study have generated numerous findings on the inclusion in higher education, learning experiences and accessibility of services for students with disabilities in Ambo University main campus based on the guiding questions of the study. The students' learning method was not different from the whole class and the teacher use general teaching and assessment method. Almost all the teachers don't have any consideration what so ever for their special needs.

Another thing was that almost all lecturers do not understand that deaf students would need a sign language interpreter and need lip reading during lecture. The Learning methods delivered for students with disabilities were through lecture methods, individual and collaborative approaches, these approaches includes individual hard working, taking notes, group activities, classrooms were not arranged at ground floors constantly, peer support for both academic and other daily life activities. The findings of the above was not in line with the following literature, means that the facilities such as adapted toilet, adapted seats in library, adequate space for wheel chairs, ramps, signage, water supply, play grounds; etc. should be accessible to these children. The classes for learners with physical

disabilities should be located in the ground floor. As stipulated in Ethiopian Building Proclamation No. 624/2009, future buildings should have inbuilt ramp and lift/elevator services for the use of students with disabilities.

Since the instructors use the general teaching methods, the classmates support the deaf students after the class by sharing the information. In line with this, differentiated instruction requires instructors to use flexible approaches of teaching and learning and adjust their presentation styles in accordance with the needs of students, rather than the students adapting themselves to the curriculum. In the teaching and learning process, evaluation is important for determining progress. The assessment method was the same for the whole class and the lecturers do not know how to accommodate the assessment method based on the students' interests and needs. The continuous assessment (such as individual and group activities, quiz, mid and final exams) was employed for the class. Confirmed by Tennant, M., McMullen, C., & Kaczynski, D. (2010), for example, have argued that assessment is a significant level for change and improvement in students' learning experiences in higher education.

The problems students with disabilities face in HEIs can be generalized as curriculum inaccessibility, lack of teachers training, poor provision of facilities, and poor attitudes and skills of instructors. The literature has further confirmed that on: UNESCO (2005), in relation to this, asserts that inclusion involves improving inputs, processes and environments to foster learning both at the level of the learner in his/her learning environment as well as at the level of the system which supports the learning experience.

Training and trained manpower on the area of inclusive education contributes for the educational success of children with special educational needs.

The lecturers still taught the students were lack of trained manpower in teaching the students with diverse needs, basic skills such as Braille, Sign Language and others. There were a few teachers who have been prepared to support students with special needs. It is important to remember that students with special needs have more needs that teachers would be in a good position to help if they could know other necessary skills like the use of braille, sign language, then they could teach, read, and mark students' work as well as interacting with them because they have the skills and abilities. In line with this, Lombardi, A., C. Murray, and B. Dallas, (2013) highlighted the need for staff to receive disability-related training to 'promote universal design for student participation and success without extensive individualised accommodations and support', and for staff to focus on SWD on a case-by-case basis.

Provision of special support services for students with disabilities

The students with disabilities get peer supports in many ways. Their classmates support them in the teaching learning process, sharing information, work activities, washing clothes. During first year the gender office of Ambo University started to give 200 birr as a pocket money for students with disabilities. The gender office sometimes also helps the female students with disabilities by giving money for soap and for modes. But this supports automatically stopped after first year.

Major challenges that the students with disabilities faces in their learning experiences

The research addressed the major challenges related to physical accessibility, and educational practices under the result section, lack of trained manpower who teach students with disability based on their diverse needs and absence of sign language interpreter rather than special needs teachers, lack of classroom adjustment on ground floor to accommodate students with disabilities, no separate special toilet, bathrooms, and cafeteria built and absence of efforts in availing special support for students with hearing impairment and for students with physical disability were the major encountered educational challenges. This result is perfectly in accordance with Tirussew and Lehtomaki (2010) observation and noted students with disabilities, particularly students with motor disabilities, had no

access to toilets in the dormitories, classroom buildings. In addition, Literature suggests that students living with disabilities are faced with numerous challenges in HEI, which include access to infrastructure, flexibility of programmes, assessment procedures, functionality of systems as well as the culture and attitudes that negatively impact on them (Howell, 2006; Healey, Pretorius, & Bell, 2011).

In the case of classroom buildings, the students with physical disabilities stated that they had the challenge of using their crutches to climb or move on the slip floor. In some cases when students reach class on time, classes could be on the second or third floor (G^{+2} or G^{+3}). This was difficult for the students with physical disabilities to move up with crutch. Sometimes even the teacher may change the class which further worsens students' problem and crutch users face the worst difficulty. With these constraints, some students with physical disability are struggling to complete and to be competent with students without disabilities. Facilities such as adapted toilet, adapted seats in library, adequate space for wheel chairs, ramps, signage, water supply, play grounds; etc. should be accessible to these children. In the case of multi-story school buildings, measure must be taken to build a modified ramp. The classes for learners with physical disabilities should be located in the ground floor. As stipulated in Ethiopian Building Proclamation No. 624/2009, future buildings should have inbuilt ramp and lift/elevator services for the use of students with disabilities.

Regarding the library services, there was a one ground room library for students with disabilities. But the library is with no reading materials / books needed. The Books present in another library rooms. During the student needs the book, they inform the library worker as they find the book and bring it for the students. In line with this issue, a one important resource centre in HEIs where students are expected to access to a wide range of academic information and enrich their learning experiences is the library (Gebrehiwot, 2015).

Regarding dormitory, among the existing buildings the dormitory given from ground floors to students with disabilities. As the participants stated that, the dormitory allowed the students with physical disabilities as the live separately in one dorm. These students were not psychologically feeling good with living in a separate dorm that different from students without disabilities. If something will happen to us (i.e. sick) we all are students with disabilities, so they can't help each other by taking to the clinic. This confirmed by Tirussew and Lehtomaki (2010) observation and noted students with disabilities, particularly students with motor disabilities, had no access to toilets in the dormitories, classroom buildings. Since the participants with physical disabilities move with crutch, the floor of the cafeteria is slip (mucucaataa). Due to this problem the students fall down because the floor is not accessible to move with crutch and sometimes we missed to go to the cafeteria for meal. There were many issues that came up from the interview with the student regarding accessibility to the bathroom facility.

The students with physical disabilities said that, the floors are too smooth and it is not useful to us at all. We easily slip and fall due to the smooth surface of the floor. The bathrooms also don't have handrails that will support us that decrease to fall. It is very challenging us in using the bathroom in the campus, especially for those with leg problems and cannot stand alone. Generally, the majority of respondents have commonly raised challenges that affect the education of the students and in rendering services for students with disabilities and issues that hinder the accessibility of this university.

Conclusion

Findings of the study suggest that students with different types of disabilities were not satisfied with their experiences regarding their inclusive learning in the institution and the students enrolment was not fully give attention in re-designing and constructing new buildings, classroom was not arranged

at ground floor, dormitory was not inclusive and provision of financial, educational and special services was not appreciable.

The students' learning method was not different from the whole class and the teacher use general teaching and assessment method without any modifications or accommodations. Almost all the teachers did not considering the students' diverse learning. On the other hand, minimal awareness on the university teachers in addressing the diverse learning of the students with disabilities, limitations in facilitating special educational consideration, the teachers have no any special consideration for students with different types of disabilities based on their needs and interests, in some places poor ramp design, inaccessible pathway to offices/classes were the major findings that hinder the inclusiveness of students with disabilities in Ambo University main campus. Based on the findings, there appear to be insufficient institutional support systems and no full of inclusion available for students with disabilities.

Generally, the students' learning method was not different from the whole class and the teachers use general teaching and assessment method. Almost all the teachers don't have any consideration what so ever for our special needs and the majority of respondents have commonly raised challenges that affect the education of the students and in rendering services for students with disabilities and issues that hinder the accessibility of this university.

Recommendations

- ✚ Ambo University of HEIs should ensure provision of reasonable accommodations which are intended to facilitate equality of participation in education through Universal Design Learning which refers to the design of curricula, teaching practices, assessment methods, support services and physical environments that can accommodate the ever-increasing diversity of students in higher education.
- ✚ The students' enrolment should be fully give attention in re-designing and consider the students with disabilities while new buildings constructed, classroom arrangement should be on the ground floor, dormitory should be inclusive and provision of financial, educational and special services should be appreciable.
- ✚ Ambo University HE to become a reality for students with disabilities, the HE institutes have to take the responsibility of creating an environment conducive to fostering accessibility.
- ✚ Higher education institutions should also provide in-service training to teachers on how to teach the students with diverse needs and educational accommodation or modification accordingly.
- ✚ It is rather crucial that there is active involvement of all the concerned stakeholders (government, institutions of higher learning, teachers, students, peers and society at large) in the process of inclusive HE.
- ✚ Sign language interpreters need to be recruited.
- ✚ Institutions should invest in the provisions of assistive technologies to SwDs just as they provide learning resources for other students.
- ✚ Libraries and other study centres should be equipped with books and other reading materials, computers with appropriate software and that support staff in such centres should be trained in the ways of providing necessary support for SwDs.
- ✚ The researcher recommended that more research should be conducted with a larger sample from various campuses of Ambo University higher education.
- ✚ It is further recommended that concerned bodies such as University management, faculty members and department staffs, Special needs education professionals, gender office, and counsellors should work collaboratively to improve teaching and learning system and learning experiences of students with disabilities to promote inclusion in the university.

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