Challenges and Opportunities of students with disabilities to Participate in physical education practical classes In primary and secondary schools of Gondar City Administration, Ethiopia

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ABSTRACT

This study tries to assess the challenges and opportunities of students with disabilities in physical education (PE) practical classes in Gondar city primary and secondary schools. Descriptive study design and mixed approach was employed. The respondents were 119 SWDs (students with disabilities), 21PE teachers and 12 school principals who are currently present in the purposely selected schools. Questionnaire, interview, observation and focus group discussion were used for data collection. IBM SPSS version 20 software was used for quantitative data analysis and descriptive statements were used to analyze the qualitative data. The major findings are: great majority of SWDs weren’t participating in PE practical classes, almost all PE teachers weren’t modifying practical activities for those students, and all school principals know that PE practical activities are important for SWDs. The presence of such background knowledge in school administrators can be taken as an opportunity to mobilize resources and improve the poor participation of students with disabilities in PE practical classes. In addition, the existing policy support (on new educational and training policy article 2.2.3) about the provision of education in accordance to the potential and needs of children with special needs and the presence of national Paralympics and deaf Olympics games competition can be taken as great opportunities to encourage the participation of students with disabilities in physical education classes. On the other hand, lack of consideration of SWDs in PE instructional materials and rules/curriculum/, limited awareness of school principals about the needs of these students, absence of responsible body/special needs education professional/ in the schools, lack of sport equipments/materials for SWDs, unsuitable school compounds & playing grounds, large number of students in a class and inability of PE teachers to modify/adapt and teach physical activities for SWDs were identified as major challenges in teaching PE for SWDs. Practical based Adaptive physical education training at higher education institutions should be provided with further in service trainings about the needs and methodologies of SWDs for regular teachers and principals. In addition, modifying curriculum and instructional materials, improving the teaching and learning environment (school compounds, play grounds and sport materials/equipments and clothes) as to the needs of SWDs and encouraging the participation of SWDs are the major recommendations.

Key Words: Student with disabilities, Physical education, Primary schools, Secondary schools, Opportunities, Challenges, Practice

1.0 Introduction
1.1 Background of the study

Education is a process by which man transmits his experience, new findings, and values accumulated over the years, in his struggle for survival and development, through generations. Education enables individuals and society to make all-rounded participation in the development process by acquiring knowledge, ability, skills and attitudes (ETP, 1994).

One of the aims of education is to strengthen the individual’s and societies problem-solving capacity, ability and culture starting from basic education and at all levels. Education enables man to identify harmful traditions and replace them by useful ones. It helps man improve, change, as well as
develop and conserve his environment for the purpose of an all-rounded development by diffusing 
science and technology into the society. Education also plays a role in the promotion of respect for 
human rights and democratic values, creating the condition for equality, mutual understandings and 
cooperation among people. (ETP, 1994).

Physical Education is Part of General Education. It is a sequential, developmentally appropriate 
educational experience that engages students in learning and understanding movement activities that 
are personally and socially meaningful, with the goal of promoting healthy living. When provided with 
an appropriate physical Education curriculum, instruction and learning experiences, students develop a 
broad spectrum of movement skills, personal and social skills, knowledge, motivation and confidence 
to engage in healthy activity throughout their lives. (Department of Education and Early child 
hood Education [DEECE], 2009)

For any child, physical education should mean more than watching from the sidelines or 
keeping score. The health and social benefits that all children receive from physical activity may be 
even more important for students with disabilities. For students with disabilities, physical activities can 
control or slow progression of a chronic disease, improves muscular strength, and control body weight 
as well as improve psychological well-being (PACER CENTER/Action sheet, 2011).

According to Auxter, Pyfer and hutting (1993) Physical education was developed in 
Conjunction with federal law that assured students with disabilities the right to free, appropriate 
physical education instruction. The term means the development of Physical, motor fitness, 
fundamental motor skills and patterns, Skills in aquatics, dance, individual/ group games and sports it 
also includes special physical education, adapted physical education, movement education and motor 
development. In order to participate students with disabilities in physical education class Adapted 
Physical Education is vital. Adaptive physical education means a specially designed program of 
developmental activities, games, sports, and rhythms suited to the interests, capabilities, and 
limitations of students with disabilities who may not safely or successfully engage in unrestricted 
participation in the activities of the regular physical education program.(The University of the State 
of New York, 1997).

In the other hand Trusew (2000) notice that CWDs have the right to participate in any activities 
of the school, however the responsible bodies should understand that the students with disabilities have 
unique needs to participate in school activities. They face challenges, but in many instances they can 
still participate in physical activities.

According to Auxt (2001) Physical Education is very important for students with disabilities. 
He was listed significant benefits of quality physical education program for learners with disabilities. 
Some of the mentioned benefits are the development of equilibrium, sensory discrimination and 
integration and Sensory motor function, locomotors and non-locomotors skills, object-control skills, 
play, leisure, recreation, sport skills, physical fitness, daily living skills, and health/wellness, and a 
repertoire of movement skills necessary for independent living.

Many students with disabilities can safely and successfully participate in general physical 
education, with or without accommodations and supports. However, some children benefit from 
specially designed or adapted physical education. Content in adapted physical education should mirror 
the general physical education curriculum to the greatest extent possible ( IDEA, 2004 ).

Therefore, the present study focuses on assessing challenges and opportunities of students with 
disabilities to participate in physical education practical class. According to Gondar city administration 
education office statistics there are 366 students with disabilities who are attending their education in 
Gondar city primary and secondary schools.
1.2 Statement of the problem.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004), states that physical education is a required service for children and youth between the ages of 3-21 who qualify for special education services because of a specific disability or developmental delay.

As cited in Maryland State Board of Education (2015) IDEA mandates that students with disabilities be educated with students without disabilities to the maximum extent possible whenever appropriate. Therefore, general physical education should be considered as the first setting option. Inclusion in the general physical education setting is determined by each individual student’s present level of academic achievement and functional performance. Students participating in physical education should be able to make progress while demonstrating learning in the psychomotor, cognitive and affective domains. In addition, students should be able to demonstrate competency in grade level outcomes.

IDEA 2004 requires that students with disabilities receive physical education services, specially designed if necessary. If a child has a disability and an IEP, the school must provide physical education as part of a child's special education program. Many students with disabilities can safely and successfully participate in general physical education, with or without accommodations and supports. However, some children benefit from specially designed or adapted physical education. Content in adapted physical education should mirror the general physical education curriculum to the greatest extent possible. Shields, Jane Synnot and Barr (2012) in their study in Australia found out the study’s finding indicate that personal, social, environmental and policy or program barriers are barriers influencing the amount of activity children with disabilities undertake and the finding of this study also indicate facilitators of children with disabilities to participate in physical activities such as personal, social, environmental and policy or program facilitators are useful to increase the amount of activity children with disabilities undertake. In addition, coming to Ethiopia Elias (2012) in his study in Addis Abeba found out that the study’s finding indicate that positive attitude of teachers is considered as an opportunity for students with disabilities to participate in physical education class, in the other hand lack of knowledge from physical education teachers and principals about the benefits of including students with disabilities in physical education class, background of students with disabilities, lack of curriculum materials, shortage of important equipment and facilities, low expectation of parents, shortage of time, psychological &social factors ,lack of responsible bodies for students with disabilities in schools, non of sport computations between schools for students with disabilities are indicated as challenges. Moreover coming to Amhara region Adugna (2011)in his study in Oromia zone found out that the study’s finding indicate that playgrounds, facilities, equipment and physical environments are not appropriate and equitable to teach the subject for both with and without disabilities but for SWDs are more challenging. In addition skill of teachers to teach PE for SWDs and attitudes of school principals also affect to teach the subject in elementary schools of Oromia Zone.

The reasons why the researcher was initiated to undertake this study was the researcher has rich experiences of teaching students with disabilities in primary schools at Gondar city. As she has served and experienced, most of the educators believed that inclusive education to be useful for students with disabilities. However, a number of influencing factors interfered with its effective implementation.

This is also true to successful accommodating these students in physical education activities. Moreover, it is not studied independently until now in Gondar city primary &secondary schools (from grade 5-10) this is made the degree of the problem high to this concern the experience of students with disabilities in the researcher area is sometimes they attend and participate only the theoretical class. Therefore, this research tries to investigate the current challenges that hinder the participation of students with disabilities and to identify the opportunities of students with disabilities to participate in physical education classes.

To meet the above purpose the following research questions were forwarded
1. What is the existing practice of students with disabilities in physical education practical classes?
2. What are the opportunities for students with disabilities to participate in physical education in Gondar city primary and secondary schools?
3. What are the major challenges that hinder the participation of students with disabilities in physical education classes?
4. What are the possible solutions to solve these challenges?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. General Objective
The general objective of this study is to:
Investigate the current challenges and opportunities of students with disabilities to participate in physical education practical classes in Gondar city primary and secondary schools.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives
The specific objectives of the study are:
1. To identify the existing practice of participating students with disabilities in physical education classes in Gondar city primary and secondary schools.
2. Identify the opportunities of students with disabilities to participate in physical Education in Gondar city primary and secondary schools.
3. Assess the challenges that hinder students with disabilities to participate in physical education classes in Gondar city primary and secondary schools.
4. To suggest ways that is helpful to participate students with disabilities in physical education classes in Gondar city primary and secondary schools.

2.0 REVIEW RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Review Literature Related to Physical Education
According to Bucher (1975) the word physical refers to the body. It is often used in reference to various bodily characteristics such as physical development, physical strength, and physical prowess, physical health, and physical appearance. It refers to the body as contrasted to the mind. Therefore when the word education is added to the word physical, thus forming the phrase physical education, it refers to the process of education that concerns activities which develop and maintain the human body. Times have changed, and physical education must change with the times. New problems face our society and the world. As a result, if education is to be relevant to current needs, it must do something about these problems. Further as Eugene, Frederic, Cozens (1958 cited in Elias, 2012) Physical education has suffered in the past from the fact that it has been thought of too often exclusively in terms of exercise, skills, muscle building, respiration, metabolism or excretion. All these are considerations in P.E, but the terms are out of place in a definition of PE. society has set up the school as a more or less effective agency to promote certain modifications of the individual in mind, body, morals and manners which society thinks will enable the individual to live a more complete and effective life than would be possible otherwise PE should never but thought of as a “frill” or Ornament attached to the institution or the school, but rather as an integral phase of the project of educating the whole individual. When this understanding of the nature of PE becomes generally accepted, we may look for less confusion about the subject and for more intelligent progress in the field.

2.2. Review Literature Related to Origin and Evolution of Physical Education for PWDs
Seaman and Depauw (1989) Physical education for individuals with disabilities can be traced to the curative physical regimens found in China on 2700 BC. The ancients relied on activities such as gymnastics, preventive exercise, and therapeutic exercise to alleviate physical disorders and illnesses. The European cultures influenced the development of PE for individuals with disability primary through medical gymnastics. Because exercise was considered the best medicine, a large part of medical gymnastics consisted of prescribed exercise to remediate specific disorders. In the early twentieth century in the United States the medical gymnastics model for P.E continued to be applied preventive and corrective exercise was still emphasized. Prior to the world wars virtually no formal PE was provided for those with physical and mental impairments, little changed until after World War I, When the needs of returning war veterans caused the structure of programs to be altered. The success
of physical rehabilitees for war veterans helped promote the use of physical activity in the school for the development and enjoyment of those with disabilities.

2.3 Review Literature Related to Physical Education within the School Program
As Daniels (1954) identifies the purposes and methods of modern P.E are rooted in general education. PE has also been influenced strongly by the methods of general education as well as by its purposes. In each instance, however, the general has been analyzed and interpreted interims of the specific contribution PE can make to the ultimate goal; the complete education of youth. The aim of PE obviously must have its base in the framework of general education many efforts to state such an aim have been made one with wide acceptance has been proposed by Williams as follows; “the aim of PE is to provide an opportunity for individuals and groups to act in situations that are physically wholesome mentally stimulating and satisfying and socially sound”.

In breaking down the broad generalization that an aim must inevitably be, the purposes of P.E have been more clearly identified in statement concerning objectives. Most such statements are included in the following main points: The improvement of physical and organic efficiency, the development of overall neuron-muscular coordination’s, as well as Skill in sports, games, rhythms, and related activities, the development of socially desirable and acceptable patterns of behavior through the many opportunities presented in play situations, the development or an appreciation of the significant of competency in PE activities and its relationship to utilizing leisure resources for richer living.

Further strengthening the previous issue John Dunn (1989) writes one of the main considerations is the use of the team approach in developing and carrying out a child's educational program. The team generally includes the parents, teachers, medical professionals, and health-related professionals such as a physical therapist. Parents are critical members of the team and should be involved in all educational decisions. A program that meets the needs of the student in five basic goal areas:

Physical independence, including mastery of daily living skills, self-awareness and social maturation, communication, academic growth, life skills training. Interdisciplinary services such as occupational and physical therapy, speech and language therapy are of prime importance for youngsters who have physical disabilities.

2.4 Review Literature Related to Physical Education for Individuals with Disabilities
According to Seaman and Depauw (1989) physical activity has been an integral part of society throughout history physical vitality has long been admired. In the days of the early Greeks, physical activity was considered primarily curative. Since that time, it has also been used in rehabilitation remediation, and illness or injury prevent. Current emphasis is on the development of fitness wellness, and the maintenance of an active life style. This emphasis applies to both able bodied individuals and individuals with disabilities. A well designed of PE provides many benefits for individuals with disabilities, contributing to:

The development of physical fitness and motor skills necessary for activities of daily living and participation with peers, family, and friends, the development of a more positive self image and feeling of self worth, and the development of skills and abilities that will enable them to participate in enjoyable leisure time activities and recreational pursuits. To this end, PE and sport for individuals with disabilities has evolved.

Bucher (1974) also suggest that Physical education can contribute to the goals of education in many significant ways. Physical education makes a unique contribution to the development of the total person. It is the only area of the school curriculum that promotes the development of motor skills and fitness. No other curricular area contributes to development in the psychomotor domain.

2.5 Review Literature Related to Regular Physical Education for Students with disabilities
As stated by Auxter, pyfer, hutting (1993). In order for a student with a disability, even a mild disability, to be educated in the regular PE class, careful preparation must be made. Accordingly there
are four variables that must be considered before making a decision to place a student into the regular PE program: The professional preparation of the physical educators to teach a child with disability, the attitude of the Physical Educator toward the disabled child, the support of the primary campus administrator of the concept of inclusion and the readiness of the non-disabled children in the school to accept and interact with the child. These four factors all must be considered.

The first variable to be considered in the decision to include children with disability in regular PE program is the preparation of the PE teacher. In order to serve children with disabilities in the regular P.E class, the teacher must have knowledge of the following. Physical, mental, and emotional characteristics of children with disabilities, learning styles of children with disabilities, teaching techniques and methodologies appropriate for children with and without disabilities, behavior management strategies appropriate for children with and without disabilities, techniques for modifying play, games, and sport activities to include children with disabilities, methods for modifying evaluation and grading for children with disabilities.

If the Physical Educators did not acquire this knowledge during undergraduate or graduate professional preparation, the physical educator must be provided access to this information through in-service preparation before a child with disabilities is included in the regular program.

The 2nd variable that must be considered before placing a child with a disability in to the regular PE classroom is the teacher’s attitude toward teaching those with disabilities. If the teacher has a negative attitude about including children with a disability in the class, the child will know it instantly and be devastated by it: the child with disability simply cannot be placed in a classroom in which he or she is not wanted. Teacher may have negative attitudes toward a disabled child for a variety of reasons, but attitudes are learned behaviors which, when necessary, can be changed. French and Henderson noted; that It is important to find ways to teach Physical Educators the knowledge and skills necessary to work effectively with students with disabilities in the regular classroom and increase positive attitude towards team.

These are not mutually exclusive. Teachers may have negative attitude towards students with disabilities because they do not know how to teach them. The 3rd Variable that must be considered is administrative support for the inclusion of children with disabilities in to the regular PE classroom. If the local campus administrator principals, or dean or instruction supports the notion that children with disabilities should be integrated in to the regular PE program, then the administrator must be in a position to support the physical educator in a number of ways. The administrator’s comities to inclusion in P.E will do one of the three things to ensure that a quality P.E is received by all.

Decrease class size by hiring additional professional personnel or arranging alternate scheduling patterns, decrease teacher-student ration by assigning trained for a Para professionals to assist the teacher, decrease teacher-student ration by assigning school volunteers to assist the physical educator. In addition to limiting the teacher student ratio administering must also provide supper by addressing other concerns. The Physical Educator must be encourages to attend classes and in-service presentation that address the Education of children with disabilities.

The Physical Educator must be given release time to participate actively as part of the motor development or the multidisciplinary team in the assessment /evaluation/ of the children’s gross motor skills and create implementation of the child or individual PE plan (IPEP). The fourth consideration is the readiness or the other children to accept and interact with the students with disabilities. In addition students with disabilities should require adapted and modified materials/equipments as well as additional support from teachers/other professional to modify and adapt the teaching/learning environment to meet his/her unique needs (Auxter, 2001).

Keith (2008) suggests three principles that are essential to developing a more teaching PE in general physical education: Setting suitable learning challenges, responding to pupils’ diverse learning needs, overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupil

2.6. Review Literature Related to Benefits of Physical Education for Students with Disabilities
The physical educator can make a major contribution to reduce the risk and facilitate independent living through physical activity by developing recreational motor skills for independent functions in the community, physical and motor prerequisites to self help skills required for independent living, physical fitness for maintenance of health, prerequisites motor skills necessary for participation in self-fulfilling social activities. It has been argued that participation in sports develops the social characteristics of participants. Participants alone may not, however, benefit individuals with disabilities. Early studies on the social benefit of mainstreamed students with disabilities indicated that under certain conditions the person with a disability could be adversely affected. There is some recent evidence that when the conditions of participations are well controlled (e.g. appropriate activities are offer at the ability level of the learners) and environment are designed that include a carefully structured modeling process, social development can be fostered through physical activity and sport. To ensure that social benefits occur to all persons, the social environment should be constructed so that there is a match between the environmental demands of the sport/physical activity and the social capabilities of the participants. Furthermore, the participants without disabilities must be supportive of the socialization process (Auxter et al, 1993).

3.0 Research Methodology
3.1. Research design
Regarding to the research design the study employed a descriptive design because “descriptive design simply describes an existing phenomenon by using words or numbers to characterize individuals or a group. It assesses nature of existing conditions. The purpose of most descriptive research is limited to characterizing something as it is(Yalew, 2005) the aim of this study is to assess and describe the current challenges and opportunities of students with disabilities in physical education classes at secondary and primary schools in Gondar city.

3.2. Approaches of the Study
The study employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This is because the study employed observation, interview, questionnaire and focus group discussion instruments to collect appropriate data. And therefore, to examine the data collected through observation, interview and focus group discussion qualitative approach was used. Whereas, to examine the data collected through questionnaire quantitative approach was employed.

3.3 The study area
The study was conducted in Gondar city administration zone. Gondar city administration Zone is one of the 11 Zones found in Amhara Regional State 180 KM far from the region capital Bahar Dar. The town is chosen because of the researcher’s well awareness and familiarity with the area. And the researcher also observed the conditions during her previous work experience. The study is focused on selected secondary and primary schools where SWDs found.

3.4 Study population
The target population of this study were all students with disabilities (students with visual, hearing and physical impairment) currently attending their education in Gondar city administration primary and secondary schools (M=237, F=129 T=366), the population of physical education teachers (in primary schools 14 and in Secondary schools 14 totaling 28). While, the principals of the schools were (In Primary schools 8 and in Secondary schools 4 total 12).

3.5 Sample and sampling techniques
From the population all students with disabilities 119 who are learning from grade 5-10 in Gondar city primary and secondary schools, 21 physical education teachers from secondary and primary schools who teach physical education in the classes of students with disabilities, and 12 school principals from primary and secondary schools were participants of the research. To select students with disabilities non-probability comprehensive sampling technique was employed and to select schools, PE teachers and principals, non-probability sampling purposive sampling technique were employed because in purposive sampling researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment of their typicality. In this way, they build up a sample that is satisfactory to their specific needs.
As its name suggests, the sample has been chosen for a specific purpose (Choen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

In order to enhance the validity and trustworthiness of the study, various data collection instruments were employed. The main instruments to collect data were questionnaire; interview, Observation, as well as FGD are used to generate field data.

3.6.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information (Choen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). In order to gather appropriate information questionnaire was employed in this study. The questionnaire to be used to collect data for this study was prepared by the researcher after conducting review of relevant related literature. In this case, the questionnaire items were made close-ended type of questions. The questionnaire was consisting of a number of items ranging from background of the participants to items related to the variable of the study. The questionnaire was filled out by students with different types of disabilities.

3.6.2 Interview

Interview is a useful instrument to understand reasons why and how things happen and the way they are happening. AS Anastasi & Urbina, 1997; Stokes, Mumford, & Owens(1994, Cited in Festinger, DeMatteo& Marczyk,2005). Interview is a form of self-report that is a relatively simple approach to data collection. Although simple, it can produce a wealth of information. An interview can cover any number of content areas and is a relatively inexpensive and efficient way to collect a wide variety of data then the researcher used this instrument for physical education teachers and school principals. The interview guide questions to collect data for this study were developed by the researcher after conducting of a comprehensive review of related literature. The interview guide questions were made to consist of items of semi structured questions. The items of the interview instrument were made to explore the variables of the study. The interview session were made in the compound of the schools. The Items of the interview and the interview session were in Amharic language.

3.6.3 Observation

Besides the above instruments observation is employed during physical education practical classes. It takes place while the teachers were teaching the practical part of the lesson in the play grounds. By using this tool the researcher can collect original information from the natural setting. Observation offers an investigator the opportunity to gather ‘live’ data from naturally occurring social situations. In this way, the researcher can look directly at what is taking place in situation rather than relying on second-hand accounts. (Choen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). An observation check list was prepared by the researcher.

3.6.4 Focus Group Discussion

In order to strengthen the data gathered from interview and observation focus group discussion (FGD) was employed. According to W.Vanderstoepe& D. Johnston,(2009) focus groups may be a reasonable alternative to conducting a number of individual interviews. Focus groups bring together a group of six to ten people. Stewart & Shandasani, (1990, cited in W.Vanderstoepe& D. Johnston,2009) The primary advantage of focus groups is the opportunity for group interaction. The “synergistic group effect” provides information that individual interviews cannot. The focused group discussion guides were developed by the researcher for the discussion. Focus group discussion was conducted with selected students with disabilities, Physical Education teachers and school principals in different schools.

4.0 Data Analysis

4.1 The existing practice of SWDs in physical education practical classes

The researcher employed different data collection instruments to assess the actual participation of students with disabilities in practical physical education classes. As the questionnaire result showed, most of the students with different types of disabilities are not currently participating in physical education practical classes. This finding was also consistent with the results obtained through
interviewing teachers and school principals. The direct observation of the researcher further confirmed that most students with disabilities, with the exception of few students with hearing impairment in one school, are not actively participating in the mentioned classes. Researches done in Ethiopia, Elias (2012) and Adugna (2011) indicated that students with disabilities did not participate in physical education practical classes. The result of this study is also consistent to the above mentioned studies. The researcher assessment further indicates that most students with disabilities believe that physical education activities are important for them and they have an interest to participate in practical classes of physical education. Moreover, most of them think that physical education practical activities are not challenging for them and their disability does not hinder them to participate in such classes. Side by side, almost all physical education teachers are volunteer enough to participate students with disabilities in physical education practical classes up on their request. On the other hand, only half of students without disabilities are reported to be volunteer to do physical education activities together with students with disabilities. The questionnaire result about current participation showed that 72.3 percent of students with disabilities are not currently participating in physical education practical classes with the exception of few students with hearing impairment. This finding was confirmed by teachers’ response for interview item No.203 that students with hearing impairment are fully participating in practical activities without any modification as they can do different practical activities by mimicking the activities of other students without disabilities. On the same interview, teachers also mentioned the rare participation of students with physically impaired. However, students with visual impairment are not totally participating and attending both practical and theoretical parts of physical education classes. Rather they prefer to attend other subjects like language, civic and social science subjects in the other class rooms. But, literatures recommend that Physical Education is very important for students with different types of disabilities. Auxter (2010) listed the significant benefits of quality physical education program for learners with disabilities. Some of the mentioned benefits are the development of equilibrium, sensory discrimination and integration and Sensory motor function, locomotors and non-locomotors skills, object-control skills, play, leisure, recreation, sport skills, physical fitness, daily living skills, and health/wellness, and a repertoire of movement skills necessary for independent living( Auxter, 2001).

In consistent to the Auxter’s recommendation, Bucher (1999) also suggested that Physical education can contribute to the goals of education in many significant ways. Physical education makes a unique contribution to the development of the total person. It is the only area of the school curriculum that promotes the development of motor skills and fitness. No other curricular area contributes to development in the psychomotor domain. Physical Education Teachers can teach physical education practical activities for students with and without disabilities in the regular school integrated settings in various ways by making some modifications/adaptations and using supportive equipments.

4.2 Opportunities of SWDs to participate in Physical education practical classes

The researcher employed different data collection instruments to assess the opportunities of students with different types of disabilities. The students’ questioner result about perception of students with different types of disabilities towards the importance of physical education practical classes and their interest to participate in such classes showed that great majority of students with disabilities believe that physical education practical activities are important for them and have an interest to participate in physical education practical classes. The student’s questioner result in table 8 indicates that half of students without disabilities are reported to be volunteer to do physical education activities together with students with disabilities. In addition, the teachers’ interview item No.202 pointed out that almost all physical education teachers are volunteer enough to give permission for interested students with disabilities and they have an interest to teach students with disabilities in physical education practical classes. The limiting factor in the teachers’ side being lack of training and experience on how to teach these students. School principals’ interview item No.301 showed that all principals know that physical education practical activities are important for students with disabilities. The presence of such background knowledge in school administrators can be taken as an opportunity
to mobilize resources and improve the poor participation of students with disabilities in practical classes of physical education. A study in Ethiopia (Elias, 2012) indicated that positive attitude of teachers is considered as an opportunity for students with disabilities to participate in physical education classes.

With regard to the education of PwDs (people with disabilities), the New educational and Training Policy (ETP, 1994) has clearly indicated that children with special needs have to be provided education in accordance with their potential and needs (article 2.2.3). Such policy support is a great opportunity to adapt/modify the existing school environment to the needs of students with disabilities.

The presence of national Paralympics and deaf Olympics games competition is also another great opportunity to encourage the participation of students with disabilities in physical education classes and further develop as professional competitors.

4.3 Major challenges of SWDs to participate in Physical education practical activities

As mentioned before, the researcher employed different data collection instruments to assess the major challenges of students with disabilities to participate in physical education practical classes. The questionnaire result indicates that most physical education teachers are not still encouraging students with different types of disabilities to participate in physical education practical classes. In consistent to this, most physical education teachers replied to item No.202 that unless students with disabilities are requesting to participate, the teachers are not currently motivating and encouraging the students to participate in physical education practical classes.

In Australia, Jane Synnot and Barr (2012) in their study indicated that personal and social barriers are among the barriers influencing the amount of participation of students with disabilities. In addition, Elias (2012) in his study in Ethiopia indicated that psychological & social factors are some of the challenges that hinder the participation of students with disabilities in physical education practical classes. While explaining the challenges to students learning and participation by social cognitive theory, Bandura (1986) said that as significant amount of students’ time is dedicated to schooling, the school environment (including teachers, peers, programs provided, their engagement in curriculum and their participation in classes) greatly influences them. The interaction and influence of all factors on preferred behavior is certainly most evident at the primary school level, where adolescents begin to strengthen their own attitudes and beliefs regarding physical activity. In line with this, motivation of students with disabilities to activity should also be considered.

In the student’s questioner result, only half of students without disabilities are reported to be volunteer to do physical education activities together with students with disabilities. In Australia, Jane Synnot and Barr (2012) in their study indicated that personal and social barriers are among the barriers influencing the amount of participation of students with disabilities.

In addition, Elias (2012) in his study in Ethiopia indicated that social factors are some of the challenges that hinder the participation of students with disabilities in physical education practical classes. In contrary to these findings, Auxter, et al (1993) said that social development can be promoted through physical activity and sport. And the social environment should be constructed in such a way that there is a match between the environmental demands of the physical activity and the social capabilities of the participants. Furthermore, they suggested that the participants without disabilities must be supportive of the socialization process to ensure that social benefits occur to all persons. As the questionnaire result shown most physical education teachers are not adapting/modifying physical activities for students with disabilities according to their needs and abilities. This result was also consistent with the results obtained through interviewing teachers. Even teachers who took adaptive physical education course said that the theory based course couldn’t enable them to adapt or modify practical activities for students with different types of disabilities in physical education practical classes and also there are large numbers of students in a class which makes modification cumbersome within a single period of class (i.e., 40/45minutes). In consistent to the above, the school principals replied that physical education teachers have not taken this course and they do not have enough knowledge about the special needs and inclusive education. In addition, there is no in service training for physical education teachers related to Adapted physical education and teaching methodology of students with disabilities. The direct observation of the researcher further
confirmed that all sample physical education teachers were not modifying physical activities for students with different types of disabilities during practical classes. The researcher observed that all physical activities were performed only with students without disabilities.

Elias (2012) in his study indicated that shortage of time among the challenges of teaching practical activities of physical education for students with disabilities. In contrary to the above findings, Brevard County (2006, cited in Efrem 2013) mentioned various ways of modifications based on adapted physical education resource guide. As the interview result (item No.208) shows, the instructional materials and rules in physical education are not considerate of all students with disabilities. And physical education teachers also implement the instructional materials and rules as it is without further modification or adaptation for students with disabilities according to their ability and needs. In consistent to the teachers’ response, the school principals mentioned that physical education curriculum has not included all students with different type of disabilities.

Elias (2012) in his study indicated that lack of curriculum materials are among the challenges. On the other hand, literatures indicate that inclusive education requires that modifications be made so that all students may participate in the curriculum. For students with disabilities, this means adaptive physical education (M.Rhinehart, 2011). In parallel to the above, MoE (2012) also indicate Curriculum refers to the subject matter that is planned to be taught and learnt by the learners at any level of education. For learners with special needs, the regular curriculum requires to undergo some modifications. So that physical education teachers can use the existing curriculum with some modification.

As the interview result (item No.209) about the supportive equipments mentions, almost all teacher respondents replied that there are no any supportive equipments for all students with disabilities and also no modifications are made in the existing equipments for all types of disabilities. In addition to the teachers, all principals also confirmed that school administrations do not fulfill the necessary materials/equipments for students with all types of disabilities to let them participate in physical education practical classes. The reason being the school physical education department did not plan ahead of time and ask to fulfill these materials for students with disabilities. The direct observation of the researcher confirmed that there were no equipments or teaching aids that can support the teaching learning process of students with different types of disabilities. In consistent to these findings, Elias (2012) in his study indicated that shortage of important equipment and facilities are also among the challenges of teaching physical education for students with disabilities. However, Auxter (2010) suggested that making instructional modifications for students with disabilities in physical education may be as simple as fining a different type of equipment for the students to use while learning. There are different options to utilize equipments in PE instructional process, Using same equipment: all learners with in the class shares and uses the same equipment. Similar but different equipment: it is possible to improve instructional modifications simply by changing the type of equipment available for students use. For example, a student with visual impairment may experience difficulty tracking a typical playground ball but would be able to participate in a game of catch if the ball were a bright fluorescent color or belling ball. Specially designed equipment: it is possible to enhance opportunities for inclusion by providing the learner with a disability with specially designed equipments. As the result from the researcher observation showed that all school compounds are not accessible for all students with different types of disabilities and play grounds also are not suitable for students with and without different types of disabilities. Similar to this finding, Jane Synnot and Barr (2012) in their study indicated that environmental factors are among the barriers of teaching physical education for students with disabilities. In consistent to the above findings, Elias (2012), in his study indicated that environmental facilities are also challenges that hinder participation of students with disabilities. John (1989), on the other hand, suggests that it is often necessary to adjust and adapt the school environment to make it accessible, safe, and less restrictive. Accessibility guidelines are readily available, and when these guidelines are followed the environment becomes easier for the child to manage independently. It is good to make note that environmental modifications be no more restrictive than absolutely necessary so that the student's school experiences can be as normal as possible.
As the interview result shows (item No.207), all teacher respondents replied that there is no any support from the school administrations to include and participate students with disabilities in physical education practical classes. The reason being school administrators have not given attention for education of students with disabilities in general and physical education practical activities in particular. In consistent to the teachers response, school principals also replied (item No.305) that school principals do not have enough knowledge about the needs of these students and there is no responsible body/special needs education professional/ in the schools. Similarly, Elias (2012) in his study indicated that lack of knowledge from school principals about the benefits of including students with disabilities in physical education classes, lack of responsible bodies for students with disabilities in schools are also another challenges that hinder participation of students with disabilities in physical education practical classes.

5.0 Summary, Conclusion And Recommendation

6.1 Summary

As it is indicated in earlier chapters, the purpose of this research work was to investigate challenges and opportunities of students with disabilities to participate in physical education practical classes. In line with the topic, the researcher reviewed a comprehensive review of related literatures and journals written by scholars in similar issues. To achieve the intended objectives and answer the basic research questions, the researcher employed a descriptive design and mixed type of approach/qualitative and quantitative methods/ and appropriate data collection instruments were designed. Before collecting data, pilot study has been made in one primary and one preparatory school. In addition to this, the tools were given to MA graduate partners to get constructive comments then revise and prepare the instruments by considering comments. Then after, data was collected and analyzed both quantitatively using frequency and percentage and qualitatively using words. Based on the analysis made, the following findings were obtained:

Most students with disabilities believe that physical education activities are important for them and they have an interest to participate in practical classes of physical education. But, most of them are not currently getting the encouragement from their physical education teachers as to their expectations. On the other hand, even if most students with disabilities think that physical education practical activities are not challenging for them and their disability does not hinder them to participate in such classes, only half of students without disabilities are reported to be volunteer to do physical education activities together with students with disabilities. So, 72.3 percent of students with disabilities are not currently participating in physical education practical classes. Exception to this is few students with hearing impairment.

Regarding physical education teachers, though 57 percent of them have taken courses dealing with special needs and inclusive education or adapted physical education, most of them do not adapt or modify physical education practical activities to the needs of students with different types of disabilities. In addition, there is no in service training related to Adapted physical education and teaching methodology for students with disabilities. Almost all physical education teachers are volunteer enough to give permission for students with disabilities to participate in physical education practical classes. But they recommended that students with disabilities have to get participated in practical physical education classes within the scope of their abilities and limitations.

All principals know that physical education practical activities are important for students with disabilities. The presence of such background knowledge in school administrators can be taken as an opportunity to mobilize resources and improve the poor participation of students with disabilities in practical classes of physical education. The New Educational and Training Policy article 2.2.3 has clearly indicated that children with special needs have to be provided education in accordance with their potential and needs. The presence of national Paralympics and deaf Olympics games competition is also another great opportunity to encourage the participation of students with disabilities in physical education classes. In general, the education of students with disabilities is not getting enough support from the school administrations and practical physical education is almost neglected. In addition, there
is no any supportive equipment for all students with disabilities and also modifications are not made in the existing equipments for all types of disabilities. The instructional materials and rules/curriculum/ in physical education are not considerate of all students with disabilities.

All principal respondents said that physical activities are important for students with disabilities to develop their physical, social and academic skills. But, they mentioned the non-inclusiveness of the existing physical education curriculum of all students with different type of disabilities, limited awareness of school principals about the needs of these students, absence of responsible body/special needs education professional/ in the schools, lack of sport equipments/materials for students with different types of disabilities, unsuitable school compounds & playing grounds, large number of students in a class and inability of physical education teachers to modify/adapt and teach physical activities for students with different types of disabilities as major challenges in teaching physical education for students with different types of disabilities.

The principals suggested that modification of the existing curriculum with increasing the trained manpower in the field should be taken as a future strategy. The researcher observed that all school compounds are not accessible for all students with different types of disabilities, play grounds are not suitable even for students without disabilities, physical education teachers did not modify physical activities for students with different types of disabilities during practical classes and all physical activities were performed only with students without disabilities.

Moreover, the researcher observed that students with different types of disabilities did not participate during physical education practical classes and no equipments or teaching aids were available to support the teaching learning process of students with different types of disabilities.

5.2 Conclusion

The study tries to seek challenges and opportunities of students with disabilities to participate in physical education practical classes. Though uncertainties remain and there seems to be a number of studies in the area, the future researchers still need to explore more challenges and opportunities and provide solutions for this. Based on the major findings the following conclusions were drawn To promote participatory physical education practical classes, awareness creation programs and trainings are necessary for SWDs, PE teachers, school principals and students without disabilities.

In this study, it was found that most of the students with disabilities believe that physical education activities are important for them and have an interest to participate in physical education practical classes. In addition, most students with disabilities think that physical education practical activities are not challenging for them and their disability does not hinder them to participate in such classes. Because of the absence of encouragement from their teachers, lack of peer support from their classmates 72.3 percent of students with different types of disabilities are not participating in physical education practical classes. Exception to this is few students with hearing impairment.

Even though, fifty-seven percent of physical education teachers have one way or another taken courses dealing on special needs and inclusive education or adapted physical education, most of them do not adapt or modify physical education practical activities to the needs of students with different types of disabilities. In addition, there is no in service training related to Adapted physical education and teaching methodology for students with disabilities. Almost all physical education teachers are volunteer enough to give permission for students with disabilities to participate in physical education practical classes. But, lack of training and experience on how to teach these students are among the major problems.

All principals know that physical education practical activities are important for students with disabilities. The presence of such background knowledge in school administrators can be taken as an opportunity to mobilize resources and improve the poor participation of students with disabilities in practical classes of physical education. The New educational and Training Policy article 2.2.3 has clearly indicated that children with special needs have to be provided education in accordance with their potential and needs. The presence of national Paralympics and deaf Olympics games competition is also another great opportunity to encourage the participation of students with disabilities in physical
education classes. The existing large number of students in a class is pointed out as a challenge to make modification within a single period of class (i.e., 40/45 minutes). In addition, the instructional materials and rules in physical education are not considerate of all students with disabilities and physical education teachers are also implementing the instructional materials and rules as it is without further modification or adaptation for students with disabilities according to their ability and needs. Furthermore, there are no any supportive equipments for all students with disabilities and also no modifications are made in the existing equipments for all types of disabilities.

To make the situation worse, all school compounds are not accessible for all students with different types of disabilities and play grounds also are not suitable for students with and without different types of disabilities. On the other hand, there is no any support from the school administrations to include and participate students with disabilities in physical education practical classes. The reason being school administrators have not given attention for education of students with disabilities in general and physical education practical activities in particular.

5.3 Recommendations

In order to address the issues discussed in this study and improve the participation of students with disabilities in physical education practical classes in Gondar city primary and secondary schools, the following recommendations are forwarded, based on the findings and conclusion of the study, to be taken by the respective stakeholders (i.e., government, school principals, physical education teachers and students with different types of disabilities).

- The government should train and assign special needs education professionals in the primary and secondary schools who can provide professional supports, trainings about the needs and methodologies of SWDs for regular teachers and principals, and additional supports for students with disabilities, if necessary.
- Universities and colleges should give practical based Adaptive physical education courses for PE teachers and organize in service trainings for continuous professional development.
- Curriculum developers should prepare PE syllabuses, teacher guides and text books with due consideration of students with different types of disabilities.
- School principals should give attention for the education of students with disabilities in general and physical education practical classes in particular.
- School principals should facilitate and make the school compounds and play grounds be suitable for SWDs, fulfill sport materials/equipments and clothes, facilitate continuous in service trainings for physical education teachers, and encourage students with different types of disabilities as other students equally.
- Physical education teachers should also take the initiative to develop their skills and empower themselves. When they prepare their department plan, they must include the needs of students with different types of disabilities, and encourage the participation of students with different types of disabilities.
- SWDs should ask to participate in physical education practical classes as other students without disabilities.
- Future researches are suggested with a large sample size from different zones to investigate more about the participation of students with different types of disabilities in physical education practical classes.

References


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