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Inclusiveness

Chapter 1
Understanding Disability and Vulnerability

1.1. Definitions of disability and vulnerability

- Disability is not uncommon and it is part of human diversity.
- It is estimated that 15 % of the world's population has a disability, a percentage that is expected to grow because of poor health care and nutrition early in life, growing elderly populations and violent civil conflicts.
- Among the population of people with disabilities, approximately 80 % live in developing countries and are disproportionately represented among the poor.
- For instance, of the total population of Ethiopia, 17.6% are estimated to live with some sort of impairment (WHO and World Bank, 2011, p. 272).

- Understanding the concept of disability varies between cultures and evolves with in a culture over time.
- People are using the two key terms, impairments and disability interchangeably but there is a visible conceptual distinction between these terms as described below:

1.1.1. Impairment

- Impairment is the “purely factual absence of or loss of functioning in a body part.”
- Hence, the term impairment is used to notify the physical condition of a person such as visual, physical, hearing, and intellectual disabilities.
- It may result in activity limitation based on the degree/ severity, type and onset of the impairment.

1.1.2. Disability

- The concept of disability is defined as “the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in a society on an equal basis with others” (UN CRPD, 2006).
- Disability is, therefore, a negative reaction of people towards persons with impairments that results in “participation restriction.”
- Disability, as a concept is referred: as an umbrella term that include impairment, activity limitation and participation restriction.
- Hence, Article 1 of the CRPD describes persons with disabilities as “those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

1.1.3. Vulnerability

- On the other hand, the term vulnerability refers to state of being exposed to the possibility of being attacked or harmed, either physically or emotionally.
- Accordingly, vulnerable groups belong to the people who are physically and emotionally hurt and attacked as a result of various forms of social injustice and malpractices.

Vulnerability is classified into four categories as described below:

A.Physical Vulnerability:

- The physical vulnerability of an area also depends on its geographic proximity to the source and origin of the disasters e.g. if an area lies near the coast lines, fault lines, unstable hills etc.

B. Economic Vulnerability:

- Economic vulnerability of a community can be assessed by determining how varied its sources of income are, the ease of access and control over means of production (e.g. farmland, livestock, irrigation, capital etc.), adequacy of economic fall back mechanisms and the availability of natural resources in the area.

C. Social Vulnerability:

- A socially vulnerable community has weak family structures, lack of leadership for decision making and conflict resolution, unequal participation in decision making, weak or no community organizations, and the one in which people are discriminated on racial, ethnic, linguistic or religious basis.

D. Attitudinal Vulnerability:

- A community which has negative attitude towards change and lacks initiative in life resultantly become more and more dependent on external support.
- This brings about disunity and individualism in the society. Thus, they become victims of conflicts, hopelessness and pessimism which reduce their capacity of coping with a disaster.

1.2. Causes of impairments and vulnerability

- The issue of disability/impairment is not yet being scientifically understood and treated by the society particularly in the low-income countries including Ethiopia.
- As a result, the cause of impairment is not appropriately comprehended due to the reason that people still believe that impairment is caused by curse, sin and wrath of God.
- However, even though some causes of impairment are unknown, scientific research conducted on the issue confirmed that the cause of impairment is classified into 2 major categories as described hereunder:

1.2.1. Biological

- Under this category of the cause of impairment, genetically induced factors are commonly known reasons.
- These include:
  - Abnormalities in genes and genetic inheritance that may cause intellectual disability, down syndrome and other multiple impairments on children.
  - Sometimes, diseases, illnesses, and over-exposure to x-rays can cause a genetic disorder.
  - Pre-term and underweight birth also may result in different forms of impairment.

1.2.2. Environmental

- The adverse effect of poverty and starvation such malnutrition, lack of access to health care and treatment etc. may cause impairment to the child during pre- and- postnatal period.
- The use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, the exposure to certain toxic chemicals and illnesses, toxoplasmosis, cytomegalovirus, rubella and syphilis by a pregnant mother can cause intellectual and other types of disability to the child.
- Childhood diseases such as a whooping cough, measles, and chicken pox may lead to meningitis and encephalitis.
- This can cause damage to the brain of the child.
- Toxic material such as lead and mercury can damage the brain too.

- Unfortunate life accident such as drowning, car accidents, falls, landmines, war, etc. can result in people losing their sight, hearing, limbs and other vital parts of their body.
- As in the case of impairment, among several examples of causes of vulnerability, the following are the most known contributing factors to vulnerability:
    - Poor governance;
    - Poverty;
    - Discrimination;
    - Inequality and inadequate access to resource and livelihood.

1.3. Types of impairments and vulnerable groups

- Regardless of the existence of a number of types of impairments, the commonly known and major kinds of impairments are listed below.
    - 1.3.1. Visual impairment (Generic terminology for blindness and low vision
    - 1.3.2. Hearing Impairment (Generic terminology for deafness and hard of hearing)
    - 1.3.3. Specific Learning Disability (Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, Dyscalculia)
    - 1.3.4. Speech and Language Impairments including fluency disorder
    - 1.3.5. Autism
    - 1.3.6. Emotional and Behavioral Disorders
    - 1.3.7. Intellectual Disability
    - 1.3.8. Physical /Orthopedic Impairments

1.3.9. Health related Impairments Such as:

- Heart disease;
- Cystic fibrosis(is a hereditary disease that affects the lungs and digestive system.);
- Acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS);
- Hemophilia(is a rare disorder in which your blood doesn't clot normally because it lacks sufficient blood-clotting proteins (clotting factors) ;
- Asthma;
- Diabetes;
- Nephrosis & Nephritis Kidney disorders **nephrosis** is (pathology) a non-inflammatory disease of the kidneys that is characterized by the leaking of blood protein into the urine, swelling or oedema, and degenerative lesions while **nephritis** is (pathology) inflammation of the kidney. ;

-Sickle-cell anemia;
-Leukemia (is a blood cancer caused by a rise in the number of white blood cells in your body.) ;
-Lead poisoning Disorder (is a type of metal poisoning caused by lead in the body) ;
-Rheumatic fever (is a disease that can affect the heart, joints, brain, and skin) ;
-Tuberculosis;
-Cancer;
-Epilepsy;
-Leprosy

1.3.10. Multiple Impairment:

-Deaf blindness.

- Then again, children, pregnant women, elderly people, malnourished people, and people who are ill or immune-compromised, are particularly vulnerable when a disaster strikes, and take a relatively high share of the disease burden associated with emergencies (WHO, 2020).
- In general poor and socially disadvantaged people are the most known vulnerable groups throughout the world.

- The following features depict the common characteristics of the vulnerable groups stated above:
  - Less physically or mentally capable (infants, older adults, people with disabilities);
  - Fewer material and/or financial resources (low-income households, homeless);
  - Less knowledge or experience (children, illiterate, foreigners, tourists);
  - Restricted by society to grow and develop according to their needs and potentials.

1.4. Historical background of modalities moving towards inclusion

- In the post industrial period legislations and litigations created opportunities for children with disabilities to access education in public schools.
- The following modalities were applied to teach children with disabilities.

1.4.1. Specialized and or residential schools

- These schools were established with an intention to provide educational services in specialized approach only for children with disabilities.
- Consequently, schools for the deaf, schools for the blind etc. came into being as separate institutions throughout 19th and 20th century.

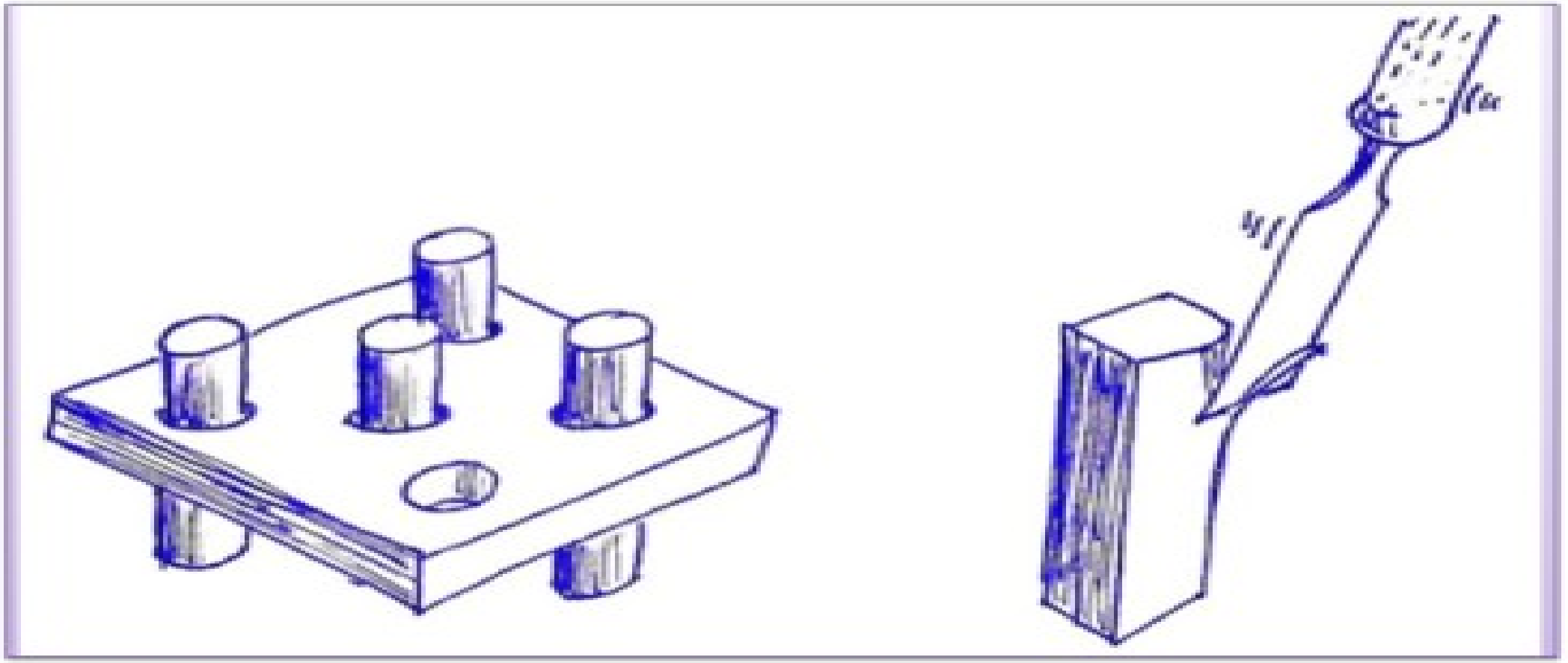
1.4.2. Mainstreaming

- In the 1960 and 70s special needs education classes were established in public schools with an intention to create least restrictive environment for children with disabilities.

1.4.3. Integration

- The approach was introduced and applied in 1970s with an objective to integrating students with disabilities in general class setting without the change of regular school/education system.
- In this situation, students with disabilities are required to fit the system.
- This approach is characterized by the following realities:
  - System stays the same;
  - Round pegs for round holes;
  - Change the child to fit the system;
  - Make the square peg round;
  - Child must adapt or fail.

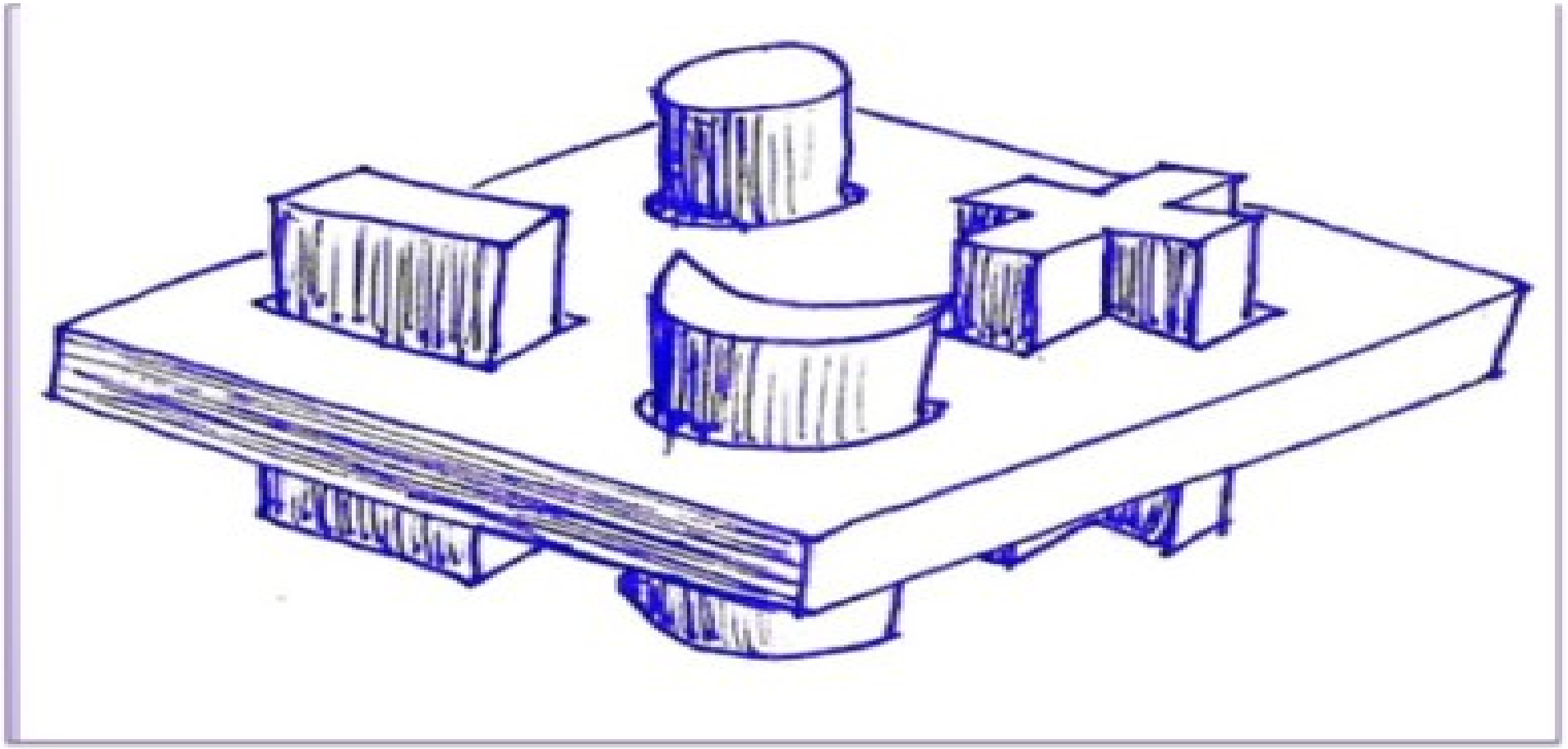
Integration



1.4.4.Inclusive Education

- This approach was applied as of the last quarter of 20th century focusing on regular education system change to fit the special educational needs of students with disabilities as discussed in the next section in detail.
- This approach is characterized by the following factors.
  - Flexible system;
  - Children are different;
  - All children can learn: (Different abilities, Ethnic Groups, Size, Age, Background, Gender, Persons with disabilities);
  - Change the system to fit the child.

Inclusive



1.5. Evolution of the concept of disability

- In order to understand how disability is currently viewed, it is helpful to look at the way the concept of disability has evolved over time as described below.

1.5.1.Traditional/Charity Model

- Historically, disability was largely understood in mythological or religious terms, e.g. people with disabilities were considered to be possessed by devils or spirits; disability was also often seen as a punishment for past wrong doing.
- These views are still present today in many traditional societies.

1.5.2.Individual/Medical Model

- In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, developments in science and medicine helped to create an understanding that disability has a biological or medical basis, with impairments in body function and structure being associated with different health conditions.
- This medical model views disability as a problem of the individual and is primarily focused on cure and the provision of medical care by professionals.

1.5.3.Social Model/Human Rights-Based Model

- In the 1960s and 1970s, the individual and medical view of disability was challenged and a range of social approaches were developed, e.g. the social model of disability.
- These approaches shifted attention away from the medical aspects of disability and instead focused on the social barriers and discrimination that people with disabilities face.
- Disability was redefined as a societal problem rather than an individual problem and solutions became focused on removing barriers and social change, not just medical cure.

PWD as part of society

