

Unit one

understanding disability and vulnerabilities

1.1 Definitions of Basic Terms (Impairment, Disability and Handicap)

Impairment

- Impairment means a lack/abnormality of an anatomic, physiological or psychological structure or function or deviation on a person.
- It refers to any loss or abnormality of physiological, psychological or anatomical structure or function.

E.g. loss of eye, leg,

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Disability

- The concept of disability is complex, dynamic, multidimensional, and contested (WHO and World Bank, 2011).
- The full inclusion of people with impairments in society can be inhibited by:
 1. Attitudinal (societal barriers, such as stigma)
 2. Physical barriers (environmental barriers, such as absence of stairs)
 3. Policy barriers (systemic barriers),
- Where all together can create a disabling effect and inhibit disability inclusive development. They are disabling factors
- If these problems addressed, impairment may not lead to disability

What is disability?

There are two approach to define disability

1. Medical Approach

- Disability is pathology (physiological, biological and intellectual). Disability means functional limitations due to physical, intellectual or psychic impairment, health or psychic disorders on a person (WHO,1996).
- people are individual objects to be “treated”, “changed” or “improved” and made more “normal”.

The social definition of disability:

- Disability is a highly varied and complex condition with a range of implications for social identity and behavior.
- Disability largely depends on the context and is a consequence of discrimination, prejudice and exclusion.
- Emphasizes the shortcomings in the environment and in many organized activities in society

Causes of disability

Genetic Causes

Abnormalities in genes and genetic inheritance can cause intellectual disability in children. In some countries, e.g. Down syndrome, diseases, illnesses, and over-exposure to x-rays can cause a genetic disorder. .

Environmental

Poverty and malnutrition before and after birth, 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 disability to the child.

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- 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 events such as drowning, automobile accidents, falls and so on can result in people losing their sight, hearing, limbs and other vital parts of their body and cause disability.

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❖ Unknown Causes

Scientists have still not figured out what and how some things in the body, cells, brain, and genes come about.

❖ Inaccessible environments

- Unable to consider people with special need
- Lack of education, support services, health and opportunities for people with impairment can cause additional disability to people with disabilities and even people with no disability.

Types of disability

1. Visual impairment

- sub- classifications (blindness and low vision)
- ✓ Blindness, total or partial inability to see because of disease or disorder of the eye, optic nerve, or brain. The term blindness typically refers to vision loss that is not correctable with eyeglasses or contact lenses.
- ✓ low vision is used for moderately impaired vision. People with low vision may have a visual impairment that affects only central vision—the area directly in front of the eyes—or peripheral vision—the area to either side of and slightly behind the eyes.

2. Hearing Impairment

Two broad classification

- Hard of Hearing: term can also be used to describe persons with enough (usually with hearing aids) as a primary modality of acquisition of language and in communication with others.
- Deaf: those who have difficulty understanding speech, even with hearing aids but can successfully communicate in sign language.

3. Specific learning disability

- Specific Learning Disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations.
- The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.
- The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; of intellectual disability; of emotional disturbance; or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

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- Generally speaking, people with learning disabilities are of average or above average intelligence.
- There often appears to be a gap between the individual's potential and actual achievement. This is why learning disabilities are referred to as "hidden disabilities"
- A learning disability cannot be cured or fixed; it is a lifelong challenge.
- However, with appropriate support and intervention, people with learning disabilities can achieve success in school, at work, in relationships, and in the community.

Types of Specific Learning Disabilities

- A. Dyscalculia-dyscalculia is a specific learning disability that affects a person's ability to understand numbers and learn math.
- B. Dysgraphia-dysgraphia is a specific learning disability that affects a person's handwriting ability and fine motor skills.
- C. Dyslexia-dyslexia is a specific learning disability that affects reading and related language-based processing skills.

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D. Auditory Processing Disorder (APD) also known as Central Auditory Processing Disorder

this is a condition that adversely affects how sound that travels unimpeded through the ear is processed or interpreted by the brain.

E. Language Processing Disorder -language Processing Disorder is a specific type of Auditory Processing Disorder (APD) in which there is difficulty attaching meaning to sound groups that form words, sentences and stories. LPD can affect expressive language and/or receptive language.

F. Non-Verbal Learning Disabilities-a disorder which is usually characterized by a significant discrepancy between higher verbal skills and weaker motor, visual-spatial and social skills.

G. Visual Perceptual/Visual Motor Deficit-visual Perceptual /Visual Motor Deficit is a disorder that affects the understanding of information that a person sees, or the ability to draw or copy.

4.Speech and Language Impairments

- Speech and language impairment means a communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, language impairment, or a voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance.
- It is disorder that adversely affects the child's ability to talk, understand, read, and write.
- This disability category can be divided into two groups: speech impairments and language impairments.

Speech Impairments

- There are three basic types of speech impairments: articulation disorders, fluency disorders, and voice disorders.

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- ❖ Articulation disorders are errors in the production of speech sounds that may be related to anatomical or physiological limitations in the skeletal, muscular, or neuromuscular support for speech production. E.g.
 - Omissions: (bo for boat)
 - Substitutions: (wabbit for rabbit)
 - Distortions: (shlip for sip)
- ❖ Fluency disorders are difficulties with the rhythm and timing of speech characterized by hesitations, repetitions, or prolongations of sounds, syllables, words, or phrases. E.g.
 - ✓ Stuttering: e.g. k..k..k..
 - ✓ Cluttering: excessively fast and jerky speech
- ❖ Voice disorders are problems with the quality or use of one's voice resulting from disorders in the larynx. E.g. absences of vocal quality, pitch, loudness, resonance, and/or duration.

Language Impairments

There are five basic areas of language impairments:

1. Phonological disorders are defined as the abnormal organization of the phonological system.
2. Morphological disorders are defined as difficulties with morphological inflections
3. Semantic disorders are characterized by poor vocabulary development, inappropriate use of word meanings, etc...
4. Syntactic deficits are characterized by difficulty in acquiring the rules that govern word order and other aspects of grammar.
5. Pragmatic difficulties as problems in understanding and using language in different social contexts.

5. Autism

Autism means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three.

Other characteristics often associated with autism

- are engaging in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences.
- Autism is pervasive developmental disorder characterized by lack of normal sociability, impaired communication and repetitive obsessive behavior such as politeness, turn-taking
- Children with autism vary literally in their use of words, (Rutter, 1966).

6. Emotional and Behavioral Disorders

Exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time

- 1) An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors;
- 2) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;
- 3) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances;
- 4) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or
- 5) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

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- Classification of behavioral and emotional disorders

Different professionals have developed a classification system, which shows some promise for educational practice. These include:

☐ Conduct disorder: individuals may seek attention, are disruptive and act out. The disorder is classified by type: overt (with violence or tantrums) versus covert (with lying, stealing, and/or drug use).

☐ Socialized aggression: individuals join subculture group of peers who are openly disrespectful to their peers, teachers, and parents. Common are delinquency and dropping out of school

- [?] Attention problems-are easily destructible and have poor concentration.
- [?] Anxiety/Withdrawn- self-conscious, reserved, and unsure of themselves/have low self-esteem and withdraw from immediate activities/.
- [?] Psychotic behavior: may hallucinate, deal in a fantasy world and may even talk in gibberish.
- [?] Motor excess: are hyperactive, cannot sit nor listen to others nor keep their attention focused.

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Kauffman (1993) two broad classifications:

- 1) Externalizing Behavior: also called under controlled disorder, include such problems disobedience, disruptiveness, fighting, tempers tantrums, irresponsibility, jealous, anger, attention seeking etc...
- 2) Internalizing Behavior: also known as over controlled disorders, include such problems anxiety, immaturity, shyness, social withdrawal, feeling of inadequacy (inferiority), guilt, depression and worries a great deal

cont... causes of behavioral and emotional disorders

1. Biological- genetic disorders, brain damage, and malnutrition, allergies, temperament and damage to the CNS.
2. Family factors- include family interactions, family influence, child abuse, neglect, and poor disciplinary practices at home.
3. Cultural factors- include some traditional and cultural negative practices, for example watching violence and sexually oriented movies and TV programs.
4. Environmental factors- include peer pressure, living in impoverished areas, and schooling practices that are unresponsive to individual needs.

7. Intellectual Disability

- Intellectual disability is a disability characterized by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior, which covers many everyday social and practical skills. This disability originates before the age of 18.

The definition has three points

- 1. Sub average intellectual functioning: It refers to general mental capacity, such as learning, reasoning, problem solving, and so on. i.e IQ limitation

2. Significant limitations exist in two or more adaptive skill areas:

- [?] Conceptual skills—language and literacy; money, time, and number concepts; and self-direction.
- [?] Social skills—interpersonal skills, social responsibility, self-esteem, gullibility, innocence (i.e., suspicion), social problem solving, and the ability to follow rules/obey laws and to avoid being victimized.
- [?] Practical skills—activities of daily living, occupational skills, healthcare, travel/transportation, schedules/routines, safety, use of money, use of the telephone.

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Their apparent slowness in learning may be related to the delayed rate of intellectual development (Wehman, 1997).

- Learning and Memory
- Attention: may have difficulty distinguishing and attending to relevant questions in both learning and social situation
- Adaptive Skills: may have difficulty in both learning and applying skills for a number of reasons, including a higher level of distractibility, inattentiveness, failure to read social cues, and impulsive behavior memory, rehearsal skills, organizational ability, and being in control of the process of learning

- Speech and Language: People with intellectual disabilities may have delayed speech, language comprehension and formulation difficulties.
- Motivation: are often described as lacking motivation, or outer-directed behavior.
- Academic Achievement: The cognitive difficulties of children with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities lead to persistent problems in academic achievement
- Physical characteristics: with differing biological etiologies, may exhibit coexisting problems, such as physical, motor, orthopedic, visual and auditory impairments, and health problems.

The majority of children with severe and profound intellectual disabilities have multiple disabilities that affect nearly every aspect of intellectual and physical development.

- Levels of support for individuals with intellectual disabilities
- Levels of support range from intermittent (just occasional or —as needed|| for specific activities) to pervasive (continuous in all realms of living).

8. physical disability/orthopedic impairment and health impairment

Physical disability is a condition that interferes with the individual's ability to use his or her body. Many but not all, physical disabilities are orthopedic impairment.

Health impairment is a condition that requires ongoing medical attention. It includes asthma, heart defects, cancer, diabetes, hemophilia. HIV/AIDS, etc.

Classification and Characteristics of physical disabilities:-

- A. Mild physical disability:- these individuals are able to walk without aids and may make normal developmental progress.
- B. Moderate physical disability:- individuals can walk with braces and crutches and may have difficulty with fine-motor skills and speech production.
- C. :-these are individuals who are wheel-chair dependent Severe physical disability and may need special help to achieve regular development.

The physical disability could be broadly classified into two

I. The neurological system (the brain, spinal cord & nerve) related problems.

II. Musculo skeletal system (the muscles, bones and joints) are deficient due to various causes.

I. Neurological system:-with a neurological condition like cerebral palsy or a traumatic brain injury, the brain either sends the wrong instructions or interprets feedback incorrectly.

- In both cases, the result is poorly coordinated movement.

- Additional problems that can be associated with cerebral palsy include learning disabilities, mental retardation. Seizures, speech impairments, eating problems, sensory impairments, and joint and bone deformities such as spinal curvatures and contractures (permanently fixed, tight muscles and joints).
- Epilepsy:-is disorder that occurs when the brain cells are not working properly and is often called a seizure disorder. Some children and youth with epilepsy have only a momentary loss of attention (petit mal seizures); others fall to the floor and then move uncontrollably. Most individuals with epilepsy have normal intelligence.
- Spinal bifida and spinal cord injury:- damage to the spinal cord leads to paralysis and loss of sensation in the affected areas of the body. The spinal bifida is a birth defect of the backbone (spinal column).

- II. Musculoskeletal system: - it includes the muscles and their supporting framework and the skeleton.
- 1. Progressive muscle weakness (muscular dystrophy);
- 2. Inflammation of the joints (arthritis), or
- 3. Loss of various parts of the body (amputation)

The list of the impairment and associated with musculoskeletal malformation are the following:

- A. Muscular dystrophy:- is an inherited condition accruing mainly in males, in which the muscles weaken and deteriorate.
- B. Arthritis:-is an inflammation of the joints.
- C. Amputation:- a small number of children have missing limbs because of congenital abnormalities or injury or disease.

- Other muscle-skeletal disorders are:-
- D. Marfan syndrome is a genetic disorder in which the muscles are poorly developed and the spine is curved.
- E. Achondroplasia:- is a genetic disorder that affects 1 in 10,000 births.
- Polio:- is viral disease that invade the brain and cause severe paralysis of the total body system.

- Club foot:- is a major orthopedic problem affecting about 9,000 infants each year. This term is used to describe various ankle or foot deformities, i.e
- ☐ Twisting inward (equino varus), the most severe form
- ☐ Sharply angled at the heel (calcaneal valgus), most common
- ☐ The front part of the foot turned inward.
- These conditions can be treated with physical therapy, and a cast on the foot can solve the problem in most instances. In more severe cases, surgery is necessary. With early treatment, most children can wear regular shoes and take part in all school activities.
- Cleft lip and cleft palate:- are openings in the lip or roof of the mouth, respectively, that fail to close before birth, the cause is unknown. Most cleft problems can be repaired through surgery.

Health Impairments

Any disease that interferes with learning can make students eligible for special services. E.g.

1. Heart disease
2. Cystic fibrosis:- is a hereditary disease that affects the lungs and pancreas.
3. Acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS)
4. Hemophilia:- is a hereditary disease in which the blood clots very slowly or not at all.
5. Asthma
6. Diabetes
7. Nephrosis & Nephritis Kidney disorders or diseases caused by infections, poisoning, burns, accidents or other diseases

8. Sickle-cell anemia Hereditary and chronic blood disease
9. Leukemia: Disease characterized by excessive production of white blood Cells
10. Lead poisoning Disorder caused by ingesting lead-based paint chips or other substances containing lead
11. Rheumatic fever Disease characterized by painful swelling and inflammation of the joints that can spread to the hear and central nervous system.
12. Tuberculosis Infectious disease that commonly affects the lungs and may affect other tissues of the body.
13. Cancer Abnormal growth of cells that can affect any organ system

9. Vulnerability-vulnerable means being at risk of being harmed. some people are more vulnerable than others. For instance, people with disabilities are more likely as a group to experience greater vulnerability.

1. Economic difficulties/lack of financial resources
2. Social exclusion: limited access to facilities
3. Lack of social support from social networks
4. Stigmatization
5. Health difficulties
6. Being a victim of crime

Causes of Vulnerability

Vulnerability may be caused by rapid population growth, poverty and hunger, poor health, low levels of education, gender inequality, fragile and hazardous location, and lack of access to resources and services, including knowledge and technological means, disintegration of social patterns (social vulnerability). Other causes include; lack of access to information and knowledge, lack of public awareness, limited access to political power and representation (political vulnerability), (Aysan, 1993). When people are socially disadvantaged or lack political voice, their vulnerability is exacerbated further. The economic vulnerability is related to a number of interacting elements, including its importance in the overall national economy, trade and foreign-exchange earnings, aid and investments, international prices of commodities and inputs, and production and consumption patterns. Environmental vulnerability concerns land degradation, earthquake, flood, hurricane, drought, storms (Monsoon rain, El Niño), water scarcity, deforestation, and the other threats to biodiversity.

Characteristics of Vulnerable People

characteristics of vulnerable people (with examples of groups of potentially vulnerable people):

1. Less physically or mentally capable (infants, older adults, people with disabilities)
2. Fewer material and/or financial resources (low-income households, homeless)
3. Less knowledge or experience (children, illiterate, foreigners, tourists)
4. Restricted by society to grow and develop according to their needs and potentials

- People who are helped by others are still vulnerable people, which includes the following extracted from various researches.
- A. Women: particularly women in developing nations ,living in rural, vulnerable for many backward traditional practices, oppressed by the culture and do not get access to education and employment
- B. Children: psychological and physical abused. This include illegally working children, children who are pregnant or become mothers, children born out of marriage, children from a single-parent, delinquent children, homeless children, HIV-infected children, uneducated children, institutionalized children, married children, mentally ill children, migrant children, orphans, sexually exploited children, street children, war-affected children...etc.

- C. Minorities: ethnic (cultural and linguistic minority), religious minority. These people are political and socially discriminated
- D. Poverty: People are vulnerable for many undesirable phenomena due to poverty. This may be resulted in, poor households and large households, inequality, absences of access to health services, important resources for life, lack of access to education, information, financial and natural resources and lack of social networks
- E. Disabilities: People with disabilities very much vulnerable for many kind of risks. This includes abuses, poverty, illiteracy, health problems, psychological and social problems.
- F. Age: Old people or very young children are vulnerable for all kinds evils

- G. Illiteracy and less education: People with high rates of illiteracy and lack quality educational opportunities are vulnerable
- H. Sickness: Uncured health problems for example people living with HIV/AIDS are much vulnerable for psychosocial problems, poverty and health
- I. Gifted and Talentedness: Gifted and talented children are vulnerable for socio-emotional developments. Due to lack of psychological support they may feel isolation