

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION OF STUDENTS AT MARY CHAPMAN SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF*

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Abstract

The deaf students possess the same intellectual level like other normal students but some deaf students cannot study formal education like normal students. Such kind of students need to teach non-formal education to adapt in society. Mary Chapman School for the Deaf provides the deaf students not only formal education but also non-formal education. Mary Chapman School for the Deaf was established in Myanmar since 1920. This paper titled Non-Formal Education of Students at Mary Chapman School for the Deaf. This research was conducted by using qualitative research methods. Key informant interview (KII), individual in-depth interview (IDI), informal conversations and participant observation became the key tools for data collection. The aim of this research is to describe the non-formal education of students at Mary Chapman School for the Deaf. The results of this study aim to prove that non-formal education is also the way for the deaf students to adapt, sustain successful careers and achieve prosperity within their communities.

Keywords: non-formal, education, deaf, students, adapt, sustain

Introduction

Non-formal education is an educational system outside the established formal education system. Non-formal education plays a crucial role in promoting sustainable development for persons with disabilities, as it equips them with essential skills and job opportunities that can help reduce poverty. Non-formal education for deaf students is important as one of the priority areas. Non-formal education encompasses vocational learning opportunities that offer individuals flexible and accessible pathways to acquire the practical skills needed for participation in the labour market. Developing countries frequently require external support to advance vocational education as well as other components of their educational systems. One of these developing countries, Kosovo, continues to experience high levels of unemployment, a circumstance that further restricts the employment opportunities available to individuals with disabilities. As a result, strengthening vocational education for people with disabilities has become an especially important area of focus. Hearing-impaired students have benefited from educational opportunities supported by specialized services offered throughout the vocational education process (Girgin *et al.*, 2015). In Myanmar, Mary Chapman School for the Deaf aims to provide non-formal education for deaf students to develop the skills to sustain themselves and foster the ability to rely on their own income as they grow older. The deaf students need to study sign language at first before they study non-formal education. Sign Language is the vision-based communication tool and deaf people use sign language to communicate with others. The teachers teach the non-formal education with sign language to students at Mary Chapman School for the Deaf. Mary Chapman School for the Deaf teach sign language as a special curriculum for all deaf students in not only formal education but also non-formal education. Non-formal education for deaf students can be highly effective for promoting sustainability. The deaf students were taught non-formal education to increase their chances of higher employment at Mary Chapman School for the Deaf since 1953. Firstly, sewing was the first subject to be taught. Beauty courses were given to eight female students in 2015 and the beauty salon named "*Mudita*" (မုဒိတာ) was opened within Mary Chapman School for the Deaf boundaries for the livelihood of deaf students. The chefs from hotels cooperate with Mary Chapman School for the Deaf and occasionally hold chef

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training classes for deaf students. Mary Chapman School for the Deaf has vocational courses in accordance with changing era and environment. In non-formal education, there are different courses for deaf students' interesting subjects.

This research was conducted to explore the non-formal education given to students with hearing impairments at Mary Chapman School for the Deaf in Yangon. Mary Chapman School for the Deaf is the deaf school which provides the deaf students with not only formal education but also non-formal education. It was intended to explore that the non-formal education for the deaf students could lead effective social adaptation in society. The ways of teaching and learning in non-formal education for the deaf students at Mary Chapman School for the Deaf and how that specific way has led the students to properly adapt within wider society are studied from socio-cultural perspective. The title of this research is "Non-formal Education of Students at Mary Chapman School for the Deaf". The aim of this research is to describe the non-formal education of students at Mary Chapman School for the Deaf. Specific objectives of this study are to explore the ways of non-formal education at Mary Chapman School for the Deaf and to examine the knowledge of how the deaf students are able to adapt and sustain successful careers in society.

Literature Review

Non-formal education is any organized, systematic educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal education system to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the population including adults as well as children (Mbilu, 2019). Though it doesn't result in a formal degree or diploma, non-formal education is highly enriching and builds an individual's skills and capacities (Eaton, 2010). Non-formal education includes on-the-job learning, agricultural or industrial extension services, entrepreneurship development programs, and commercial or artistic programs. They are organized and offered by a wide range of providers including private firms and agencies, trade unions as well as state and non-state formal schools and colleges. Such non-formal education programs are mainly for skills development with the intention to help governments address socio-economic challenges such as youth unemployment (Mbilu, 2019). People with disabilities participate in non-formal education programmes and learn literacy, numeracy and other skills which contribute to better living conditions. Non-formal education programmes include people with disabilities and consider their needs during programme planning. These programmes are usually focused on literacy, adult learning and vocational training (Khasnabis *et al.*, 2010).

Vocational education provides students with the skills responding to the demands of adult life, prepares for the independent social functioning and makes them the contributing members of the communities. It is also important for hearing-impaired people to find a job, have confidence in their work environment and establish professional communication with their colleagues. In developing countries, individuals with disabilities typically live in extreme poverty and dependency. One of the reasons for this is limited access to basic services such as education and vocational training (Malle *et al.*, 2015).

The United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) is about ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting life-long learning opportunities for all students. Goal 4 intends to "eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations" (Burchi and Rippin, 2015).

Sociocultural adaptation is defined as the process of adapting an individual to the environment and purposefully adapting of its separate elements so as to meet their own needs and desires. This is realized through the knowledge and skills acquired in the course of socialization

in the continuum of social interaction and communication (Georgieva, 2020). Deaf viewed through the lens of the sociocultural approach can be defined as a group of persons who share a common means of communication (signs) which provide the basis for group cohesion and identity. It is “a group of persons who share a common language and a common culture”. The attitude of people who work from a sociocultural approach believe that the deaf community should be accepted and respected as a separate cultural group having its own values and language, sign language (Peel, 2004). The sociocultural adaptation of children with hearing impairments has its own distinctive features and problems. Hearing pathology leads to a significant restriction of life activity, to social maladaptation, which causes difficulties in communication, training and the further mastering of professional habits (Searle and Ward, 1990).

Vygotsky's theory of sociocultural cognitive development highlighted the central role of social interaction in the cognition development area. Vygotsky's theory asserts that a child's cognitive development and learning ability can be guided and mediated by their social interactions (Vygotsky, 1978). In the Social Learning Theory of Julian Rotter, Rotter's interactionist position holds that human behavior is based largely on the interaction of people with their meaningful environments (Rotter, 1954).

Research Methodology

In conducting this research, qualitative research methods are used through descriptive approach. Key informant interview (KII), individual in-depth interview (IDI), informal conversations and participant observation became the key tools for data collection. Key informant interview (KII) was conducted to gather insights from experts with specialized knowledge about non-formal education at Mary Chapman School for the Deaf. Teachers, full-time volunteers and parents were selected as key informants for the study. Individual in-depth interviews (IDI) were conducted to explore the personal experiences, perspectives, and challenges encountered by deaf students within non-formal education programs. Informal conversations offered further understanding of the context through unstructured discussions with participants. Participant observation enabled the researcher to examine and participate in learning environments and daily practices, providing a deeper understanding of how deaf students engage with and benefit from non-formal education programs. Secondary data was collected from various journal, thesis, articles and books. Qualitative data was analyzed manually according to the use of data collection tools such as phone recorders, camera and video camera. A total of 35 interviewees were included in this research. Research participants are teachers, students, full-time volunteers and parents. The interview sessions took 1hour to 2 hours, depending on the research participants' willingness to share their experiences.

Findings

Non-formal Education

In Mary Chapman School for the Deaf, deaf students are given vocational education and classes to improve skills and job opportunities for livelihood. Vocational classes such as poultry farming, chefs training, sewing class, massage, and beauty classes are included in non-formal education. Vocational education was started in 1953. There are not only basic education classes but also vocational education classes in Mary Chapman School for the Deaf, and certificates are given to those who finished two years of vocational training since 2022-2023. In the 2022-2023 academic year, vocational classes, such as sewing class, shiatsu massage class and beauty class,

last for two years. Deaf students are given all the vocational education in the first year and have to choose the class they are interested in most, which they can be taught in detail in the second year. A teacher who has 12 years of experience in teaching vocational education said:

“It is not easy for deaf students to pass the examination each year. They need to attend Kindergarten for three years and finish primary school at eighteen years of age. Therefore, they are grown up after finishing primary level. Students with normal hearing are still young when attending middle schools. Most deaf students quit learning after finishing basic primary education. Therefore, we have to give them vocational education”.

In Mary Chapman School for the Deaf, some deaf students are more interested in getting an occupation than continuing basic education after finishing primary education. During the times of COVID outbreak, as the schools were closed, deaf students had to go back to the countryside from hostels and became distant to education. When the school reopened classes, some students did not want to continue basic education and joined vocational classes. One of the students in vocational class said:

“As I was 19 years old when the school was reopened after COVID outbreak, I didn't want to continue my education. I just wanted to learn vocational education and work by opening my own shop at home”.

Chef Training Class

Chef training class was established on 25 February, 2012. It started with six deaf students from Mary Chapman School for the Deaf. Chef training classes are opened in collaboration with chefs from hotels to support the training of deaf students at Mary Chapman School for the Deaf. Those classes even produce deaf chefs who can work in famous hotels in Yangon after finishing chef training classes at school. Because of those chef training classes; one deaf alumnus, Ko Ye Lwin Oo was able to compete in the Master Chef Myanmar competition. It can be seen in the media that he was successful and even got into the top ten list. Mary Chapman School for the Deaf could successfully nurture a deaf student who has stood at the fourth position at Master Chef Myanmar cooking competition. Another deaf alumnus had been working at Novotel Hotel and had got gold medal in pizza making competition held by the collaboration of multiple hotels (see Photo 1). This alumnus's uncle, who works as a teacher at Mary Chapman School for the Deaf, said that:

“My nephew had attended up to Grade 10. He took chef training class in 2012 and is now working at Novotel Hotel. In pizza making competition, my nephew was the only deaf chef and got gold medal after competing with chefs with normal hearing”.



Photo 1: Deaf alumnus who had got gold medal in pizza making competition

Source: Mary Chapman School for the Deaf 100th Anniversary Magazine (2021)

The experts from hotels trained the deaf students with the knowledge to be a good chef. Deaf students face language barriers in chef training classes because experts from hotels are hearing. To address this issue, teachers from Mary Chapman School serve as intermediaries to instruct the deaf students. So that the students could learn and get chances such as job opportunities in hotels. On April 8, 2022, it is an interview in Myanmar Celebrity News on TV with the deaf male alumnus and a female alumnus of Mary Chapman School for the Deaf, stated that they could even have founded a restaurant named “Shwe Phu ရွှေဖူး”. Chef training classes enable deaf students to pursue successful careers in the food industry. Chef training for deaf students promotes sustainability by fostering economic independence, enhancing job opportunities and supporting inclusivity. From 2013 to 2023, the Mary Chapman School for the Deaf has been able to train over a hundred deaf chefs.

Sewing Class

The sewing class was included in vocational education since it was started. Teacher Naw Sar Phaw, school alumnus, took responsibility for the sewing class since 1995 till now. Deaf students are taught sewing in detail starting from basics. The students who started to join sewing classes didn't even know what sewing was. Therefore, students are taught what sewing is and the sewing materials. The main idea taught is not to put hands into sewing machines and it will be painful if they get needle pricks. The students are taught sewing *longyi* (လုံချည်) *Htamein* (ထဘီ), blouses, bags, handkerchiefs and embroidery like in other sewing classes (see Photo 2). They need more time to learn sewing as they cannot hear and they are not taught by speaking like in other classes in which normal people attend. A nalumnus Naw Sa Phaw explained her experiences:

I have been working as a teacher for tailoring at the shop in Mary Chapman School for the Deaf for 28 years. I teach the deaf students sewing and embroidery. At the beginning, the students sew the cloth up side down as they haven't got knowledge for the related tools and things so that one lesson is taught up to three to four times and let them practice frequently. I took time to teach them and now they even can earn for their living and they can help at the school as assistants. People who know the shop here in this school, come and make order for their clothes and we can earn more. My neighbours also ask me .”make their clothes at my shop



Photo 2: Beautiful Creations of the deaf students

Source: Photo taken by the author (2023)

Sewing classes are important for deaf individuals in sustainable development. Sewing skills provide a foundation for adaptation. According to the interviews, some deaf alumni have achieved significant success including the establishment of their own tailoring shops in their hometowns. Most deaf students face challenges in securing employment at other tailoring shops. To overcome this challenges, Mary Chapman school for the Deaf open a tailoring shop and sewing classes in campus. This aims to provide deaf students with employment opportunities to support their livelihoods. Deaf alumnus can work as full-time volunteer in the tailoring shop and receive a full-time volunteer salary from the school. Deaf students can also earn income based on their sewing skill. Sewing classes can offer practical benefits that align with broader goals of economic independence, successful careers and prosperity for deaf students.

Shiatsu Massage Class

Shiatsu, the Japanese traditional massage, is taught at the school. In 2004, 10 teachers of Shiatsu group from SHARE (Human Life Project), Italy, and one interpreter Shiatsu, came to Mary Chapman School for the Deaf and asked interested people to get treatment. Therefore, teachers and some deaf students had got the treatment. Then principal and teachers discussed in a meeting about starting Shiatsu class as one of the vocational classes to support the livelihood of deaf students. From the year 2004, teachers and students learned Shiatsu massage.

In 2008, the Shiatsu Center named Balance was opened at Mary Chapman School for the Deaf (see Photo 3). Balance Shiatsu Massage Center was opened and school alumni who studied massage at school were appointed as full-time volunteers there. Those full-time volunteers are also teaching massage to younger students who want to learn. The lessons learned in Shiatsu massage class are Yoga, body balancing exercises, breathing exercises, anatomy to identify pressure points in massage, and massaging techniques. The deaf students are also taught some other important basis such as greeting customers, preparing the massage area, cleaning pillow sheets and bed sheets after customers going back.



Photo 3: Balance Shiatsu Massage Center at Mary Chapman School for the Deaf

Source: Photo taken by the author (2023)

Shiatsu means treatment using fingers. When Shiatsu massage is given, it helps to regain energy and release tension in the body by giving pressure to the tensed area with hands, fingers, and elbows. Massage reduces the tension of muscles of the body and improve blood circulation. It is a treatment good for patients with chronic illnesses and people who want to reduce stress. In addition, it also reduces back pain, fatigue and gives better sleep. Many people are getting Shiatsu massage as it is good for health. As the customers love the massage and come to take massage sessions at home, deaf students get income for their livelihood. In addition, it is like doing finger exercises while giving massage because they have to use fingers in Shiatsu massage. Shiatsu massage improves health and supports the sustainable development of deaf students. A full-time volunteer, alumnus of school for the deaf, working at massage center, said that:

“I attended up to Grade 9. After finishing it, I didn’t want to continue my education and became interested in massage class, one of the vocational classes at school as I am a boy, and attended this class. As Shiatsu massage is good for health, many customers of older age come to get massage. Middle age customers sometimes come because they get back pain and migraine from their tiring jobs. If this massage is learned, we will get income for livelihood by giving massage to people with stiffness in our quarters. From Shiatsu massage, I get ten thousand per hour for one person in daily. That amount is enough for me to earn a living”.

Beauty Class

In Mary Chapman School for the Deaf, beauty class was started in 2015, during the time of principal Daw Nyunt Nyunt Thein, by teaching eight deaf students and one teacher. In the same year, the beauty salon named *Mudita* (မုဒိတာ) was opened with the help of donor Daw Mya Kaythi (see Photo 4). When donor Daw Mya Kaythi came to get massage at Shiatsu Center, she noticed that the full times volunteers at massage center and sewing shop had talent and hobby in cosmetics applications. Therefore, she hired makeup artists to teach eight deaf students about beauty with sponsorship. As the makeup artists are not hearing-impaired, there is difficulty in communication with deaf students during class. Therefore, the teachers from Mary Chapman School for the Deaf interpreted the teachings. Then those eight deaf students who had learned from the artists taught back younger students interested in that. Some students continue to work at the salon after finishing beauty class till now. However, some students stop working

due to health, social and economic reasons. The objective of opening beauty salon at Mary Chapman School for the Deaf is to give job opportunities to deaf girls when growing up and to encourage ability to stand on their own feet by using their skills. *Mudita* (မုဒိတာ) beauty salon is also work place and training class for deaf students. A teacher is responsible for teaching and controlling deaf students at *Mudita* (မုဒိတာ) salon. As there is a difficulty in communication between customers and deaf students, there is always a teacher at beauty salon, massage center, and sewing shop. A responsible teacher who has 15 years' experience in teaching, now working at *Mudita* (မုဒိတာ) beauty salon said that:

“If the deaf students had learned the beauty, they can work the same as others. The school allows students to work salon at school or outside if they want to after finishing class. It is because we intend to give the future when they can live independently”.



Photo 4: *Mudita*(မုဒိတာ) Beauty Salon

Source: Photo taken by the author (2023)

In beauty salon, the subjects such as hair washing, facial cleansing, manicure, and pedicure are taught as in other beauty salons. In addition to those deaf students are encouraged to communicate with customers using signs and body language in order to improve their communication skills with customers. The customers coming to the salon also use body language for the deaf students to understand. If there is a problem at salon, responsible teacher takes control. When deaf students work at the salon in Mary Chapman School for the Deaf, they get experience in communication with customers of normal hearings. The subjects taught in beauty class can lead to employment opportunities such as makeup artists or hairdressers. These opportunities provide long-term career options and support sustainable development for deaf individuals. A full-time volunteer, alumnus of school, working at salon in Mary Chapman School for the Deaf said that:

“I attended grade 8 in other school. As I thought vocational education is more suitable for me than basic education, I started to join beauty class at Mudita salon. I took beauty class and now work as a full-time volunteer at Mudita (မုဒိတာ) salon in school for my living. Now I teach younger sisters about beauty lessons (see Photo 5)”.



Photo 5: A full-time volunteer working at beauty salon in Mary Chapman School for the Deaf teach young sisters

Source: Photo taken by the author (2023)

The Challenges of Deaf Students in Non-Formal Education

When the deaf students are learning, they need to know the related terms for the subjects like cooking, sewing, massage and beauty otherwise they may face difficulties for learning. Deaf students often made mistakes as they could not understand the related terms. Therefore when the deaf students are to be introduced the vocational education, they are being taught the related things, the usages and the dangers at the beginning of the course. Henceforth, they understood the usage of the things, they are to be taught the related vocational course. The deaf students also browse the video on webs and watch which are related to skill for cooking, sewing, massage and beauty by reading the captions so that they can catch up the skill more detail. As the result of such effort, some deaf students are qualified enough to work.

It is not sure for the deaf alumni to get jobs as they have weakness in communication. Therefore, Mary Chapman School for the Deaf teach communication skills to assist students in effectively interacting with others. When the deaf students are in a working time, they might have barriers in communication, but they tried their best by writing and using body language, to communicate with the customers, and sooner or later, they can communicate with the customers who come to the shops. There can be seen some of the deaf students who tried their best to study the techniques in cooking, and then they can even work in hotels. There are also some deaf students whose parents are rich so that the students are provided by their parents to establish own sewing shops, beauty salon, or restaurant. By trying their best to be adaptable with the customers, as they have got communication challenges in nature, some deaf students are able to earn by using their vocational skills. However, the potential of rejection from the outside professional shops for the deaf students is still undeniable. Therefore, Mary Chapman School for the Deaf promotes public awareness of deaf through social media platforms. As a success, people become understood about the deaf and are willing to give job opportunities for the deaf. Moreover, Mary Chapman School for the Deaf is not only providing the vocational education but also intentionally creating chances for them to be full time volunteers in the shops for tailoring, massage and beauty salons at Mary Chapman School for the Deaf. After attending the vocational classes, the deaf students are assigned as full-time volunteers so that the problems of unemployment is solved.

For deaf students to support their own living, non-formal education is taught at Mary Chapman School for the Deaf. Non-formal education is important for the sustainable development of deaf individuals as it enhances their employability and supports their economic independence. Non-formal education is a powerful tool for empowering deaf students, enabling them to adapt to their environments and sustain their personal and professional growth.

Discussion

According to Mbilu (2019), non-formal education programs are mainly for skills development with the intention to help governments address socio-economic challenges such as youth unemployment. This research also found that Mary Chapman School provides non-formal education for skills development and employment of deaf students. Therefore, the same findings are found that non-formal education provides job opportunities for deaf students so that they can adapt in society.

According to Khasnabis *et al.* (2010), people with disabilities participate in non-formal education programme contributing to better living conditions. The present study found that non-formal education is essential for supporting the livelihood of disabled children. Scholars Khasnabis *et al.* stated that non-formal education is essential for people with disabilities. Therefore, similar findings are found in this study that non-formal education is given to deaf students in the current study area to support and improve their living.

According to Malle *et al.* (2015), in developing countries, individuals with disabilities typically live in extreme poverty and dependency. One of the reasons for this is limited access to essential services such as education and vocational training. In my study area, it is learned that there are challenges in providing vocational training to disability. Despite these challenges, many disability schools in Myanmar offer non-formal education aimed at helping disability adapt to society, achieve self-sufficiency through their own income and sustain their livelihood over the long term.

According to Burchi and Rippin (2015), the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal 4 ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations. In my study area, Myanmar has adopted Goal 4 to provide quality education for all students, including disabilities. As a result, all schools implement Myanmar's Sustainable Development Goal 4, ensuring that all students receive equal opportunities not only in formal education but also in vocational training.

According to Peel (2004), deafness viewed through the lens of the sociocultural approach can be defined as "a group of persons who share a common means of communication (signs) which provide the basis for group cohesion and identity." In my study, deaf students also utilize sign language in non-formal education. It is found that sign language is the communication tool for deaf students and provide the basis for group cohesion and identity. Therefore, sign language is deeply tied to deaf culture, serving as a vital component of identity and community for many deaf individuals from a socio-cultural approach.

According to Vygotsky (1978), Vygotsky's theory asserts that a child's cognitive development and learning ability can be guided and mediated by their social interactions. In my study area, deaf students cognitive and learning ability develop by interacting with peers and teachers in non-formal education. Therefore, social interaction can improve the child's cognitive development and learning ability.

According to Rotter (1954), human behavior is based largely on the interaction of people with their meaningful environments. In my study area, deaf students learn to communicate and interact with others through non-formal education, leading to positive changes in their behavior. This illustrates that human behavior depends significantly on the interaction between individuals and their environments.

Conclusion

Some deaf students at Mary Chapman School for the Deaf change their education from formal education to non-formal education, such as vocational education, if they cannot catch up with formal education. Deaf students can make their own income and support their livelihoods according to the vocational education. Deaf students can adaptively live in society and community because of the non-formal education at Mary Chapman School for the Deaf.

Non-formal education for the deaf students was started in 1953 at Mary Chapman School for the Deaf and deaf students were given a non-formal education up to the present date. Targeting not only to educate students with vocational skills but also ways to upgrade social and mental skills, Mary Chapman School for the Deaf trains the students to be able to adapt properly like the other normal people in the wider society. It was found that deaf students are even able to earn a living in society and community if they have been trained with non-formal education.

Teachers play a crucial role in non-formal education for deaf students. Teachers use clear body language, sign language and visual demonstrations to effectively convey concepts in non-formal education. Deaf students interact with teachers and peers to acquire knowledge and learn through non-formal education. Non-formal education can serve as a platform for cultural exchange, where deaf students explore and share their unique experiences, cultural identity and traditions, enriching the learning environment for all participants. If deaf students do not catch up with formal education, they need to teach non-formal education to adapt and achieve financial independence for their daily lives. Non-formal education is important for the quality of life of deaf students. Non-formal education is important for progressing disability to a sustainable future and non-formal education is the best choice for disability. Non-formal education not only provides essential skills but also supports broader goals of sustainability and self-reliance.

From a socio-cultural perspective, it has been observed that deaf students can learn cultural and behaviors through social interactions with others, which facilitates their adaptation to society. Although biological factors such as hearing loss are inherent, non-formal education at Mary Chapman School for the Deaf enables these students to exhibit significant changes and improvements in their behavior. Consequently, it can be argued that human behavior is more profoundly shaped by cultural influences than by biological factors. A socio-cultural approach emphasizes the importance of integrating individuals with hearing impairments into their communities. Anthropologically, enculturation is viewed as a social process where individuals learn and adopt the cultural norms, values, behaviors and social skills of their community. In non-formal education, deaf students learn and engage with peers and teachers who share their experiences, allowing them to become enculturated into community. Non-formal education can promote social acceptance by fostering interactions between individuals with and without hearing impairments. A socio-cultural approach to non-formal education for deaf students emphasizes the importance of cultural adaptation, social integration and community involvement.

Non-formal education for deaf students may face challenges such as limited resources, societal attitudes towards deaf and the need for specialized staff. Mary Chapman School for the Deaf and other similar schools should ensure the provision of specialized supports, including physical facilities, accessible infrastructures, curriculum and teachers, give awareness to the public about the rights of person with disability to reduce stigma and form network establishment and collaboration with other institutions that have expertise in non-formal education for disability. This study proved that non-formal education can provide sustainable opportunities for disabilities and achieve prosperity within their communities. Non-formal education for disabilities can enhance overall quality of life and provide pathways to greater adaptation and participation in society.

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