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STUDENTS BEHAVIOUR AND THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN ETHIOPIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS (THE CASE OF EASTERN ZONE OF TIGRAI REGION, ETHIOPIA)

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ABSTRACT

The study has dealt on the basis of the perception of the schools' principals of the quality of education in the secondary schools of Eastern Zone of the Regional State of Tigray, Ethiopia. The study adopted census method to investigate the quality of education with a particular emphasis on students as one of the core actors in the teaching learning process. It has executed the research process by considering all the secondary schools in the zone. Questionnaire method of data collection is applied so that greater degree of freedom of respondents is maintained and possible bias is minimized. The study disclosed that there is a dramatic incremental trend of student population in the past few years which will continue in the future too with fundamental implication on the provision of supply side factors. This situation demands due attention from all concerned bodies and manage it strategically. The study revealed that students as core stakeholders of the teaching learning process are not properly discharging their roles properly. The achievement of quality of education remains unconceivable owing to the failure of the implementation of the shared responsibility vested on students by themselves. To overcome the observed gap from student side, the school better take the initiative to take the leading role for restoration of the desired execution of shared responsibilities for quality of education. Some problems attributed to students are shared by some schools such as the prevalence of low attitude to schooling; while some are peculiar depending on the respective school's prevailing situation.

KEYWORDS

Eastern Zone, educational quality, Ethiopia, principals' perception, students' behavior, students' responsibility, students' role, Tigray.

INTRODUCTION

Many countries of the world used to assume education quality as one crucial national priority with the intent of supporting economic progress and social aspirations. It is obvious that the Ethiopian Government has been directing all efforts of the various sectors with the aim of alleviating the deep rooted poverty which has been so prevalent in the country for a very long period of time. One of the top priorities given from the various sectors of the country was the education sector with the rationale that poverty can be eradicated with the help of the force of diversified, capable and skilled personnel army that can effectively combat the fight against backwardness. Consequently nationwide development strategies were designed where the educational sector got a prominent place as a result massive expansion on the educational activities has been made in a very short period of time. The educational coverage of the country and the expansion of Higher institutions is so enormous which resulted the production and supply of skilled and semi skilled human resource that can involve or participate in the development activities of the country. Despite the positive results achieved in expanding education and access to the people, still there are indications where a lot of work should be done on the quality part of the education. It has been observed that from those who are sitting to take the national competence assessment very few are observed passing the examination. Moreover, significant number of the students who join universities are observed to have a lot of difficulties in coping up and grasping the concepts of the subject matter of the courses they are taught. The Secondary Schools in the country are serving as the direct inputs to Ethiopian Universities and Colleges. The educational performance of the Secondary schools is significantly affecting the academic performance of Ethiopian Higher Institutions. Currently, the State Regional Government is also giving a lot of focus to ensure the provision of quality education to the people of Tigray and some measures are being taken. It is evident that the problem of the quality of education is not as such to be left solely to be dealt by the regional government. The desired quality can be ensured and be sustained through the concerted efforts of various bodies. Agazi Alumni Association is one that the issue of quality of education concerns it directly and has the social responsibility and obligation to contribute its part in maintaining the desired quality of education and see students of today becoming productive citizens of tomorrow. With this rational in mind the association has taken the initiative to conduct a study to identify the actual real problems of schools with a particular emphasis on the high schools of the Eastern Zone of Tigray.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to examine the problems with regard to the behaviours of the clients or participating students and identify the problems of high schools in this regard that deter the realization of the desired quality of education in Eastern Zone of the Tigray Regional State of Ethiopia.

METHODOLOGY

The study bases its analysis on the conceptual frame work of most researchers adopt while doing similar study on education. The study has reviewed various literatures on education, quality of education, factors that determine quality of education, conceptual definition of education, and the like. The survey study is conducted based on primary data collected from almost all high schools of the Eastern zone of the Regional State of Tigray. A questionnaire has been prepared and filled by the respective principals of each school. The study is analyzed on the basis of descriptive approach using tables

The study focuses on the expected behaviours of students and the actual behavior as observed by the respective principals of the secondary schools. The desired quality of education can be realized through the integration of various factors. This study deals with the factors related to students which are the clients expected to be built up equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge, and behavior at the end of the teaching learning process. However, apart from the contributions and roles of other factors like teachers, facilities, and the environment, if the clients or students are not playing their expected roles properly it could saddle the efforts of the various parties striving for achieving the targeted quality of education. The study will investigate the actual prevailing behaviour of students as perceived by the respective principals of the secondary schools.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study is limited to the assessment of the problems of the high schools in Eastern Zone of Tigray with a particular emphasis on students' behaviour of these schools. It is limited to the problems associated with the teaching learning process that affects the quality of education. The study does not deal with the problems related to teachers, physical and location of the specified Eastern zone high schools; and the tertiary higher institutions such as colleges, universities of the zone. It specifically focuses on the students' behavior related problems of the secondary schools of the Eastern zone.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Problems related to education are so general which may range from primary level to the tertiary level. These problems could be country wide, region wide, in their coverage. However, this study is limited to the specified zone of the region and on one part of the educational sector that is on the secondary schools. The study attempted to deal with the educational quality problems attributed to students' related factors. Educational quality can be affected by many factors in which students related issues are only part of it that this study assumes as a limitation of this study. Moreover quality can be realized through the integration of the various factors responsible for, which this study considers partial analysis of the behavioural factors of students. Besides, the findings of this study may not represent to other secondary schools in the other zones of the regional state of Tigray. Moreover, as the study is mainly based on descriptive approach due to the relative inherent characteristics of the approach it may not investigate the problem so deeply. The analysis used in this study are based on the responses given by the respective principals of each high school and it can be inferred that had the views of the teachers, students and parents to some of the issues been incorporated to some extent the reliance on the responses of the principals would have been minimized which this study considers as a limitation.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Most of the studies reviewed used to focus on teachers and other inputs of the teaching learning process, whereas the behavioural aspects of the participating clients of the education process are not given due attention as principal subject of a study. This study attempts to explore this part in the education process. The study will help identify the real problems high schools are facing in the teaching learning process which enables them to recognize from the students part and tackle it in a way that enhances the quality of education. It will help the Education Bureau of the Tigray Regional State government in Ethiopia, Agazi Almuni Association, which took the initiative to undergo this research and other concerned bodies understand the problems the schools are facing and do all necessary planning and execution efforts to mitigate it. Moreover, this study will be important to concerned bodies to prioritize the problems that should be challenged and effectively channel the resources it used to generate for the enhancement of quality of education in the zone. This study also is of paramount importance serving as an input for alleviating the hurdles on behavioural aspects of students. Having a picture about the prevailing overall problems related to the important key stakeholders (students' behavior in this case) of the schools will help government and nongovernmental organizations persuade their respective audiences in the home country and across the world to be coordinated and work cohesively to achieve the common major goal of enhancing quality of education.

STUDY AREA

The study is conducted in Ethiopia in which it is classified in to regional administrative states. The regional states of Ethiopia are also classified into administrative zones. Accordingly one of the regional states of Ethiopia, Tigray Regional State in which this study is conducted is classified into four zonal administration areas, namely Eastern Zone, Western Zone, Southern Zone, and Central Zone. The zonal administration is further classified into 'woreda' (subzone) administration areas. This study is conducted in one of the regional zonal administration of the Eastern Zone of this Tigray Regional State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The precise meaning of education quality and the path to improvement of quality are often left unexplained. Examined within context, education quality apparently may refer to inputs (numbers of teachers, amount of teacher training, number of textbooks), processes (amount of direct instructional time, extent of active learning), outputs (test scores, graduation rates), and outcomes (performance in subsequent employment). Additionally, quality education may imply simply the attaining of specified targets and objectives. More comprehensive views are also found, and interpretation of quality may be based on an institution's or program's reputation, the extent to which schooling has influenced change in student knowledge, attitudes, values, and behavior, or a complete theory or ideology of acquisition and application of learning (Adams 1998).

As education systems grow and the numbers of stakeholders and clients involved in education decisions change, the potential for misunderstanding, disagreement, and conflict regarding the meaning of quality increases. Full agreement among parents, teachers, administrators, and students as to the ingredients of quality, how to measure it, and how to initiate and sustain improvement is unlikely. (Chapman and Adams, 2002)

In all aspects of the school and its surrounding education community, the rights of the whole child, and all children, to survival, protection, development and participation are at the centre. This means that the focus is on learning which strengthens the capacities of children to act progressively on their own behalf through the acquisition of relevant knowledge, useful skills and appropriate attitudes; and which creates for children, and helps them create for themselves and others, places of safety, security and healthy interaction. (Bernard, 1999)

The students have unique role to play in ensuring quality education institutions from Government College of Engineering, Amravati (GCOEA). Firstly, the students should realize that they have right for quality education and it is the responsibility of the GCOEA to provide quality educational experience to learners. Secondly, the students should equally be aware of their responsibilities which in turn will help the institutions to provide quality education. This means students should demand quality education and demonstrate their commitment to quality education by accepting their responsibilities. Otherwise the institution will have very little motivation for quality enhancement. (GCOEA)

It adds that student's responsibilities of learning as student shall appreciate the institutional goals and objectives and contribute to the realization of the same by participating in relevant institutional activities; have a clear knowledge of programs, admission policies, rules and regulations of the institution; follow the time schedules, rules and regulations of the institution; undertake regular and intense study of learning materials; make optimum use of the learning resources and other support services available in the institution; prepare for continuous assessment and term-end examination; give feedback for system improvement; have a faith and ability to pursue lifelong learning; live as worthy alumni of the (GCOEA)

A study of village-based schools in Malawi found that students with higher rates of attendance had greater learning gains and lower rates of repetition, a finding consistent with many other studies (Miske, Dowd et al. 1998).

Parental education not only influences parent-child interactions related to learning, but also affects parents' income and need for help in the home or field — help that often comes at the expense of keeping children in school (Carron & Chau, 1996). Parents with little formal education may also be less familiar with the language used in the school, limiting their ability to support learning and participate in school-related activities.

Do larger class sizes hurt the quality of education? Educators and researchers from diverse philosophical perspectives have debated the relationship between class size and student learning at length. Although many studies have found a relationship (Willms, 2000), class size has not consistently been linked to student achievement (Rutter, 1979, cited in Pennycook, 1993). They added that this may be due to the fact that many schools and classrooms have not yet adopted the more demanding but higher quality student-centered learning practices. Moreover, quantitative relationships between class sizes and academic achievement rarely take other key quality factors into account, such as teachers' perceptions of working conditions and their sense of efficacy.

Within schools and classrooms, a welcoming and non-discriminatory climate is critical to creating a quality learning environment. In many countries, attitudes discouraging girls' participation in education have been significant barriers to providing quality education to all students. The Republic of Guinea provides an example of how this barrier can begin to overcome. Between 1989 and 1997, Guinea was able to increase the percentage of school-age girls enrolment from 17 per cent to 37 per cent. This was done through the establishment of a high-profile Equity Committee, research to better understand various communities' needs and attitudes, policy reforms related to pregnancy of school-age mothers, the building of latrines for girls in schools, institutional reform that brought more

women into teaching and administrative positions, and a sensitization campaign to raise community awareness about the value of girls' education. Although curricular reform and other issues remain to be acted upon, and girls' persistence and achievement have not yet reached the level of boys', this case shows that efforts to improve the learning environment for girls and all students can lead to real results (Sutton, 1999).

The other issue that can be considered in the case of education is the psychosocial factor. Once girls gain access to schools, however, they may experience both direct physical threats and more subtle assaults on their confidence, self-esteem and identity (Pigozzi, 2000). The journey to school may be unsafe, since many girls experience harassment and physical attacks either on public transportation in cities or remote paths in rural areas. At school, teachers often require girls to do maintenance work while boys study or play, and allow boys to bully girls. Girls must often sit at the back of the classroom, where teachers may call on them infrequently. In some cases, extreme physical assault, including rape, may be perpetuated against girls at school. The threats that come in the form of unequal treatment, harassment, bullying and undervaluing girls harm them in profound and long lasting ways.

Relative to both girls and boys, parents, educators and researchers express important concerns about teachers who create an unsafe environment for students. In some schools in Malawi, for example, male teacher's sexually harassed girls even with outside observers present (Miske, Dowd, et al., 1998). When parents in Burkina Faso, Mali and Tanzania were asked about reasons they might withdraw their children from schools, they most often cited a lack of discipline, violence of teachers towards pupils (corporal punishment), and the risk of pregnancy due to the male teachers' behaviour (Bergmann, 1996). A study in Ethiopia found that nearly 50 per cent of teachers interviewed reported using corporal punishment at least once a week, with 11 per cent saying they use it every day. Just over one third said they never use corporal punishment (Verwimp, 1999). These teacher behaviours affect the quality of the learning environment since learning cannot take place when the basic needs of survival and self-protection are threatened.

The presence of inclusive environment is supposed to have its own impact on the quality of education. Reducing other forms of discrimination is also critical to quality improvement in learning environments. Most countries, in all parts of the world, struggle with effective inclusion of students with special needs and disabilities. An examination of special education policies and practices in China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Korea, Thailand and Viet Nam found that although most educational policies include some philosophy of inclusion, significant gaps between policies and actual practices in schools and classrooms exist (Mitchell, 1995). Children of ethnic and language minorities, politically or geographically disfavoured groups, and groups at low socio-economic levels may also suffer from discriminatory policies and practices that hinder the advancement of quality education for all children. This can occur by excluding such children from school or by excluding their participation in school once they are attending. In general, continued restructuring of most learning environments needs to occur to improve learning opportunities for children of all abilities and backgrounds.

The maintenance of effective school discipline contributes its part in realizing the desired level of educational quality. Well-managed schools and classrooms contribute to educational quality. Students, teachers and administrators should agree upon school and classroom rules and policies, and these should be clear and understandable. Order, constructive discipline and reinforcement of positive behaviour communicate a seriousness of purpose to students (Craig, Kraft & du Plessis, 1998). It is important not to mistake small group cooperative learning for disorder, however; although noise levels may increase, task-orientation and focus on learning signal effective practices. Policies are also needed on bullying, harassment, drug and tobacco use, and anti-discrimination with regard to disabilities, HIV/AIDS and pregnancy.

Quality content refers to the intended and taught curriculum of schools. National goals for education, and outcome statements that translate those goals into measurable objectives should provide the starting point for the development and implementation of curriculum (UNICEF, 2000).

Teacher education, both pre-service and in-service, should help teachers develop teaching methods and skills that take new understandings of how children learn into account. Just as curriculum should be child-centered and relevant, so should instructional methods. The limited view of teaching as presentation of knowledge no longer fits with current understandings of how and what students learn. Instead, instruction should help students build on prior knowledge to develop attitudes, beliefs and cognitive skills; as well as expand their knowledge base. Teaching styles in many places, however, remain traditional, teacher-centered and fairly rigid or even authoritarian (Carron & Chau, 1996).

When Ethiopian teachers were interviewed about the degree to which their teaching practices were learner-centered and relevant to student's lives, about half said they link lessons to the daily life of pupils at least once a week. Almost two-thirds, however, said they never or rarely ask pupils what their interests are, or what they would like to learn (Verwimp, 1999). Greater understanding of student-centered learning can be encouraged through programs such as the Bangladeshi project on Multiple Ways of Teaching and Learning. Begun in 1994, the project helps improve teachers' skills by integrating brain research and multiple intelligences theory as the foundation for understanding children's needs (Ellison & Rothenberger, 1999). Teaching methods that facilitate active student learning rather than promote passivity and rote memorization represent a new and difficult paradigm for many teachers, but one that needs to be understood and put into practice if learner outcomes are to improve. Life skills is a term which UNICEF uses in two main ways, (i) to refer to a broad group of psychosocial and interpersonal skills, and (ii) to refer to the process of teaching and learning about these skills. As such, it is important to discuss life skills in terms of essential content and processes related to life skill-based education. Teaching and learning about life skills requires interactive, student-centered methods. Since skills are by definition active, competency is unlikely to be developed without active practice.

Education that supports and empowers both teachers and students through democratic processes increasingly defines quality in the 21st century. An example of how schools might organize learning activities around these principles comes from Uganda. With help from USAID's Improving Educational Quality project, researchers collaborated with teachers in primary schools in Uganda to develop action research opportunities for students that would exemplify empowering student-centered education. In one school, for example, students identified the problem area of student tardiness and selected it for study. They collected and analyzed data tracking attendance and mapping the homes and routes tardy children took to school. Based on these data, more punctual students teamed up with their slower classmates who lived nearby, and devised systems to encourage them along (Kanyike, L., Namanya, P., & Clair, N., 1999). Among other things, this type of learning activity promotes critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, and community involvement. Such activities can build the attitudes and values in children that contribute to democratic societies.

The feedback mechanism of teachers influences the quality of education. Good teachers are skilled not only in instructional methods, but also in evaluation and assessment practices that allow them to gauge individual student learning and adapt activities according to student needs. This process should include both performance assessment and assessment of factual knowledge. Observations in Guinea and India found that teachers are very poorly trained in evaluation techniques, and the reality is far from the continuous evaluation procedures recommended by official programs (Carron & Chau, 1996). Indeed, many teachers and educational systems continue to rely almost exclusively on traditional paper-and-pencil tests of factual knowledge that tend to promote rote memorization rather than higher order thinking skills (Colby, 2000).

The teachers' belief that all students can learn enables them to strive for applying various instructional and teaching methods so that the desired skills and knowledge can get transferred to all students. The way time is used is related to school priorities and expectations. Quality education puts students at the centre of the process; student achievement must be the school's first priority. Since schools exist because of students, this would seem self-evident. Perhaps because of the complexity of educational systems, however, teachers may not always believe in the school's ability to help all students. For example, teachers interviewed in Guinea and Mexico had little awareness of the school's role in pupil failure and dropout. Instead, they tended to blame the pupils and their family environment (Carron & Chau, 1996). Research around the world has shown that low expectations for student achievement permeate educational systems.

Rather than setting high standards and believing that students can meet them, teachers and administrators in many developing countries expect that up to half the students will drop out or fail, especially in primary grades. Schools committed to student learning communicate expectations clearly, give frequent and challenging assignments, monitor performance regularly, and give students the chance to participate in and take responsibility for diverse school activities (Craig, Kraft, & du Plessis, 1998).

Recent scholarship has emphasized the importance of student effort and involvement in their academic and co-curricular activities as the decisive elements in promoting positive college outcomes. As colleges have struggled to extend opportunities, an accompanying expectation for students to assume responsibility for their own education often has been lacking. Institutions must work to create a climate in which all students feel welcome and able to fully participate. It is

equally important to nurture an ethic that demands student commitment and promotes student responsibility. Students can contribute to their own learning and to the development of a campus climate in which all can grow and learn. (Davis Todd M. and Patricia Hillman Murrell)

The foundations of student responsibilities in higher institutions are expressed by scholars such as Pace, Tinto, Pascarella, and Astin which they have offered explicit theories about how colleges can promote student learning and growth. Despite different uses of terms, these approaches have much in common. First, each theorist recognizes that the student's background plays a role in shaping college outcomes. This role is largely indirect and is moderated by the college environment and a student's interactions with faculty and peers. Second, each theorist sees the campus environment exerting an enabling effect on college outcomes. Last, all emphasize the importance of a partnership between the college and the student. Colleges alone cannot "produce" student learning. Colleges provide opportunities for interaction and involvement and establish a climate conducive to responsible participation. Each approach reflects the centrality of what we call student responsibility. (<http://www.ntlf.com/html/lib/bib/93-8dig.htm> accessed on November 29, 2011)

Institutional policies and practices must be oriented toward developing a climate in which students' responsibility and active participation in their own collegiate experience are promoted. Policies that stress the importance of student achievement and in-class and co-curricular challenge and support are essential for student growth. The institutional culture clearly must convey the institution's purpose in an unambiguous manner, and the ethos of the campus must be one in which students believe they are members of a larger community. As student culture serves as a filter for students entering college, care must be taken to ensure that students who are prepared inadequately understand the nature of college life and what is expected to attain satisfactory academic and developmental gains. (<http://www.ntlf.com/html/lib/bib/93-8dig.htm> accessed on November 29, 2011)

Small-scale, human environments must be built in which students and faculty collectively can engage in the process of teaching and learning. As learning is the process through which development occurs, it is crucial for students to be actively engaged in the classroom. Course activities are the vehicle through which students may become more fully engaged with academic material. The literature clearly indicates that the quality of effort that a student expends in interactions with peers and faculty is the single most important determinate in college outcomes.

This report concludes with a call for a new relationship between our institutions of higher learning and our students. A genuine shared purpose among all members of the higher education community can be created by recouping individual rights with a sense of personal and social responsibility around issues of teaching and learning. The work of Pace is a good place at which to begin thinking about the renewal of our intellectual community. As Pace reminds us, all learning is the mutual responsibility of students, faculty, and administrators. Student responsibility doesn't just happen. We must expect it, foster it, and nurture it. Pace is a good place at which to begin thinking about the renewal of our intellectual community. As Pace reminds us, all learning is the mutual responsibility of students, faculty, and administrators. Student responsibility doesn't just happen. We must expect it, foster it, and nurture it. (<http://www.ntlf.com/html/lib/bib/93-8dig.htm> accessed on November 29, 2011)

Considering the importance of student behavior in achieving the quality of education this study is attempted with a particular focus on the secondary schools of Eastern Zone of Tigray, Ethiopia. Basically the study makes its base for its analysis on the perceptions of the secondary schools respective principals. This research is done by framing a questionnaire addressing questions of students' behavioural situations in the schools. Understanding the perception of principals in this respect of the prevailing behavior students and its implications in achieving the intended quality of education may help identify challenges that could be given attention by respective stakeholders and devise remedial measures which will help for implementing the reform policies as well as points of intervention to improve the effectiveness and success of the new policies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

LOCATION, GRADE LEVEL AND AREA OF PREMISES OF THE HIGH SCHOOLS IN EASTERN ZONE

The role of education in developments in all forms in general and in the process of poverty eradication through producing labor force with diversified, capable and skilled personnel that can effectively combat against backwardness in particular is quite oblivious. The socio-economic development achievements exhibited in the world are concrete evidences for the assertion. With this understanding nationwide development strategies have been designed where the educational sector got a prominent place and as a result massive expansion on the educational activities have been made in a very short period of time in Ethiopia.

Similar trend, if not more, is achieved in the Regional State of Tigray too where education has been among the priority areas in terms of the attention given and the investment deployed in the undergoing development endeavors. As the result currently the number of secondary schools has reached nineteen in the Eastern Zone. Hence, no exaggeration if one concludes that the performances realized in the educational sector are remarkable comparing to the earlier periods. 10 of the high schools found in the zone are up to preparatory level (9th-12th) that is they are having both cycles (first and second cycle secondary schools) while nine are at the level of first cycle secondary schools (9th-10th). But the schools included in this assessment are 15 for it could not be possible to get information on the remaining schools on time.

The data gathered from the respective schools shows that eight of them are not fenced. Such situation may expose the schools for various problems. Taking the simplest job that can be realized in the schools, it is not easy even to practice plantations and hence students cannot have appreciation on nature and environmental concerns. It is very surprising to observe one of the oldest high schools in Tigray Region, Agazi Comprehensive Secondary School, and being still not having a secured compound. Of course the problem might be linked with availability of resources for the fact other things might be the priority areas in a situation of scarce resources.

The data collected on the area of premises of respective school reveals different size. The information gathered shows that there is no standard as to the area required for the schools. It is quite obvious that concentration of the schools tend to Adigrat town not only because of the reason that there is relatively high population but also the surrounding suburbs are served by the prevailing infrastructures in the town.

TABLE 1: LOCATION AND GRADE LEVEL OF HIGH SCHOOLS IN EASTERN ZONE

S/N	Name of School	Grade Level	Location		Premises		Fenced
			'Wereda'	Town	Area Size	Circumference	
1	Agazi Copenhive Secondary School	9 th -12 th	Adigrat	Adigrat	90 m ²	1200m	No
2	Yalemberhan Secondary School	9 th -10 th	Adigrat	Adigrat	9500 m ²	1200m	No
3	Finoteberhan Secondary School	9 th -10 th	Adigrat	Adigrat	200,000 m ²	-	No
4	Tsinsetamariam Secondary School	9 th -12 th	Adigrat	Adigrat	-	-	Yes
5	Zalanbessa Secondary School	9 th -10 th	Gulomekada	Zalanbessa	62500 m ²	1000m	Yes
6	Dewhan Secondary School	9 th -12 th	Erob	Dewhan	-	-	No
7	Lideta Secondary School	9 th -10 th	Erob	Alitena	2500 m ²	-	No
8	Bizet Secondary School	9 th -12 th	Ganta-Afeshum	Bizet	-	-	Yes
9	Ahzera Secondary School	9 th -10 th	Ganta-Afeshum	Ahzera	46500 m ²	-	Yes
10	Edaga-Hamus Secondary School	9 th -12 th	Saesie-Tsaeda Emba	Edaghamus	914000 m ²	-	No
11	Masho Secondary School	9 th -12 th	Hawzien	Hawzien	-	-	Yes
12	Negash Secondary School	9 th -10 th	Kilte-Awlalo	Negash	37500 m ²	-	No
13	Wukro Secondary School	11 th -12 th	Wukro	Wukro	-	-	Yes
14	Atsebi Secondary School	9 th -12 th	Atsibi Wonberta	Atsibi	69689 m ²	-	Yes
15	Agulae Secondary School	9 th -10 th	Kilte-Awlalo	Agulae	5000 m ²	1000m	No

Source: Data gathered from respective school, 2010.

STUDENT POPULATION BY YEAR

The increment of high schools in the past years is quite clear. Four of the schools from the listed ones are established after 2008. Hence, increment of student population is found quite dramatic compared to the situation earlier. Taking the data indicated in the table below, one can derive that growth of student population of 2010 compared to the situation of 2005 is about 400% which brings the simple yearly average to be about 67%. The increment favors more to females where their share that was 41.6% of the students in 2005 is found to have grown to 49.1% in 2010. But the share of female students from the total number of students is still low.

It is important to remind here that the student population does not show the complete picture of the Eastern Zone for the fact there are high schools not included in the assessment as stated earlier. The data on Agazi also have not included the student population of the earlier periods. So, some differences are expected had the information included all. However, the documented data is sufficient to derive reasonable conclusions from the assessment.

Generally, the growth of student population is highly encouraging. The trend in the growth of student population is likely to continue in the future too although might not be with similar marginal increment rate. The population at the lower grades is very high since every child is expected to join at the proper age. Various reports show that the achievements recorded in this respect are so high. The implication of the dramatic increment is obvious. It would require similar trends in all the inputs for the smooth operations of the schools. Hence, the budget load that takes place as the consequence on the government is quite significant.

Nevertheless, the continuation of the students through college levels needs to be given adequate attention. This can be realized only when the quality of education at the lower and high school levels are ensured so that students would be equipped with skill and knowledge that enable them to pass the national exam and withstand the challenges they encounter at the tertiary levels. The student population organized for the high schools is depicted in the following table.

TABLE 2: STUDENT POPULATION BY YEAR

S/N	Name of School	2005			2006			2007			2008			2009			2010			
		M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	
1	Agazi Coprehnsive Secondary School	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	Yalemberhan Secondary School	1027	941	1968	1315	1174	2489	1236	1335	2571	1286	1353	2639	1384	1405	2789	1504	1646	3150	
3	Finoteberhan Secondary School	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	999	1050	2049	1421	1462	2883	1505	1650	3155	
4	Tsinsetamariam Secondary School	235	195	430	323	265	588	423	375	798	493	412	905	502	420	922	568	511	1079	
5	Zalanbessa Secondary School	-	-	-	-	-	-	199	153	352	460	394	854	515	420	935	630	514	1144	
6	Dewhan Secondary School	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	388	403	791	
7	Lideta Secondary School	32	41	73	26	48	74	37	53	90	71	63	134	61	62	123	68	66	134	
8	Bizet Secondary School	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	710	699	1409	852	806	1658		
9	Ahzera Secondary School	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	111	99	210	122	133	255		
10	Edaga-Hamus Secondary School	-	-	-	961	551	0	1113	796	1909	1124	981	2105	983	823	1806	829	836	1665	
11	Masho Secondary School	1064	698	1762	1161	842	2003	1503	1384	2887	1774	1560	3334	2152	2013	4165	1839	1833	3672	
12	Negash Secondary School	-	-	-	-	-	-	203	183	386	389	369	758	384	411	795	614	468	1082	
13	Wukro Secondary School	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	734	518	1252	
14	Atsebi Secondary School	568	211	779	814	311	1125	975	456	1431	1014	572	1586	1136	826	1962	?	?	1945	
15	Agulaa Secondary School	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	194	195	389	260	261	521	256	270	526	
	Total	2926	2086	5012	4600	3191	6279	5689	4735	10424	7804	6949	14753	11444	10256	21700	11661	11253	24859	

Source: Data gathered from respective school, 2010.

OPINIONS OF SCHOOLS ON EFFORTS OF STUDENTS

The direct beneficiaries from the schooling process are the students themselves. It is therefore reasonable to expect them to devote their effort and time fully for the success of the process. With this understanding data is gathered from the schools with respect to the efforts exerted by the students. Schools are made to give their opinions as to how they perceive efforts of their respective students in the teaching-learning process. Accordingly only one school has responded that most of its students are hardworking persons. On the other hand, ten schools indicated few of their students to be hardworking ones. Eight have replied that most of the students show medium effort. While giving response to the question related to this issue, it is expected that two answers are possible as long as they do not contradict to each other. As a result eight schools have marked two times on the options as depicted in the following table, in fact, the responses do not contradict to each other. Four of the schools have the opinion that most of the students show low effort. Efforts of teachers and provision of educational materials are not sufficient by themselves to ensure quality education. Similar to that of teachers, if not more, effort of students is quite determinant for the efficient operation of the schools and to the realization of national and regional development objectives. Thus, students are among those aspects that need special attention as could be concluded from the information portrayed on Table-3.

It is evident from Table-3 that the teaching learning process in the Eastern Zone of Tigray could be effective and attain the required level of educational quality when the main actors are to play their respective roles effectively. If one of these players is not in a position to execute the responsibility and share it has to, it becomes just like clapping by one hand. Therefore, the schools should take the initiative of appreciating this prevailing problem which brings in failure of educational quality, and get it to the attention of the teachers, and students and let them get convinced of this situation as a serious problem that should not be left for tomorrow. Then the schools administration better design a means that is accepted by all the key stakeholders and execute it in a responsible manner.

TABLE 3: OPINIONS OF SCHOOLS ON EFFORTS OF STUDENTS

S/N	School	Most of them Hardworking	Few of them Hardworking	Most of them Show Medium Effort	Most of them Show Low Effort
1	Agazi Comprehensive Secondary School		✓	✓	
2	Yalemberhan Secondary School			✓	
3	Finoteberhan Secondary School		✓		✓
4	Tsinsetamariam Secondary School	✓			
5	Zalanbessa Secondary School		✓		
6	Dewhan Secondary School		✓		✓
7	Lideta Secondary School			✓	
8	Bizet Secondary School		✓	✓	
9	Ahzera Secondary School		✓	✓	
10	Edaga-Hamus Secondary School		✓		
11	Masho Secondary School			✓	
12	Negash Secondary School			✓	
13	Wukro Secondary School		✓		✓
14	Atsebi Secondary School		✓	✓	
15	Agulaa Secondary School		✓		✓

Source: Data gathered from respective school, 2010.

PREVAILING PROBLEMS RELATED WITH STUDENTS BEHAVIOUR

Most of the schools have pointed out similar problems linked with students. Attitude of students being low for education is the major problem that is stated by almost half of them. In fact all the items documented are in one way or another related to the low attitude of the students to schooling. On top of the schools that have taken the low attitude of students as a problem, some others have highlighted that lack of self-confidence of students and hence tendency to depend

on copying from others, students not working their assignments properly, unethical behavior of students like coming to school taking alcohol are among the issues highlighted but all can be considered as the manifestations of law attitude to schooling. Late coming to school, absenteeism and withdrawal of students is also among the items indicated by some of the schools. There are also schools that have stated students not being educationally well equipped at the elementary level to be one of the problems. The combined effect of all the problems is quite obvious to result in low educational performance of the students. The low performance does not stop at the high school level. It continues to linger at the tertiary level also. The low performance of students at the college levels is practically prevailing that is exposing quite a number of students for dismissal every semester in all the colleges and universities found in the country in general and region in particular.

There are also arguments that raise doubts on the capacities of even the graduates. In general, the situation is one of the issues that demand top attention since it is not only understood as an affairs of individuals. It rather determines the progresses of the socio-economic developments of the country and region as well as competitiveness of the individuals in particular and society in general. The writers believe that the issue should be considered seriously. Attitude of students to schooling is the bottom line that has to be ensured for the effectiveness and efficiency of the resources to be deployed for the sector.

The detail problems documented by every school are indicated in the subsequent table. As could be understood from the information gathered, some schools have indicated problems related with facilities which should not be considered as problems linked with students. But they can be included in the items that would be treated under issues highlighted for facilities.

TABLE 4: PROBLEMS RELATED WITH STUDENTS' BEHAVIOUR

S/N	School	Prevailing Problems
1	Agazi Comprehensive Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitude of students on education being low • Attitude of students to depend on copying from others • Students not being ready to do their class-room and home works
2	Yalemberhan Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less attention of students to schooling • Few students are found with unethical behavior • Low performance/results of students
3	Finoteberhan Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relation of parents with the school is not as required • Students being with less courage • Attitude of students to depend on copying from others • Few students are found with unethical behavior
4	Tsinsetamariam Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortage of educational materials of orphan and poor students although the school supports about 200 students
5	Zalanbessa Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low interest of students
6	Dewhan Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are not well equipped academically at the elementary level • Feeling of being hopeless for they do not see their predecessors are not living in better life
7	Lideta Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are not well equipped academically at the elementary level
8	Bizet Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low interest of students in education/schooling • Few students coming to school taking alcohol • Because of distance students coming to school being late
9	Ahzera Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low interest of students in education/schooling • Absenteeism and late coming to school
10	Edaga-Hamus Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of hopelessness of students and no confidence on the living improvements that can be gained through education
11	Masho Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortage of text books • Shortage of library
12	Negash Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance of the school for students • Shortage of laboratory • Shortage of teachers
13	Wukro Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tendency of student to depend on copying from others • Less efforts and interest to work hard
14	Atsbi Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coming late to school • They do not work assignments properly • Withdrawal and absenteeism of students
15	Agulae Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late coming and absenteeism of students • Students do not work their assignments properly • Students do not bring their books when coming to class • Withdrawal of students

Source: Data gathered from respective school, 2010.

PROVISION OF TUTORS IN THE SCHOOLS

The support of provision of tutor in the teaching- learning process is important. It can create opportunities for all students to participate in the whole process since class hours are limited. Provision of tutor in schools has become almost customary in Tigrai region.

An attempt is made to collect data on the practices of schools in this regard. All schools have replied that tutor is given in their respective schools. Except in two non-governmental schools, tutor is given to weaker students and girls in seven of the schools while three of the schools give to weaker students without segregation by sex and another three provide the service to girls only.

With respect to the tutor providers only one governmental high school has replied that all the teachers are involved in providing tutor. On the other hand, six schools have indicated that few of their respective teachers are involved and seven have replied most of the teachers.

Effectiveness and contribution of the service would depend on the level of internalizing the assignment as an important aspect by the service providers. Although participation of students may depend on their interests, it appears important if all students get the opportunity as long as the tutor service is organized in the schools. The contribution of the tutor provision has to be evaluated also. It may also be important to involve volunteers from the academically strong students. Responses of each high school are depicted in the table below.

TABLE 5: PROVISION OF TUTORS IN THE SCHOOLS

S/N	School	Is Tutor Given?		Tutor is Provided to			Tutor is Provided by			
		Yes	No	All Students	Weaker Students	Girls (Only)	All Teachers	Few Teachers	Most Teachers	Female Teachers (Only)
1	Agazi Comprehensive Sec. Sch.	✓			✓	✓			✓	
2	Yalemberhan Secondary School	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓
3	Finoteberhan Secondary School	✓			✓	✓	✓			
4	Tsinetamariam Secondary Sch.	✓		✓					✓	
5	Zalanbessa Secondary School	✓			✓	✓			✓	
6	Dewhan Secondary School	✓			✓			✓		
7	Lideta Secondary School	✓		✓					✓	
8	Bizet Secondary School	✓			✓	✓			✓	
9	Ahzeria Secondary School	✓			✓	✓				
10	Edaga-Hamus Secondary School	✓				✓		✓		
11	Masho Secondary School	✓			✓				✓	
12	Negash Secondary School	✓			✓	✓		✓		
13	Wukro Secondary School	✓				✓		✓		
14	Atsebi Secondary School	✓				✓		✓		
15	Agulae Secondary School	✓			✓			✓		

Source: Data gathered from respective school, 2010.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study has revealed that there is a dramatic increment of student population in the past few years and this trend is to continue in the future. This will have a serious implication on the supply side of resources such as classrooms, teaching materials, and even qualified teachers and the like. Hence, the concerned bodies should consider this trend and devise a handling mechanism that at the same time ensures the educational quality in the future.

The study finds that one of the major players of the teaching learning process; students are not discharging their roles properly. Whatever efforts may be done by other stakeholders if this key stakeholder is not executing its shared responsibility the educational quality in the zone is going to be unconceivable. To mitigate this problem the schools primarily should take the initiative to take the leading role in sharing this issue with all the key stakeholders to devise a mechanism to bring it to the desired position.

Even though some schools have their own peculiar problems most of the schools have pointed out similar problems linked with students. Low attitude, lack of confidence, the tendency to depend on copying from others, not working their assignments properly, unethical behavior of students like coming to school taking alcohol are among the issues highlighted but all can be considered as the main ones that may be also thought of as manifestations of low attitude to schooling. Moreover, coming late to school, absenteeism and withdrawal of students are also observed problems. As the combined of all these problems obviously results in low quality of education, all concerned bodies should take this conditions and take remedial action to restore to its normal position as this low performance does not stop at the high school level. It continues to linger at the tertiary level which in turn adversely affects the development endeavours of the country at large.

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