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

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### ABSTRACT

*The study has dealt with the assessment of the quality of education in the high schools of Eastern Zone of the Regional State of Tigray, Ethiopia. The study investigated the quality of education with a particular emphasis on teachers as one of the core actors in the teaching learning process. It has adopted census method of study taking all the school principals as respondents using questionnaire method of data collection. The study has revealed that all the teachers participating in the teaching process are first degree holders and almost all have taken the pedagogical training. However, the effectiveness of the pedagogical training taken by the teachers seems to be doubtful owing to the prevailing sliding quality of education in the high schools of the Eastern Zone of Tigray, though there could be other contributing factors to the existing lower quality of education. It is found as well that there is high dissatisfaction of teachers and discomfort with regard to the compensation being applied in the zone, which could influence the quality of education adversely. Shortage of teachers in the high schools is resulting in a teacher to be overloaded and gets forced to teach courses out of one's specialization which adversely influences on the quality of education.*

### KEYWORDS

Principals' perception, quality of education, satisfaction level, teachers' role.

### INTRODUCTION

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 competency 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 educations 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 prevailing quality of education in relation to the participating teachers 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 using descriptive approach in the form of percentages, graphs, and averages.

The study focuses on teachers one of the core actors in the teaching learning process. The desired quality of education can be realized through the integration of various factors. This study deals with the factors related to teachers which without it becomes unthinkable to maintain the quality level of education. Cognizant of this fact, the study has made its investigation as to the prevailing reality of the crucial factors that should be possessed by the teachers that enables them play their part in achieving the targeted quality of education. The study will investigate the educational qualification of teachers, the status of pedagogical education and skills the teachers have, their level of commitment, and their satisfaction level with regard to the existing compensation.

### 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 teachers 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 students, 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 teachers' 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 teachers' related factors. Educational quality can be affected by many factors in which teachers related ones are only part of it that this study assumes as a limitation of this study. Besides, the findings of this study may not represent to other schools in the other regions of the regional state of Tigray, the whole region and the country in general. 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 responses used in this study are mainly as per the responses given by the respective principals of each high school and had the views of the teachers 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

The study will help identify the real problems high schools are facing in the teaching learning process which enables them to recognize from the teachers 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 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 setting a strategic plan that is thought to be achieved in the long run. Having a picture about the overall problems related to the important key stakeholders 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 the 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 'wereda' (subzone) administration areas. This study is conducted in one of the regional zonal administration of the Eastern Zone of Tigray Regional State.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Educational quality is defined in various ways. In general, it can be stated that there is no universal definition of education quality. Even though each country considers education as vital for all its affairs and development, each country's policies define quality explicitly or implicitly according to its own economic, political, social, and cultural visions. Virtually all countries, however, include two key elements as the basis of quality: students' cognitive learning (which is what achievement tests usually measure) and their social, creative, inter-personal, and emotional development. Cognitive learning is the major explicit objective of most education systems and is often used as the sole indicator of quality, although there is wide disagreement on what to measure as cognitive learning and how to measure it. Learners' social, creative, and emotional development is rarely assessed in a significant way or included in cross-national "league tables" of educational outcomes (Leu 2005; UNESCO 2004, p. 29).

Countries of the world are highly concerned about its quality. In the search for ways to improve quality of education, most countries increasingly focus on understanding complex interactions that take place at the school, classroom, and community levels as the primary engines of quality and as a way of engaging local actors to address the frequently weak link between policy and practice (Farrell 2002). Of the factors that contribute to education quality at the local level, quality of teaching is recognized as the key, the factor without which other quality inputs are unlikely to be successful (ADEA 2004; ADEA 2005; Anderson 2002; Boyle et al. 2003; LeCzel 2004; UNESCO 2004; UNESCO 2006; USAID/EQUIP1 2004; USAID/EQUIP2 2006).

To examine the quality of education several studies used to be done. A study of teacher quality and teacher professional development in Ethiopia has been carried out under the USAID/EQUIP1 Leader Award examined teachers' and principals' perspectives on education quality as the first stage of the study (Asgedom et al. 2006). Carried out by researchers from Addis Ababa University, the study included in-depth qualitative interviews with a core group of 24 grade 4 teachers in 12 focus schools, three schools each in Amhara, Oromia, Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's (SNNP), and Tigray Regional States. In-depth interviews were also carried out with principals of the 12 schools. To compare how teachers and principals talked about quality with teachers' classroom practice, the study found out the teaching of the 24 core teachers. To illuminate the information from the in-depth interviews and observations, it carried out focus-group discussions with six to eight teachers in each school (about 86 teachers total) and 439 grade 4 teachers from the four regional states completed a quantitative survey questionnaire that explored their perspectives on issues and practice related to education quality. Whereas this study has selected sample schools while this study is census in its nature and in the Eastern Zone of Tigray and deals with secondary schools quality aspects of education.

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)

What does quality mean in the context of education? Many definitions of quality in education exist, testifying to the complexity and multifaceted nature of the concept. The terms efficiency, effectiveness, equity and quality have often been used synonymously (Adams, 1993). Considerable consensus exists around the basic dimensions of quality education today, however. Quality education includes: learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities; environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities; content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace; processes through which trained teachers use student-centred teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities; outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society.

This definition allows for an understanding of education as a complex system embedded in a political, cultural and economic context. It is important to keep in mind education's systemic nature, however; these dimensions are interdependent, influencing each other in ways that are sometimes unforeseeable.

This definition also takes into account the global and international influences that propel the discussion of educational quality (Motala, 2000; Pigozzi, 2000), while ensuring that national and local educational contexts contribute to definitions of quality in varying countries (Adams, 1993). Establishing a contextualized understanding of quality means including relevant stakeholders. Key stakeholders often hold different views and meanings of educational quality (Motala, 2000; Benoliel, O'Gara & Miske, 1999). Indeed, each of us judges the school system in terms of the final goals we set for our children our community, our country and ourselves (Beeby, 1966).

Definitions of quality must be open to change and evolution based on information, changing contexts, and new understandings of the nature of education's challenges. New research — ranging from multinational research to action research at the classroom level — contributes to this redefinition.

Systems that embrace change through data generation, use and self-assessment are more likely to offer quality education to students (Glasser, 1990). Continuous assessment and improvement can focus on any or all dimensions of system quality: learners, learning environments, content, process and outcomes. School systems work with the children who come into them. The quality of children's lives before beginning formal education greatly influences the kind of learners they can be. Many elements go into making a quality learner, including health, early childhood experiences and home support. Physically and psychosocially healthy children learn well. Healthy development in early childhood, especially during the first three years of life, plays an important role in



providing the basis for a healthy life and a successful formal school experience (McCain & Mustard, 1999). Positive early experiences and interactions are also vital to preparing a quality learner. A large study in 12 Latin American countries found that attendance at day care coupled with higher levels of parental involvement that includes parents reading to young children is associated with higher test scores and lower rates of grade repetition in primary school (Willms, 2000).

Parents may not always have the tools and background to support their children's cognitive and psychosocial development throughout their school years. Parents' level of education, for example, has a multifaceted impact on children's ability to learn in school. In one study, children whose parents had primary school education or less were more than three times as likely to have low test scores or grade repetition than children whose parents had at least some secondary schooling (Willms, 2000).

Learning can occur anywhere, but the positive learning outcomes generally sought by educational systems happen in quality learning environments. Learning environments are made up of physical, psychosocial and service delivery elements.

Physical learning environments or the places in which formal learning occurs, range from relatively modern and well-equipped buildings to open-air gathering places. The quality of school facilities seems to have an indirect effect on learning, an effect that is hard to measure. Some authors argue that "extant empirical evidence is inconclusive as to whether the condition of school buildings is related to higher student achievement after taking into account student's background" (Fuller, 1999). The quality of school buildings may be related to other school quality issues, such as the presence of adequate instructional materials and textbooks, working conditions for students and teachers, and the ability of teachers to undertake certain instructional approaches. Such factors as on-site availability of lavatories and a clean water supply, classroom maintenance, space and furniture availability all have an impact on the critical learning factor of time on task. When pupils have to leave school and walk significant distances for clean drinking water, for example, they may not always return to class (Miske & Dowd, 1998).

Many countries significantly expanded access to primary education during the 1990s, but the building of new schools has often not kept pace with the increase in the student population. In these cases, schools have often had to expand class sizes, as well as the ratio of students to teachers, to accommodate large numbers of new students. A UNICEF/UNESCO survey conducted in 1995 in 14 least developed countries found that class sizes ranged from fewer than 30 students in rural and urban Bhutan, Madagascar, and the Maldives, to 73 in rural Nepal and 118 in Equatorial Guinea (Postlewaithe, 1998).

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 be 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 sensitisation 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).

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 teachers 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.

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).

The school service environment can also contribute to learning in important ways. Provision of health services and education can contribute to learning first by reducing absenteeism and inattention. Sick children cannot attend school, and evidence from China, Guinea, India and Mexico shows that children's illness is a primary cause for absenteeism (Carron & Chau, 1996).

The highest quality teachers, those most capable of helping their students learn, have deep mastery of both their subject matter and pedagogy (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

The preparation that teachers receive before beginning their work in the classroom, however, varies significantly around the world and even within the least developed countries. In Cape Verde, Togo and Uganda, for example, 35 per cent to 50 per cent of students have teachers who had no teacher training. Yet in Benin, Bhutan, Equatorial Guinea, Madagascar and Nepal, over 90 per cent of students do have teachers with some form of teacher training. In these latter countries, most teachers have, at least, lower secondary education; this contrasts sharply with Cape Verde and Tanzania where over 60 per cent of students have teachers with only a primary education (Postlewaithe, 1998). Perhaps as a consequence of too little preparation before entering the profession, a number of teachers in China, Guinea, India and Mexico were observed to master neither the subject matter they taught nor the pedagogical skills required for good presentation of the material (Carron & Chau, 1996). This affects educational quality since student achievement, especially beyond basic skills, depends largely on teachers' command of subject matter (Mullens, Murnane & Willett, 1996) and their ability to use that knowledge to help students learn. A recent evaluation of the East African Madrasa (Pre-school) Programme noted the importance of mentoring by trainers in the form of continuous support and reinforcement of teacher learning by on-site visits to classrooms following a two week orientation training and alongside weekly trainings in Madrasa Resource Centres. (Brown, Brown & Sumra, 1999).

Whether a teacher uses traditional or more current methods of instruction, efficient use of school time has a significant impact on student learning. Teachers' presence in the classroom represents the starting point. Many teachers face transportation and housing obstacles that hinder them from getting to school on time and staying until school hours are over. Many teachers must hold second jobs, which may detract from the time and energy they expend in the classroom. Teachers may miss school altogether. A study in China, Guinea, India and Mexico found that nearly half the teachers interviewed reported being absent at some point during the previous month (Carron & Chau, 1996), requiring other teachers to compensate for them or leaving students without instruction for the day. Next, when teachers are present, learning occurs when teachers engage students in instructional activities, rather than attending to administrative or other non-instructional processes (Fuller, et al., 1999). As mentioned above, the opportunity to learn and the time on task have been shown in many international studies to be critical for educational quality. Finally, some schools that have been able to organize their schedules according to children's work and family obligations have seen greater success in student persistence and achievement.

In Ethiopia, for example, schools that began and ended the day earlier than usual and that scheduled breaks during harvest times found that educational quality improved. "The quality of a school and the quality of teaching of the individual teacher is higher in schools that are able (and willing) to make more efficient use of the available time of its teachers and its pupils" (Verwimp, 1999).

Professional development can help overcome shortcomings that may have been part of teachers' pre-service education and keep teachers abreast of new knowledge and practices in the field. This ongoing training for teachers can have a direct impact on student achievement. Case studies from Bangladesh, Botswana, Guatemala, Namibia and Pakistan have provided evidence that ongoing professional development, especially in the early years after initial preparation and then continuing throughout a career; contribute significantly to student learning and retention (Craig, Kraft & du Plessis, 1998). Effective professional development may take many forms; it should not be limited to formal off-site kinds of programs. Dialogue and reflections with colleagues, peer and supervisor observations and keeping journals are all effective ways for teachers to advance their knowledge (UNICEF, 2000). A program in Kenya, the Mombassa School Improvement Project, built on this approach to professional development and showed that teachers supported with in-service as well as external

workshop training improved significantly in their abilities to use student-centred teaching and learning behaviours (Anderson, 2000). In India, an effective program used interactive video technology to reach a large number of teachers who sought professional development. This program found that training using interactive video technology led to improved conceptual understanding of pedagogical issues for a large number of geographically dispersed teachers (Maheshwari & Raina, 1998).

This study particularly focuses on what we can learn from understanding of the Ethiopian Eastern Zonal Administration area of Tigray's high schools principals' perceptions on teachers and of quality of education. The paper addresses questions of how principals conceptualize and understand quality of education, quality of teaching, and quality of learning. Understanding principals' perspectives on quality is particularly important because they are the professionals primarily responsible for overseeing the overall proceedings of the teaching learning process like, active-learning, and student-centered pedagogical approaches to improving education quality that underlie the reform policies of Ethiopia in general and in the Tigray Regional State Eastern Zone area secondary schools in particular. Understanding the perception of principals of the schools in the Eastern Zone of Tigray as the way educators perceive the prevailing quality of education, may help identify challenges to implementing the reform policies as well as points of intervention to improve the effectiveness and success of the new policies. This study particularly will focus on the perceptions the principals on the quality of education in relation to teachers.

## 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 (fight) against backwardness in particular is quite obvious. 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 (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>) that is they are having both cycles (first and second cycle secondary schools) while nine are at the level of first cycle secondary schools (9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>). 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 Comprehensive Secondary School	9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup>	Adigrat	Adigrat	90 m <sup>2</sup>	1200m	No
2	Yalemberhan Secondary School	9 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup>	Adigrat	Adigrat	9500 m <sup>2</sup>	1200m	No
3	Finoteberhan Secondary School	9 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup>	Adigrat	Adigrat	200,000 m <sup>2</sup>	-	No
4	Tsinetamariam Secondary School	9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup>	Adigrat	Adigrat	-	-	Yes
5	Zalanbessa Secondary School	9 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup>	Gulomekada	Zalanbessa	62500 m <sup>2</sup>	1000m	Yes
6	Dewhan Secondary School	9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup>	Erob	Dewhan	-	-	No
7	Lideta Secondary School	9 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup>	Erob	Alitena	2500 m <sup>2</sup>	-	No
8	Bizet Secondary School	9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup>	Ganta-Afeshum	Bizet	-	-	Yes
9	Ahzera Secondary School	9 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup>	Ganta-Afeshum	Ahzera	46500 m <sup>2</sup>	-	Yes
10	Edaga-Hamus Secondary School	9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup>	Saessie-Tsaeda Emba	Edaghamus	914000 m <sup>2</sup>	-	No
11	Masho Secondary School	9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup>	Hawzien	Hawzien	-	-	Yes
12	Negash Secondary School	9 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup>	Kilte-Awlalo	Negash	37500 m <sup>2</sup>	-	No
13	Wukro Secondary School	11 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup>	Wukro	Wukro	-	-	Yes
14	Atsebi Secondary School	9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup>	Atsibi Wonberta	Atsibi	69689 m <sup>2</sup>	-	Yes
15	Agulae Secondary School	9 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup>	Kilte-Awlalo	Agulae	5000 m <sup>2</sup>	1000m	No

Source: Data gathered from respective School, 2010.

### TEACHERS IN THE SCHOOLS BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AND PEDAGOGICAL SKILL

Teachers are the primary actors in the creation of skillful, creative and innovative citizens. Hence, deployment of qualified teachers is among the areas of focus in the process of building quality educational service. The changes achieved in this regard are encouraging. During the time the study is made, there are only about 4.6% of the teachers with diploma qualification while there is no one at the certificate level. Therefore, 95.4% of the teachers in secondary schools of Eastern Zone are first bachelor's degree holders. No teacher is having master's second degree. Compared to their respective number of teachers, the diploma holders seem to have relatively concentrated in Lideta Secondary School having the proportion of 50%, in Tsinetamariam Secondary School 16.7% and in Zalanbessa Secondary School sharing about 13.8% of the total teachers in the schools.

The policy direction that stipulates all high school teachers to be at least with first degree appears realized accordingly in general. On the other hand, all teachers except 1.2% of them have taken pedagogical training which is believed to be an important skill for the teaching-learning process. About 12.6% of the total teachers are females. This, on the other hand, indicates the participation of females to be low compared to the male counterparts.

However, contrary to the achievements in the educational level of teachers, there are problems in the capacity of the high school graduates as has been viewed by the principals of the respective schools. This problem in turn may be reflected on the capacity of the teachers to equip their students with the required level of skills and knowledge on each subject. As long as these high school graduates who possess relative less capacity are to join universities then a vicious circle takes place that would have far-reaching impact in the whole socio-economic development processes of the region and the country at large.

The respondents added that despite the efforts made in the expansion of the physical infrastructure and production of teachers with higher qualification, the quality issues are still compromised. Consequently, this issue has become one of the pressing agendas in the public as well as for the government. As a result quality education has become central issues these days in all educational institutions. It is important to remind at this juncture that teachers play the pivotal role in the process to ensure quality education that would be instrumental to transform the whole socio, economic, political and cultural aspects of the society.

TABLE 2: TEACHERS BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AND SEX

S/N	Name of School	Teachers by Educational Level											Pedagogical Training	
		Certificate		Diploma		1st Degree		2nd Degree		Total		Grand Total		
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F			
1	Agazi Coprehnsive Secondary School	-	-	4	-	67	8	-	-	71	8	79	79	-
2	Yalemberhan Secondary School	-	-	2	-	62	15	-	-	64	15	79	79	-
3	Finoteberhan Secondary School	-	-	-	-	53	23	-	-	53	23	76	76	-
4	Tsinsetamariam Secondary School	-	-	3	1	19	1	-	-	22	2	24	-	-
5	Zalanbessa Secondary School	-	-	4	-	22	3	-	-	26	3	29	29	-
6	Dewhan Secondary School	-	-	-	1	32	3	-	-	32	4	36	36	-
7	Lideta Secondary School	-	-	2	3	5	-	-	-	7	3	10	-	-
8	Bizet Secondary School	-	-	4	-	34	8	-	-	38	8	46	42	4
9	Ahzera Secondary School	-	-	-	-	7	2	-	-	7	2	9	8	1
10	Edaga-Hamus Secondary School	-	-	-	-	9	46	-	-	9	46	55	55	-
11	Masho Secondary School	-	-	5	-	75	12	-	-	80	12	92	-	-
12	Negash Secondary School	-	-	-	-	21	4	-	-	21	4	25	-	-
13	Wukro Secondary School	-	-	1	-	30	2	-	-	31	2	33	31	2
14	Atsbi Secondary School	-	-	-	-	38	9	-	-	38	9	47	-	-
15	Agulae Secondary School	-	-	-	-	13	-	-	-	13	-	13	12	1
	Total			25	5	487	136	0	0	512	141	653	447	8

Source: Data gathered from respective School, 2010.

### OPINIONS OF SCHOOLS ON EFFORTS OF TEACHERS

Schools were asked to give their opinions on the efforts of teachers with the belief that commitment of teachers is determinant in the endeavor to create a skillful and responsible generation. Accordingly seven schools have responded that most of their respective teachers are hardworking persons. On the other hand, six schools indicated few of their teachers to be hardworking ones. Five have replied that most of the teachers show medium effort. It was expected that two choices are possible but should not be contradicting to each other. A school is not expected, for example, to reply most of its teachers to be hardworking and most showing medium/low effort. But it is possible to reply few teachers being hardworking persons while most of them showing medium or low effort. As the result four schools have marked two options as depicted in the following table but the responses do not contradict.

The writers believe that as per the responses of the schools the commitment level of the teachers in the zone is in a good status. From this it can be inferred that the commitment and dedication of the teachers is not as such a problem, rather problems other than this seems to be responsible for the sliding down of the quality of education in the zone. In fact, it is still essential to note that the prevailing commitment and efforts of teachers is quite important determinant although may not be sufficient if not associated and integrated with the other actors and input factors.

TABLE 3: OPINIONS OF SCHOOLS ON EFFORTS OF TEACHERS

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	Agulae Secondary School		✓	✓	

Source: Data gathered from respective School, 2010.

### PREVAILING PROBLEMS RELATED WITH TEACHERS

Having a look into existing problems related with teachers is taken as important component of the inquiry. Each of the schools has enumerated different issues but have many in common. Few of the schools do not seem to adequately have understood or might have intentionally tried to divert the responses linking with other aspects than trying to highlight issue that directly are linked with teachers. The responses of each school are documented in the following table that many of them can be summarized in to the following items.

Issues related with ethics of teachers not being to the required level are among the points stated. This can comprehend different aspects such as late coming and early withdrawal of teachers from classes, teachers not using their periods fully, teachers not monitoring and not making follow ups on their students, etc. Some schools have reflected that such features are observed on teachers. These would be important obstacles to ensure quality educational service that is expected to create innovative and committed generation. The phenomenon appears to contradict to the information documented on the pedagogical skill of teachers. The information collected in this regard shows that almost 99% of the teachers have taken pedagogical training. On the other hand, this may partly imply the less effective feature of the attended pedagogical training. However, though such phenomenon mare observed, the proportion of teachers who exhibited the stated behaviours can not be known to make a general conclusion in this regard though a single instance of such acts from a single teacher should even be avoided. Hence, it would be advisable to further investigate the causes for such behaviours and apply a remedial action to restore the desired educational behaviour.

Discomfort of teachers because of being low salaried is highlighted by almost one third of the schools. In principle one may argue that such discomfort should not have been reflected in undermining responsibilities that have for-reaching societal and national impacts. In general terms this dissatisfaction of teachers does not influence the teaching learning process positively. Under this situation of the high schools, let alone the teachers become motivated and take the initiative to innovate new thing that helps them embark the expected knowledge and skills into their students, they tend to lose the motivation to work as per



the normal standards. The respective authorities need to take this issue and resolve it in a way the existing discomfort will be minimized and its adverse impact on the quality of education will be mitigated.

As highlighted earlier, the writers take teachers as the primary actors amidst the endeavors to improve and ensure quality of education. As the result, maximum efforts should be exerted to win the commitment and high devotion of teachers with a complete understanding on the pivotal position they have in building responsible, committed, innovative and disciplined generation. Otherwise, the discourses usually made on facilitation of development and eventual creation of technologically advanced society would remain to be rhetoric.

The mechanisms to address the problems can be different. Some of the problems might be reduced and resolved through building a systematic management practices such that, among others, may include proper execution of monitoring and evaluation, recognition of achievements or good performances through the provision of promotions and awards fairly that strictly and transparently depend on performances, etc. Provision of periodic trainings and orientations on the roles and responsibilities of teachers would help to address part of the issues. Designing proper systems of motivation would have also its respective contribution. The issue of salary is another important element which is highly dependent on the economic progress of the country and region in particular to afford. Generally complementary instruments have to be designed and practiced by periodically updating it taking into account the prevailing realities.

It can be understood that the problems faced by teachers in the high schools of the Eastern zone of Tigray are varied and many of the problems are specific to each school. Shortage of teachers is observed to common problem of schools like Zalanbessa, Ahzera, Bizet, Masho, Atsbi and Agulae Secondary schools. This implies that the existing teachers will be forced to be overloaded and they will be pushed to teach subjects out of their respective specialization. This situation results in a negative impact on the quality of education in general.

Moreover, some of the problems seem to directly influence the educational quality while others influence indirectly. It can be understood that some teachers are not properly managing their time which can be explained by not utilizing their teaching time fully; start classes late after some minutes and finish earlier than the time scheduled for it; and mis-utilization of the time allotted for teaching. In addition, in some schools, the teachers' problems that can be resolved through training that enhance their capacity and professional ethics. Some of the schools are also facing fundamental problems related to teaching materials such as shortage of reference books and laboratories. Still there are problems related to access to the internet, computers, recreational facilities, housing facilities, toilet facilities, and the like.

TABLE 4: PROBLEMS RELATED WITH TEACHERS

S/N	School	Prevailing Problems
1	Agazi Comprehensive Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Few teachers do not use their periods fully</li> <li>Late coming and earlier withdrawal of teachers</li> <li>Few teachers do not monitor their students</li> </ul>
2	Yalamberhan Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of toilet for teachers</li> <li>Lack of lounge for teachers</li> <li>Lack of residence house</li> <li>Non availability of laboratory</li> </ul>
3	Finoteberhan Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shortage of reference books</li> <li>Lack of computers and internet access</li> </ul> <p>Both problems impede teachers to exert efforts fully</p>
4	Tsinsetamariam Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shortage of periodic and continuous training to teachers</li> </ul>
5	Zalanbessa Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shortage of teachers</li> </ul>
6	Dewhan Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ethics of teachers is not to the required level</li> <li>Discomfort of teachers because of less salary</li> </ul>
7	Lideta Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficulty in getting permanent teachers because of the school being far from the urban areas</li> </ul>
8	Bizet Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shortage of teaching materials</li> </ul>
9	Ahzera Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shortage of teachers and as the result teachers are forced to teach not their fields of study</li> </ul>
10	Edaga-Hamus Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less commitment of teachers because of dissatisfaction in their living conditions</li> <li>Less efforts of students</li> </ul>
11	Masho Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shortage of experienced teachers as most of them are fresh Graduates</li> <li>Shortage of teaching material supports</li> </ul>
12	Negash Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of residence houses for teachers</li> <li>Lack of recreational/lounge for teachers</li> </ul>
13	Wukro Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less commitment of teachers</li> <li>Misuse of class hours</li> <li>Not making self evaluation whether the teacher makes a change on his/her students or not</li> <li>Tendency to measure owns efforts in terms of time devoted in school rather than on results</li> </ul>
14	Atsbi Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers being overloaded because of shortage of teachers</li> </ul>
15	Agulae Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shortage of teachers as the result there are with 35 hrs period</li> <li>Teachers do not introduce new initiatives</li> <li>Few teachers feel discomfort on the prevailing situation</li> </ul>

Source: Data gathered from respective School, 2010.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The assessment has tried to gather information on the existing situation of the secondary schools that would be an input for planning purposes. Now it is time to wide up summarizing the major findings of the assessment that would lead to draw points of recommendations.

The proportion of the female students in the secondary schools is found very low that accounts to 12.6% only in the current year. So, the situation demands special efforts to be exerted in enhancing the participation of females in boosting the educational quality of the zone.

The improvement achieved in the deployment of teachers is also encouraging. More than 95% of the teachers found in the secondary schools of the Eastern Zone are first degree graduates. And more than 98% of the teachers have taken pedagogical training. Both cases imply the availability of the skills that are important inputs for ensuring quality educational service.

However, the opinions the schools have on the efforts of their respective teachers appears an area of attention. It has been shown that the dedication and commitment status of teachers is somehow good though some of the schools have indicated that only few of their teachers are hardworking. This will lead to the tendency that students will become medium or low hardworking. As the result the physical presence of teachers may not enable to achieve the expected results since efforts of students is one of the determinant factors for the educational performances. There are problems as regards to the dissatisfaction of teachers due to the fact that they are being low salaried which adversely affects the quality of education. Hence, the provision of the proper incentive is among the basic factors that should be given due emphasis amidst the endeavors to ensure quality education.

Each of the secondary schools of the Eastern Zone have their respective peculiar problems which distinguished it from the rest. Some of the problems are common to some of the schools. Some of the schools have the problem of shortage of teachers resulting in overload and teaching subjects out of ones specialization. In addition, some as well have a problem in the utilization of the time allotted for class teaching, and lack of teaching materials, as well as recreational facilities. The concerned bodies need to appreciate the problems and provide possible solutions so that such problems will no longer exist in the schools for the future.

It is quite obvious that all problems cannot be resolved over night. The resources required to address the problems would be relatively high in the resource scarce environment. Hence, an integrated effort of various actors would be necessary to fundamentally resolve the problems. Necessary efforts are therefore needed from all stakeholders expecting that the respective governmental sector would take the leading position in coordinating and organizing the process.

Relentless efforts are needed to make teachers internalize the role they have in the nation and generation building and what their responsibility implies from the societal transformation point of view. All necessary and possible steps should be taken to minimize and eventually avoid discomforts of teachers.

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