Decentralization and Community Participation in Education in Ethiopia:

A case of three woredas in Horro Gudduru Wollaga Zone of Oromia National Regional State

Obsaa Tolesa Daba

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Abstract

This study explored decentralization and rural community participation in primary education in three woredas in Horro Gudurru Wollaga Zone of Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia. The study has illustrated how communities participate in their local schools and examined the successes and challenges in the implementation process. The main fieldwork was conducted in July and August 2009. Qualitative research approach was applied and focus group interview, qualitative interview, documents and field observation were used for data collection. The study majorly involved 24 informants that include woreda education officers, headmasters, Kebelle Education and Training Boards, Parent Teacher Associations and community members.

The study investigated that the decentralization in education has improved community participation in education. This has improved access and equity in education, sense of community ownership and school level disciplinary problems. Despite these encouraging outcomes, the implementation of decentralization and community participation in education is suffering from many challenges. Poverty in the community and fluctuation in households' income were found to affect community capacity to finance schools. The block grant fund for schools was inadequate. Schools have no adequate infrastructure and the existing ones were intended to fix problems quickly and hence are of low quality. The PTA and KETB lack basic knowledge and experience for the position and were not succeeded in performing their functions effectively. These bodies have also limited power over control of teachers and performance of headmasters. Further, there is inequality between localities and weak relationship between actors and sectors.

Generally, the decentralization of education and community participation has brought great change in the way a school is financed, but little change in the way a school is managed and educational quality is improved. Hence, the decentralization of education is serving as a tool for lessening state responsibility for provision of education. Moreover, the lack of necessary resource and trained manpower at the local level are potential challenges for the successful implimetation of the decentralization of education and the promotion of community participation and hence for local educational development.

Acknowledgement

To my late father Tolesa Daba.

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Acronyms

BBO	Biroo Barnoota Oromiyaa
CRC	Cluster Resource Center
EFA	Education for All
EFDA	Education for Development Association
ESDP	Education Sector Development Program
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
GRE	Gross Enrollment Rate
HGWZ	Horro Gudurru Wollaga Zone
KETB	Kebelle Education and Training Boards
MoE	Ministry of Education
NER	Net Enrollment Rate
NGO	Non-Government Organizations
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
UNESCO	United Nation Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children International Education Fund
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States of America International Development
WEO	Woreda Education Officer
WETB	Woreda Education and Training Board

Chapter One: Introduction

Following the World Forum on Education for All (EFA) of 1990, in Jomtien, Thailand and the signing of the Dakar Framework for Action in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000, community participation in education has become an educational development agenda of countries of the developing world (Bray, 2001). This trend is associated with national decision-makers desire to change the pattern of education control and provision, and interests of donors of education about how and where to spend aid money. The argument is that "those closest to the schools are in a better position to make more responsive and relevant decisions about how teachers, headmasters, and schools should operate to best serve the needs of local children" (Chapman, Barcikowski, Sowah, Gyamera, & Woode, 2002, p. 2). The devolution of power and financial responsibility to the local is to promote the locals' participation in their local educational affairs and improve accountability on schools and teacher, demand for education and sense of community ownership (Watt, 2001).

In addition, there are critical local conditions that demand community participation in educational development efforts, specifically in sub-Saharan Africa (Watt, 2001). Geographical complexity hinders the government to reach the locations of a community and to solve their educational problems promptly and efficiently. Many children stay in school for a short while others are out-of-school because of socio-economic problems. The education curriculums tend to be based on urban school model which is not easily understood by most children from the rural part. There is ambivalence towards education and late school age enrollments. It is unlikely for the central government to solve these problems. Thus, educational development under such condition is unlikely to happen, unless communities are placed at the center of the efforts intended to solve these problems and to overcome the critical challenges of poverty reduction whether as a partners of governments, civil society organizations or donors (*Ibid*).

On the other hand, there are counter-arguments against community support in education. It is argued that community lacks the resources to support school and relevant skills to monitor the use of school resources and teachers, and commitment for democratization at the school level (*Ibid*). These problems are more apparent in the rural parts than in the urban parts. Rural communities lack not only relevant skills and resources to contribute to school but also they are less confident to interact with schools and teachers. These likely raise the major issue of equity (Bray, 1996; Watt, 2001).

Likewise, community participation has been advocated in Ethiopian education development endeavors. The Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia was designed in the context of decentralized education system and has the goal that schools be "democratized and run with the participation of community, teachers, the student and relevant government institutions" (FDRE, 1994, pp. 16-17). The Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) mandates the community to participate from identification of local educational problem through planning, execution of projects, management to evaluation of the final product (MoE, 1998). The woreda (district) level decentralization reform seeks to empower the community "to participate in local development activities, improve local democratic governance, and enhance the scope and quality of delivery of basic service at the local level" (Garcia & Kumar, 2008, p. 8). Local schools have been placed under local ownership and ambitious strategies for promoting community participation in education have been instigated at the federal and regional levels. The Oromia Bureau of Education has also enacted similar strategy in 2006 which is in use to the present. In the strategy the regional government legitimized the policy and strategy of its central counterpart and mandates the community to participate in management and finance of their local schools. In order to assure these, Woreda (District) Education and Training Board (WETB); Kebelle (Council) Education and Training Board (KETB) and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA) were anticipated to be organized at woreda, kebelle and school respectively.

In light of the presented arguments and the contemporary phenomenon in Ethiopia, this thesis had explored decentralization and community participation in education in three woredas of Horro Guduru Wollaga Zone (HGWZ) of Oromia National Regional State, Ethiopia. The zone was thought to represent appropriate settings in which to investigate how communities participate in their local educational affairs for three reasons: First, in Ethiopia previous studies in the field (Beyene, Gaumnitz, Goike, & Robbins, n.d.; Dom, 2004; Swift-Morgan, 2006) and explanation as to its effects (Muskin, 1999) were conducted where community participation was promoted by Non-Government Organizations (NGOs). But in HGWZ, the phenomenon is a grassroots movement coordinated by the local governments. Second, the phenomenon is contemporary and very active which makes it noteworthy to explore. Lastly, the researcher has interest to explore the phenomenon in the zone.

1.2. Objectives of the study

The general objective of this study whose report is conferred in this thesis was to explore decentralization and community participation in education in Abay Cooman, Horro, and Jimma Gannati Woredas of Horro Guduru Wollaga Zone of Oromia National Regional Sate, Ethiopia. In light of this general objective, the following specific objectives guided this study:

- To explore how rural community and their representatives participate in primary education.

- To examine the successes and challenges of the implementation of decentralization and rural community participation in primary education.

1.3. Research question

In order to address the intended research objectives, the following specific research questions had guided this study:

- How do communities and their representatives participate in their local educational affairs?

- What are the successes and challenges of the implementation of decentralization and community participation in education?

1.4. Significance of the study

In my perspectives this study adds to the stock of knowledge about community participation in education as practiced in developing countries. In Ethiopia, community participation in basic social service provision including in education is an emerging contemporary phenomenon whose successes and challenges are not well documented. So a study of this kind provides understanding of the dynamics of community participation in education and expected to benefit the PTA, KEMTB and WETB, local decision-makers, to respond to constrains that affect active participation of the community.

1.5. Delimitation of the study area and level of education

This study was based on the standpoint of rural community participation in primary education in Abay Cooman, Horro, and Jimma Gannati Woredas of Horro Guduru Wollaga Zone of Oromia National Regional State, Ethiopia. The rural part of Ethiopia has more unfulfilled educational needs than the urban part (MoE, 2005). Community participation in

education is very active in the rural part. This study is, therefore, delimited to the implementation of decentralization of education and rural community participation in rural schools found in their localities.

The Ethiopian education system is structured as 2 + 4 + 4 + 2 + 2. There are two years of pre-primary school, four years of first cycle primary education, four year of second cycle primary education, two years of lower secondary education and two years of upper secondary education. The primary education comprises of the first eight years of education. The first ten years of educations are free for all children. This study is delimited to community participation in primary education development. Consequently, the study whose accounts had been conferred in this thesis is based on the implementation of decentralization of education and rural community participation in primary schools located in rural part of Abay Cooman, Horro, and Jimma Gannati Woredas of Horro Guduru Wollaga Zone, Ethiopia.

1.6. Limitation and challenges of the study

As in other social researches, this study had encountered certain limitations and challenges. The limitations and challenges that the researcher came across in the study were stated as follows:

The first major limitation was time. The fieldwork was conducted over two month period from July to August 2009 which was to short and didn't allow me to observe certain relevant activities in schools. Because I had to return to Norway before my Visa expire. However, some of the relevant data that were not obtained during the main fieldwork period were obtained later during my visit to Ethiopia, from March 18 to 28, 2010. Getting the informants was very challenging as the main fieldwork period was overlapped with summer holidays. Thus, I was obligated to meet the headmasters and school management committee members at their living places.

The other major challenges were availability of secondary data in schools, difficulty in organizing participants for focus group discussion and scarcity of transportation facility. Firstly, it was not possible to obtain relevant documentary data from the three participant schools. The schools have no sufficient archives and the existing ones were not collected because of absence of copy machine in and around the schools. Nonetheless, these documents were compensated by documents obtained from woreda and other upper offices. Second, though it was intended to interview PTA, KETB and community members

separately, the fieldwork did not go as intended. The PTAs and KETBs did not show up according to the appointments sought. Some community members were frustrated to participate in the focus group interview. Community members I gathered for a focus group interview corresponding to schools 'C' were scattered regardless of all possible and available means used to get their informed consent. Later, I managed to organize the focus groups through the cooperation of headmasters and issuing cover letters from local administration offices. It was very helpful that community members were happy to participate. Lastly, the summer heavy rain that used to happen all over a day and scarcity of transportation facility were big challenges to easily travel from place to place. I was, then, forced to travel on foot for long hours. This had left me with few days to spend with my parents and collecting other relevant data from regional educational offices that is located 334 kilometers away from the study area.

The other challenge was transcribing and translating interview records and official documents. The interviews were conducted in Oromo language (*Afaan Oromoo*) - the official and major language in Oromia region. Being an Oromo and raised up in the study area, I managed to transcribe and translate local and non-verbal expressions to the best of their local understanding.

Despite these challenges, necessary efforts had been done to maintain the reliability and validity of the study. This was done through triangulating data by corroborating data collected through formal methods with informal ones collected through informal conversation with people from different walks of life. Above all, I have used two primary school teachers; my nephews who had been traveling with me throughout the fieldwork period, to filter views whose authenticity were in question.

1.7. Definition of key concepts

It is essential to provide explanation about key and controversial concepts to provide their easier understanding and in what sense they were used in the thesis. There are three concepts that are worth explanation: community, participation and then community participation in education.

1.7.1. Community

Communities are of many types operating in different setting with multiplicity of matching, interrelated and opposing future that makes it difficult to define and classify it. Religious,

social, demographic, occupational or other futures cannot easily identify one community from the other, as their characteristics are not absolutely mutual or exclusive. Hillary (1955, p. 113, as cited in Bray 2001, p. 5) has identified ninety-four different types of communities and the list was not exhaustive. Communities are dynamic, they expand and contract, and sometimes communities with multiple futures come together and form new community depending on needs and situation (*Ibid*). Zenter (1964, as cited in Uemura 1999, p. 5) argues that a given community should have group structure organized formally or informally; their own collective identification or symbolic base in relation to other community; and some degree of local autonomy and responsibility to be called a community. Bray (1996) has identified three categories of community in education.

1. *Geographical communities:* this refers to individuals living in relatively small areas such as villages, districts or suburbs;
2. *Ethnic, linguistic, racial and religious communities* especially ones that are minorities and that have self-help support structures;
3. *Communities based on shared family or educational concerns*, including Parents' Associations based on adults' shared concerns for the welfare of their children.

The above three categories of community are common in Ethiopia in general and the study area in particular. Rural villages are geographically partitioned into kebelle and sub-kebelles. The Church and Mosques support schools and students from the poor family. Villagers have social self-help association in which any household could be a member voluntarily. There are individuals who support schools in the area because of their birth, racial, linguistic and religious affiliation to the area. There are bodies like KETB and PTA which are organized to lead and administer schools. And the wider community participates in construction and rehabilitations of schools and other school works like school farm. In the area, these groups have interest in and provide support for schools.

Thus, in this context, geographic community defines the concept community. A school found in a kebelle is supposed to serve communities in the kebelle and the communities in return are supposed to participate in all the school matters directly or through their representatives. The geographic community embraces the other two categories of community

1.7.2. Participation

The term participation is subjected to different meaning depending on the context. Shaffer (1994) has indentified seven ladder of participation in education which he again categorized into two based on the extent of participation in decision-making. These are *involvement* which he meant passive participation and *participation* which he used to mean active and genuine form of participation. In increasing order the seven ladders were:

1. The mere use of a service (such as a primary health care facility);
2. Involvement through the contribution (or extraction) of resources, materials, and labor;
3. Involvement through 'attendance' and the receipt of information (e.g. at parents' meetings at school), implying passive acceptance of decisions made by others;
4. Involvement through consultation (or feedback) on a particular issue;
5. Participation in the delivery of a service, often as a partner with other actors;
6. Participation as implementers of delegated powers; and
7. Participation at every stage of real decision-making from identification of a problem, feasibility study, planning, implementation and evaluation.

The term participation in this study is defined with this continuum. Active decision-making is associated with the highest level of the continuum in which PTA and KETB participate. Passive participation is associated with parents and other community members. For instance, all children have the right to education and parents decide as to their children education. Nonetheless, throughout the thesis the terms were used synonymously whether the action refers to the lowest or the highest levels of the continuum of participation.

1.7.3. Community participation

The purpose of defining community and participation separately was to clear the ground for defining the broad concept community participation. Community participation is commonly defined based on the United Nations resolution of the 1970 formulated by groups of experts assigned to discuss popular participation (Midgley, 1986, p. 24). Accordingly, community participation is "the creation of opportunities to enable all members of a community and the larger society to actively contribute to and influence in the development process and to share equitably in the fruits of development" (United Nations, 1981, p. 5, as cited in Midgley, 1986, p. 4)

In education, it refers to parents and other community members' direct and influential involvement in decision-making concerning how a school should be run. This entails decision and action to mobilize funds and other school inputs, improve student enrollment and attendance, adjusting the school calendar, and monitoring teachers' attendance along with some small involvement in issues such as quality and content of classroom instruction (Muskin, 1999, p. 1). Likewise, Ethiopian ESDP action plan defines community participation as "development strategy in which the beneficiaries are active participants at all stages of the development and execution of a project from identification of a projects, selection of a site, supervision of work and provision of labor to appropriate utilization, management, and maintenance of the final product" (MoE, 1998, p. 14).

In this study, community participation in education refers to direct or indirect parents and other community members' participation from enrolling a child and financing to influencing and real decision-making - that include identification of school problems to planning, management and evaluation of the final product.

1.8. Organization of the thesis

This thesis has six chapters. Chapter one has presented background of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance and scope of the study as well as explanation of key terms used in the study. Chapter two presents theoretical framework for the study. The chapter discusses decentralization of education and community participation education. Chapter three presents educational policy context of Ethiopian. The chapter provides brief historical over view of Ethiopian educational systems, educational decentralization policy of Ethiopia and educational management and financing strategies in Oromia region. Chapter four presents methodology used in the study. The chapter comprises of research approach and the research strategy (research design, unit of analysis, and research method), reliability and validity of the methods and ethical considerations followed in the study. Chapters five focuses on the presentation and analysis of findings based on the data collected through qualitative data collection tools. The chapter describes and comments upon how communities participate in management and development of education, and presents the effects and challenges of the on-going implementation of decentralization and community participation in primary education in three woredas of Horro Guduru Wollaga Zone of Ethiopia. The last and sixth chapter presents summary of findings, conclusion drawn from the study.

1.9. Summary

This chapter has presented an introduction to the study whose account is discussed in this thesis. The chapter has presented arguments, objective and research question that were addressed in the thesis. The chapter has also presented significance, scope, limitations and challenges of the study. Lastly, the chapter has given explanations for key concepts that are used throughout the thesis and structure of the research report.

Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature

The aim of this chapter is to establish analytical framework that serves as the basis of the subsequent analysis and discussion of the study. The framework is built around local participation in education based on decentralization and local governance theory. The chapter is organized in two parts. The first part of the chapter presents forms, dimensions, rationales, challenges and dilemmas in policy and practice of decentralization of education. The second part presents the forms, challenges, approaches and effects of community participation in education based on literatures in the field. The understanding of the concepts of decentralization and the dynamics of community participation in education helps to guide the analysis and discussion of community participation in education with reference to its practice in Abay Cooman, Horro and Jimma Gannati Woredas in Horro Guduru Wollaga Zone, Ethiopia.

2.1. Decentralization of education: Concept, form and dimension

During the past decades a number of developing countries have undergone decentralization within the existing organizational structure with the expectations of increased local participation in decisions and improved system efficiency (Conyers, 2006; McGinn & Street, 1986; Saito, 2008). The argument is local governments are closer and more in touch with the community and this is hypothesized to be a better position to deliver basic services more efficiently and effectively according to the local needs and priorities than the central government (Chapman et al., 2002; Saito, 2008). This is embedded in the principle that claims the central governments should not undertake those activities, which are at the reach and capacity of individual, private or local government called the 'principle of subsidiary'(Saito, 2008).

The interest in this principle has changed the old pattern of educational provision and control and local governance has been sought to be an enviable mechanism for local democracy and development (Saito, 2008). Almost in all countries educational decentralization reforms are introduced like a universal fashion (Mukundan, 2003) but many argues that there are confusions in concept (Lauglo, 1995; McGinn & Street, 1986). In this regards Lauglo (1995, p. 6) argued that the concept decentralization becomes more perplexing when it is used in the context of the distribution of authority as in the national education systems. Indeed, the forms, rationale, the extent and level of power transfer and implementation strategies of

decentralization vary within and across countries. In Ethiopia, during regional decentralization, the devolution of power was limited to regional governments and during the local level decentralization; it was further devolved to woreda and their constituencies (Gebre-Egziabher & Berhanu, 2007). Studies conducted during the second phase of decentralization revealed different implementation strategies among the regions that have undergone the reform (Garcia & Rajkumar, 2008). In countries like India, a study by Saito & Kato (2008) observed a contrasting experience in decentralization between two of its states, namely, Kerala and Karnataka states.

Despite the variations in experiences, it is essential to throw light on decentralization. A centralized system is one in which the government holds most or all authority and power while a decentralized system is one in which power and authority is shifted down to the sub-national levels (McGinn & Street, 1986; McLean & Lauglo, 1985; Welsh & McGinn, 1999). The forms of decentralization vary depending on the rationales with which a government approach the reform (Lauglo, 1995) and the extent of power and to which body power is devolved (McGinn & Welsh, 1999; Rondinelli & Cheema, 1983; Shaffer, 1994). Regarding the former, Lauglo (1995) has categorized different forms of decentralization based on three rationales with which governments approach decentralization reforms - a political legitimacy dispersal of authority, the quality of service rendered and the efficient use of resources. Depending on the later, the concept of decentralization is commonly referred with at least three major forms of transfer of power and functions to sub-national governments and their constituencies. It is not the intention of this chapter to discuss the forms of decentralization exhaustively. Nonetheless, for the clarity, I adopted the latter forms based on Shaffer (1994, p. 19).

De-concentration, also called administrative decentralization, involves handing over more routine authority and decision-making powers from a higher level of the central government to lower levels (regional, district, cluster), still accountable to, and staffed by, the central ministry. Delegation refers to transfer of (or lending) certain specific management responsibilities for some activities to other units, governmental or non-governmental bodies, implying somewhat stronger (but easily cancellable) local autonomy. Devolution, sometimes called political decentralization, strengthens sub-national units of government and actually transfers of considerable decision-making powers to local political bodies relatively independent of the central government. Privatization is the divesting of functions to the

private sector, to either voluntary or for-profit organizations. Some writers consider privatization as a fourth dimension of decentralization (Fritzen & Lim, 2006) while others considered it as a form of devolution (Hanson, 1997). In few cases implicit or *de facto* delegation is applied when government fail to provide education in some locations (Gershberg & Winkler, 2003). For the case in point, it may be employed in remote areas to hold the community responsible for financing and provision of education and sometimes through some compensatory mechanism such as through subsidies. Among the different forms of decentralization, devolution of power to local government, institutions and community encourages greater scope of participatory development (Shaffer, 1994, p. 19).

Further, decentralization is referred with three dimensions; namely, political, administrative and fiscal decentralization. Accordingly to Fritzen and Lim (2006, p. 2): Political decentralization involves the transfer of power to politically elected local governing bodies in an attempt to make them accountable to their constituencies through establishing oversight boards or the introduction of new forms of community participation in development management and policy making. Fiscal decentralization involves the altering of the sources of revenue for local governments through such efforts as block grants, intergovernmental borrowing and lending and changes to revenue sources available to local governments through user fees, service charges and taxes. Lastly, administrative decentralization involves the transfer of policy-making and management responsibilities from central to local levels. In Ethiopia, with the woreda level decentralization, the three dimensions were devolved further from the regions to woredas and sub-woredas. It is widely claimed that devolution of administrative, fiscal and political decision-making power to local government and their constituencies increases participation and accountability at the local level (Coppola, LuczaK, & Stephenson, 2003; Shaffer, 1994; Tilkson, 2008).

2.2. Rationales for decentralization and local participation in education

Decentralization is seen as a means of achieving political, economic and administrative goals that could be publicly stated and unstated (Conyers, 1986; Lauglo, 1995). The rationales differ depending on interest groups involved in decentralization - government, international agencies, academics and others (Conyers, 1986, 2006). Nonetheless, these interest groups view decentralization as a means to improve the planning and implementation of national development programs and to facilitate effective popular participation in the process of development (*Ibid*). With reference to the former rationale, in education, decentralization is

viewed a means to increase education resources, efficiency, accountability and effectiveness (Winkler, 1994, as cited in Baganda, 2008, p. 20). As to the later, decentralization is viewed as a means of improving the relevance of local decisions, as a means of encouraging local support in implementation of development programs and thereby helping to improve basic service provision (Conyers, 2006).

Community participation in (support for) education is one element of decentralization of power and responsibility to the local levels (Watt, 2001, p. 14). In one of his chapters, Watt (2001, pp. 14-18) had identified five key rationales for which governments in sub-Saharan African demand community support in their endeavors to provide basic education. These are:

Limit of state effectiveness: The multifaceted nature and complex processes in education places limitation on how well governments alone can achieve educational goals with the available resource and management capacity. A highly centralized educational system neglects the demand side constraints to development of education and lets distortion into the education system. The argument is decentralization and local participation in management and finance of education serve as a means to respond to government resource and management constraints, and address demand side constrains for education development. This is supped to make the education system more effective.

Ownership and demand: National education systems have traditionally been developed based on government needs and financing. Such system likely suffers from inefficiency and chronic resource constraints as well as low private demand for education. Under such circumstances: first, low effective demand could occur because sending a child to school has direct and indirect costs which poor people cannot afford. Second, weak social demand could happen when the education offered is low quality or is seen as inappropriate by parents. Third, low demand probably happens when community do not participate in education as well as when school have deaf concerns for parents. When they do not participate in one way or another, it is unlikely that community see schools as something that belongs to them, send their children to schools and have concerns on how the schools run effectively. Thus, the argument is participating communities in management and financing of schools promotes sense of ownership and increases their commitment for educational improvement (Patrinos & Ariasingam, 1997, as cited in Watt, 2001, p. 15).

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Democratization and accountability: Participation in provision of basic services is often considered as an important building block in the democratization of societies. The argument is that through participation citizens would be heartened to hold government accountable for meeting its responsibilities, to provide forum where weak and strong voices can be heard and to legitimize collective local decision-making process. Likewise, the argument for community support in education is related to the assumption that when communities contribute directly towards the cost of education, they are likely to demand a greater say in the form and content of educational service, and wants to ensure that the services are delivered efficiently i.e. increase in accountability.

Efficiency: Centralized and rigidly hierarchical systems often produce good educational outcomes at high unit costs. According to Winkler (1994, as cited in Baganda, 2008, p. 21) this is related to: First, in a centralized education system the central government lacks the ability to administer education at the local level. Second, the cost of decision-making in a system in which every education matters have to be decided by the central decision-makers leads to high cost. Third, frequent application by nationwide standards to the entire country is possible at high cost. Decentralizing decision-making closer to service users and making the beneficiaries to participate in management and finance of education are maintained as a means to respond to these problems. With reference to this, Watt (2001) argues community involvement in education develops appreciation and understanding of the different roles and potentials of education and strengthens the community capacity to organize itself. This consequently helps to ensure that educational needs are accurately identified, accountability structures are enhanced, teachers attend school on time and teach the curriculum, school participation rates increase, and pupil achievement improves. Consequently, efficiency in education is improved.

Choice and competition: The rationales for offering parents and children educational alternatives are based on two distinct but related arguments. The first argument is that parents have a basic right to choose what form of education their child should take. The second argument is that subjecting education providers to market discipline by forcing them to compete for service users raises standards and improves efficiency. Watt maintains these arguments are subject of controversy as they raise the major issue of equity.

2.3. Challenges and dilemmas in decentralization of education

The rationales and outcomes of decentralization are tantalizing and conflicting (Saito, 2008; USAID, 2005; Welsh & McGinn, 1999). It is widely argued that efficiency and effectiveness are more likely to be achieved when decision-making is placed at the local level. But localization of decision alone should not be considered as a panacea rather as a means to the ends provided that fundamental requirements that enhance the implementation process are fulfilled at the local level. Otherwise devolving decisions and function to the local will not have advantage (Welsh & McGinn, 1999). The requisites to be available at the local level include effective local authority and autonomy, sufficient resource for localities, effective institutions of collective actions, accountability and transparency in operations (Olowu & Wunsch, 2004; Welsh & McGinn, 1999). These requisites are imperatives for the success of decentralization reform. However, they tend to be conflicting in practice (Saito, 2008, p. 10).

Quality of local decisions depends on local units that are able to process and use information, and representation of interests of individuals and groups affected by the decisions (Hurst, 1985; Welsh & McGinn, 1999). Sometimes this is not available at the local. In Karnataka, India, localization of decision-making was not able to produce the intended outcome because of lack of skilled personnel to formulate plan (Saito & Kato, 2008). In Ethiopia during the regional devolution, educational decentralization had not achieved the intended objectives because the local governments lacked the basic knowledge and experience to perform effectively (Garcia & Rajkumar, 2008; Tadesse, 2007). Recent studies also note acute shortage of skilled manpower as a critical challenge of the implementation of Ethiopian local governance policy (Ayele, 2009).

Local autonomy increases independence and flexibility in decision and operation. However, when the required level of decision-making power is absent at the local level it affects the performance of the local governments (USAID, 2005). During the regional devolution in Ethiopia, woreda and sub-woreda governments had lacked the necessary power required for their local operations (Gebre-Egziabher & Berhanu, 2007). This had constrained the local governments to perform their functions effectively and the implementation of decentralization had consumed higher than the expected level of government expenditure (BBO, 2006; Gebre-Egziabher & Berhanu, 2007). According to a study conducted by Saito and Kato (2008), in India, in Karnataka state the local level decentralization failed to achieve the intended outcomes due to lack of adequate resource and necessary power at the local level.

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Likewise, in many Africa countries educational decentralization failed to yield the intended outcomes due to absence of real decision-making power and resource at the local levels (Winkler, 2005). Some notes that in many African countries decentralization was not able to promote local participation and achieve the intended goals because the reforms were little more than de-concentration of functions (Coppola et al., 2003). However, realization of improved local participation, efficiency and effectiveness in education needs devolution of fiscal, political and administrative power and functions to the local governments and their institution (*Ibid*). In other countries like Indonesia, due to the imbalance of these dimensions at the local level the decentralization reform become a costly reform and exceed the financing capacity of the country (Tikson, 2008, p. 45). Galshberg and Winkler (2003), in their study of educational decentralization in certain African countries including Ethiopia, observed local features like parents' illiteracy, fragile democracy, and less well developed banking system, to affect the success of educational decentralization.

There are other claims for which decentralization becomes more costly. This could happen when there exists complete local autonomy that likely separates localities (McGinn, 1997). According to the argument of McGinn (1997) the separations of localities hinder the advantage of exploiting economy of scale because such condition increase cost of information production and dissemination. Some scholars doubt if local autonomy leads to representation of local interest because local autonomy could leads to reemergence of elites at the local level and 'recentralized' of decision making power (Hurst, 1985; McGinn, 1997; Taal, 1993). In Indonesia, local leaders and officials considered themselves as champions of decentralization misinterpreting the local autonomy and become unilateral local rulers (Tikson, 2008, p. 4). This has consequently affected the realization of intended goal of the reform.

There are other criticisms forwarded toward decentralization in education. It is claimed to serve as a means through which governments transfer the burden of educational finance and provision to parents and other local community (Bray, 2001; Châu, 1985; Taal, 1993; Welish & McGinn, 1999). But it is imperative for a decentralization reform not only to be applied for increasing education resources and lessen state obligation, but should also be carried out to enhance democracy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity in education. This requires not only the transfer of resources to the local level, but also the strengthening of community, school and school management technical capacity and collaboration with community organization (Shaffer, 1994). Furthermore, it is advocated that decentralization empowers community and

increase participation in local decision. Nonetheless, low political bargaining power and economic capacity will affect the active participation of the poor and minority groups in local matters pertaining to their concerns (Chapman et al., 2002).

Another controversy involves the rationale of equity, choice and competition. In the rhetoric decentralization is advocated for maintaining equity but this is not always true. Many scholars assert that decentralization is widening the inequality gap between rich and poor localities (Châu, 1985; Dunne et al., 2007; UNESCO, 2008; Winkler, 2005). As the literature shows this challenge is associated with variation in local resource endowment, commitment of local government and community for educational development. On the other hand, the imperatives of choice and competition tend to jeopardizes equity as richer localities devote more resource on education and get better education but this has high frustration in poor localities. Consequently, some urge centralized decision-making and control of education within a decentralized system for considerations of not only maintaining equity but also for national unity and efficiency in management (Lyons, 1985).

Indeed, government intervention could serve for maintaining equity. It could be employed in the form of "deliberate action to counteract the natural dynamics of the expansion of education system and reallocation of educational resources among the different regions and call for special effect in favor of deprived ones" (Châu, 1985, p. 99). Bray (2001) on his part urges a shared responsibility (partnership) between community and the government for local initiatives to increase educational access, quality and equity. But government intervention sometimes complicates equity in education. In Papua New Guinea, government financial arrangements called "*minimum unconditional grants and divisions 284*" introduced with decentralization of education for disadvantaged provinces has complicated the existing equity problem among the autonomous provinces (Bray, 1985). According to the study, though the government intervention has prominence, there were other factors that have complicated the equity problem. These were qualitative provincial changes, difference in population growth rates, administrative shortcomings that affect how money is spent and injection of different amounts of provincial finance into the system (*Ibid*).

Furthermore, in some places decentralization has worked out through centralization (McGinn, 1997) and in others decentralization has achieved results through local community initiatives to solve their own problems (Galshberg & Winkler, 2003). Regarding the former, McGinn (1997) cites studies conducted in Thailand and Sir Lank where the educational

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decentralization had become successful through integration of local and central action. Nonetheless, it should be noted that, extreme centralization or decentralization is an impractical form of governance. Because extreme centralization leads to institutional congestion, inertia, low quality and high cost service while extreme decentralization leads to lose of coherence and raise issues of equity (Watt, 2001, p. 13). A study based on analysis of three education policy reforms titled 'Power, participation and educational decentralization in South Africa' (Sayed, 1997) led to the conclusions: First, stronger commitment to individual freedom in the form of parents as consumers may actually limit the freedom of others and perhaps contradicts the principle of equality and justice which are central to the existence of democracy. Second, strong commitment to state control could not lead to the deepening of democracy. And third, commitment to strong central control and strong form of participation may lead to impractical and unmanageable system of governance.

The latter condition is best elaborated with the following quote, a condition that Galshberg & Winkler (2003) observed in some Africa societies:

> The most common and most successful decentralization is not the result of government decentralization policy but, rather, the consequence of government failure to deliver the most basic services. The community school where local citizens finance and manage their own schools is a community response to the lack of access to education for its children. This phenomenon can be viewed as inequitable, since access is weakest where people are poorest, but it can also be viewed as an indicator of people's commitment to education as well as a demonstration that even poor, illiterate citizens can govern schools. (Galshberg & Winkler, 2003, p. 3)

There were many practical circumstances where countries that have undergone decentralization reforms failed to achieve the intended outcome and/or produced the unintended ones. Faguet (2001) has reviewed educational decentralization reform in Algeria, Tunisia and Libya, New Guinea and others and observed mixed results. The outcomes were moderate success in some, moderate failure in some, and both results in others. There are many conditions that vary the actual outcome of educational decentralization from the planned one. Conyers (2006, p. 459) presented these conditions in three major categories:

First, in many cases the actual degree of decentralization seems to have been very limited either because of the proposals weren't implemented as intended or because the initial proposals did not provide for a significant decentralization. Second, there are claims that decentralization has done little to improve the planning and implementation of local

development programs and therefore to contribute to local or national development. Lastly, there are complaints that power has been decentralized to the 'wrong' people, either central appoints or local elites so there has been no meaningful increase in the participation of the mass of the people (Rondinelli, 1981, as cited in Conyers, 2008, p. 459).

In light of the above challenges and dilemmas, community-state partnership is thought to increase community participation and improve school performance. Lyons (1985) proposes a centralization in a decentralized planning system which he calls 'de-concentration' meant that the center retains the main elements of strategic control of the system that are the subject of national interest, but widens the scope of planning, decision-making and control at the local and/or other sub-national levels of the system and at the same time improving the quality of communication between center and periphery - that a combination of strategies is supposed to give positive outcomes.

From this discussion it can be understood that there is no single blue print for implementation of decentralization that will increase efficiency and effectiveness of education. Some urge best practices, anecdotal and evaluative, growing out of educational decentralization reforms, majorly from Latin American countries and Eastern European countries (Galshberg & Winkler, 2003, p. 2-3). On the other hand, Welsh and McGinn (1999, p. 58) urges "a strategic approach is to be preferred over 'best practices' approach. The number of effective combinations of decision is large; there are many ways to improve education. Consequently, decision-makers and managers do not maintain a single strategy over time, but instead can vary where decisions are made according to the current situation of the organization. A strategic approach would define the principle that guide choice in situations, rather than specify the fixed structural changes to be made."

2.4. Forms of community participation in education

School is not the only place where a child is equipped with skills and knowledge. Thus, community participation in education comprises not only what parents and other community members formally do in school but also informal forms including the wider society support in child upbringing and socializing before and after enrollment in school and efforts community make to improve teacher life (Uemura, 1999).

It is possible to find different forms of community support for schools in the literature. Swift-Morgan (2006) has investigated six domains of participation through review of the literature

and educational policies. These are infrastructure and maintenance, management and administration, teacher support and supervision, pedagogy and classroom support, student supervision, and student recruitment. The Oromia Regional Bureau of Education, Ethiopia, defined eight aspects of education where communities are supposed to participate voluntarily (BBO, 2006). (These are discussed in chapter three). Williams (1997, as cited in Watt, 2001, p. 27) presented three broad areas of activities where communities support education - support for the instructional program, school management and contribution to school resources.

2.4.1. Community support for school infrastructure and operational costs

When we think about community support for education, 'monetary and non-monetary forms' of contribution for schools come to our mind (Watt, 2001). Monetary support includes levies, fees and fundraising made for schools to supplement teacher salaries, for rehabilitation of classrooms and construction of schools. Non-monetary forms of participation include varied activities that range from attending a school meeting and assembly to active participation in every step of school decisions. Studies conducted in Ethiopia inform that parents are often required to make in cash and in-kind contribution for school operation, infrastructure and maintenance as well as to supplement salary of teachers and other school personnel (Beyene et al., n.d.; Dom, 2004; Nasise, 2010; Swift-Morgan, 2006).

Community financing for schools is a subject of controversy, particularly when it come to the poor capacity to contribute for schools. In one aspect community financing is considered as a means of increasing resource for supporting government effort in educational provision, promoting accountability and community legitimacy to exercise control over schools and promoting sense of ownership (Watt, 2001). It is asserted that the poor are not able to finance education (Chapman et al., 2002) and in places where communities support is contingent to child education; it expels the poor from educating their children (Bray, 1996, 2001). Equity is another major issue that arises due to variation in community capacity and cultural factor, ethnic rivalries, racial inequalities like the cast system and urban-rural conditions (Bray, 1996).

Besides, there are two contrasting issues with regard to community financing in primary (basic) education. The Universal Declaration of Human Right in 1948, Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1959; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1966 all declares primary (elementary) education shall be free. However, the declaration of EFA does not state anything whether parents shall pay fees for primary education or not

(UNESCO, 1990). It is argued that the role of community in education dramatically increased after The World Forum on Education in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990 (Bray, 2001). This phenomenon is associated with 'Article 7' of the declaration of EFA that demands partnership among different stakeholders in education, in which community is a domain, and explicitly states education provision as a shared responsibility for the stakeholders (*Ibid*). The absence of any mentioning about user fees in EFA goal seems not to contradict the need for 'revitalized partnership' with different stakeholders and to protect government's interests to ask for community support.

In principle community participation is voluntary; however, it should be distinguished from 'compulsory forms of support for education' that is decided outside the community (Watt, 2001, p. 27). This could be when a government is unable to meet full cost of education from its own resources and identifies community as an additional source of financing (*Ibid*). In Ethiopia, primary and lower secondary education (grade 1 - 10) are to be free (FDRE, 1994). But households are mandated to support all government efforts in educational expansion and development (BBO, 2006; MoE, 1998).

2.4.2. Community participation in school management

This is the area questioned whether communities are capable to mange school or not, especially in the rural parts (Watt, 2001). It is maintained that the rural part commonly lacks skilled community members who can effectively participate in school management.

Based on who is qualified or right person to control education, Welsh and McGinn (1999) have categorized proposals for educational decentralization into one or more of three major ideological positions - political legitimacy, professional experience and market efficiency. The explanations of the three ideological positions in the following sections are adopted based on Welsh and McGinn (1999).

Political legitimacy favors democracy and focus on political values than expertise in educational control. The extent of power transfer may goes down to school and a joint member selected out of parents/community, teachers, students, and school principal control a school. Community or politically selected community representatives directly govern education. Decision-making power is, nevertheless, not uniform; it can extend from participation in routine school or educational issues to controlling and managing the school and its financing, and to hiring and firing teachers. In Oromia region, Ethiopia, PTAs are to be

organized politically elected at parent-teacher assembly while KETB are organized based on a legal nomination based on regional guideline.

Unlike political legitimacy system, in professional expertise system education is largely controlled by education expertise. Professional expertise focuses on the means (what and how to do) rather than on the ends. It is driven by professional rather than by politicians and can presume that certain small sets of best practices yield good results if those at the school level have expertise on how to translate such practices into action. Authority is transferred from professionals at the central level to authorities at the provisional level and goes down to school and called school-based management. In school based management system "responsibility for and decision-making authority over school operations are transferred to principals, teachers, and parents, and sometimes to students and other school community members" (World Bank, 2007, p. 2). The position can accept the importance of community participation; however, when participation does not mean a share in decision-making. Communities can be involved in labor and material contribution and maintenance of schools, ensuring student work, participating in school activities in which students perform and also in financing.

The final position, set out by Welsh and McGinn is market efficiency, which separates the governance of production and consumption of education. This position adheres to the principle of individual freedom in production and choice of education and asserts market efficiency is the best in responding to consumer (parents and children) needs and wants.

School based management (professional expertise) is control by local experts while market controlled education is self-managing (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992; as cited in Welsh & McGinn, 1999, p. 47). While in the former the emphasis is on application of expertise knowledge at the local level, the latter emphasizes on the demand side with least cost operation based on professional judgment. Advocators of market efficiency claim professional expertise lacks knowledge of customers' needs and choice mechanisms and cannot satisfy its educational clientele. It attacks political legitimacy as corrupt and inefficient and argues that the majority rule principle in democracy neglects the minority freedom. Professional decentralization and market decentralization are similar in keeping the community away from decision-making. Three of the positions involve some degree of devolution of power to schools, principals and/or community.

Within these positions, it is possible to find different models on how a community participates in management and administration of schools. Bray (2001) had identified three models through which community participates in school decisions through their representatives.

Legally incorporated school boards – set by the law for each school to have a managing body consisting of the school principal, representative of teachers, representative of parents, and others.

Parents Associations - also called *Parent Teacher Association* (PTA), are executive committees comprising principal, representative of teacher and parents that make decisions on activities and overall operations and serves as a bridge between teachers and parents.

Cluster and/or village education committees – in these model formal single bodies oversee several schools within a village or cluster of villages rather than a single school and serve in creating collaboration between government and community.

2.4.3. Community support in instructional program

Parents and other community support are not limited to management and financing of schools and teachers. They also contribute to the improvement of educational delivery and serve as an agent of educational delivery where there is shortage of teachers (Uemura, 1999). For instance, Watt (2001) had observed tutorial classes arranged for low performing students by mother association in Guinea and extracurricular activities arranged by PTA and communities. In many countries PTAs monitor, supervise and take attendance of teachers, ensure that teachers arrive at the classroom on time and effectively teach in the classroom.

Community can serve as guest teachers in the classroom; help introduce teacher to the local environment, language and culture; help in preparing instructional material and media to accord it with the local condition and understandable by children; and give feedback that can help to improve school performance (Uemura, 1999). Respected community members, knowledgeable village elders, community members with special positions and religious people can help student understand what a teacher teaches or provide indigenous knowledge for students. In rural areas where there are acute teacher housing problem, the community could provide or construct houses, and supply certain household goods for new teachers. In such environments solving teachers' housing problems can serve as a strategy to retain teachers who otherwise could leave. In some countries community could help in design of curriculum and learning materials that reflect children's everyday life in society.

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Parents could provide supervision and attendance over what students have done both inside and outside school. The next argument more elaborates the role of parents in academic performance of their children:

> Professional teachers control how much time student spend in class, parents are responsible for time studying at home. Learning outcomes are related to how much time parents spend with children at home, more than the extent of their participation in education activity. (Welsh and McGinn, 1999, pp. 40-1)

Parental and other community support include helping children in their homework, in organizing their timetable, preparing a suitable condition for studying, in monitoring their progress, follow up of their daily activity and progress both inside and outside school, reinforcing positive attitude about learning and school, and encouraging and supporting their success in education (Shaffer, 1994). Beyond this, participation increases the understanding of the relevance of education and tendency to cooperate with teachers and school in identify students' problems and improve student learning (Uemura, 1999). Parents also make sure that children are dressed and fed, and physically ready to learn at school.

Student recruitment is another activity that involves parents and other community members. There are various conditions in which students do not come to school, mainly because of economic problems, and cultural and social influences. Through participation in education, the community can develop an understanding and appreciation of education, and this helps to break mainly societal and cultural conditions that keep children from schools, particularly girls' and children with disability (*Ibid*).

2.5. Factors affecting community support in education

In the literature it is possible to find many factors that could affect community participation in education. The level of community participation attainable at any given time is affected by economic conditions of community, existing political and institutional arrangements, and social and cultural condition (Adam, 2005; Shaffer, 1994). Shaffer (1992, as cited in Uemura, 1999, p. 10) in his attempt to find factors that affect community participation in formal education, he observed community participation to be lower in socially and economically marginal populations. In these segment of the society, Shaffer had investigated fewer appreciation of the overall objective of education, a mismatch of what they expect schools to be and what the schools were doing, a thinking that provision and management of education is the task of the state, and lack of knowledge of the structure, functions and constraints of

school as well as a the realization that collecting the benefit of better education takes long time.

The existing institutional arrangement is another factor that affects community support for education. Decentralization is the major condition that is supposed to increase participation but not all stakeholders in education accept and participate at an equal level (Welsh & McGinn, 1999). In decentralization of education resistances from teachers are often cited for obstructing community participation in education. Teachers expect that community participation in schools will increase accountability and control on them, and lose freedom if the community gains power over school decisions (Uemura, 1999). On the other hand, Uemura argues that all parents do not get involved in education because parents have different understanding about schools and consequently they could think that they have no control over school, may not want to talk to and interfere into teachers business. The cost and benefit of supporting education is another detrimental factor for community participation in education. When the cost of supporting schools outweigh the benefits of education, it is unlikely for community to participation to advance (Uemura, 1999; Watt, 2001).

Another challenge related to institutional arrangement is weakness that could happen on the part of school management committee due to lack of incentive for the service they render for a school. Concerning this factor, Aviner (1980, p. 125) argues that members of school management committee most likely develop apathy, lose commitment and/or become half hearted over time because of lack of incentive for coordinating community participation which Aviner characterized it as time consuming and energy draining.

Shaffer (1994, pp. 25-7) on his part submit other factors that affect achieving higher level of participation in participator approach to development in general and in education in particular. These includes: heterogeneity of community; capacity to afford cost of participation required in participatory development and collaboration activities; the need for new and complex managerial and supervisory skills, attitudes, and behaviors; conflict of interest between goals of participation and political agenda; individual and institutional inability and resistance to accept the change and administrative obstacles.

2.6. Approach to community participation in education

Higher level of community participation is an evolutionary process that goes up from the lower level of participation to higher level with different speed and outcome at various level

of governance (Shaffer, 1994). Participating communities vary from place to place; nevertheless, they have some shared features (Reid, 2000): First, many peoples in the community are involved and not just an elite. Second, involvement is open for all groups, responsibilities are shared within the community, and ideas and talents are treated equally. Third, activities are carried out openly and publicized widely so that everyone gets informed. Forth, all individuals are welcomed regardless of color, age, race, past membership, level of education, occupation, personal reputation…etc. Besides, the members do not sit passively and wait for others to take the initiative; rather everybody involves and provides their support. Fifth, citizens are encouraged to offer or contribute their best for a common good. Finally, the communities operate with an open minded; they are not externally influenced by anybody; and leaders do not champion their own personal interest rather they focus on high quality democratic decision-making process.

Certain minimum requirements must be in place for transformation to such a good practice. These fundamentals include collaboration and partnership with different actors in development and the encouragement of new norms, creation of new mechanisms and strategies, and developing new knowledge, skill, and attitude (Shaffer, 1994). According to Shaffer, establishing three supplementary conditions leads to transformation in higher level of community participation. These are discussed in the next paragraphs based on Shaffer (1994).

First, transformation into higher level of community participation requires *developing social, political and cultural norms*. This again requires: a) openness and adaptability of individuals and institutions i.e. the national political and cultural environment, education system and school openness and adaptability to change, to ideas, to the outside world and to new ways of doing things. b) A consistent system wide commitment and support to collaboration, participation and partnership especially of community, and c) Greater professional and social autonomy and empowerment both down to lower level of a system, especially at the school level and out to other actors, at the community level.

The second condition that leads to transformation into good practice of community participation is developing *mechanism for collaborative structure and organizations*. This could be possible: a) when the norms developed for individual and institutional are accepted at all level of the bureaucracy. b) When there is government intervention and support, adaptive and flexible hybrid, and existence of understandable objectives and shared vision of a program at hand, and clear, systematic and consistent guidelines concerning participation

and collaboration. c) When there is horizontal relationship within and between bureaucracy and different actors at all levels in the educational system. Certain factors need precaution as they could affect the benefits that could be realizable from collaboration with different stakeholder. These include, individual and institutional jealousies; competition over scare government resources and external funding; the desire to develop once own innovation; and differences in the professional languages spoken - language of the researcher and the policy maker.

The third condition that could lead to transformation into good practice of community participation *is setting policy, procedures and guidelines at both national and provincial level*. This requires: a) setting policy and guideline for directing the functions and responsibilities of school management committees and communities and this could enhance collaboration at micro level of educational system. These committees play the role of building collaboration and partnership within and across schools; between students, parent, other communities and the school; and between communities and communities or among the wider society. b) Setting specific legislation, policies, procedures, and guidelines relating to the function and responsibilities of organization at the provincial and national levels to enhance collaboration at the micro level.

Lastly, transformation in to good practice of community participation needs changing knowledge, attitude, skill and behaviors. This could be enhanced through providing training that can produce new capacities, roles and values focusing on developing the basic norms that contribute to greater collaboration with different actors internal and external to school as well as developing the ability to focus on both the inputs and outputs.

2.7. Effects of community participation in education

There are strong claims that community participation can lead to improved school performance (Bray, 2001; Muskin, 1999; Shaffer, 1994; Watt, 2001). Many educators who have worked in the field of community participation have analyzed and illustrated increase in school performance from different settings. However, the strategies are not universally applicable because the practical outcomes are often particular to a specific context and conditions (Bray, 2001; Shaffer, 1994). Despite this fact collaboration and partnership in education can lead to increased resource for education; more effective and relevant education; greater equity, demand and acceptability of education (Shaffer, 1994).

There are some prominent community-state partnership experiences, one of which is the Escuela Nueva (New School) program in Colombia (Colbert, 2009). The program is government initiated student centered multi-grade teaching program for rural children. Parents, teachers and the community are the real actors in education. The model is known for achieving both positive quantitative and qualitative results. The program improved student active learning and study habit, reduced student repetition and dropout rates. It has also improved self- esteem, democratic and civic behavior. Students under the program achieved high scores in language and mathematics in the third and fifth grades. Later this program has been reproduced at national level and in to other countries including Latin American and some African countries with a careful study, planning, implementation, management and monitoring.

Other writers submit their evidence and explanation regarding the effects of community participation in education. Bray (2001) notes that community participation increase sense community ownership and a better understanding of the true nature of the educational problems facing a country. He states that community participation contributes to improvement in education through improving student recruitment, retention and attendance; improving teachers' performance and condition of their service; and enhancing equity. Similarly, Uemura (1999) submits that community participation in education ensures optimization of the use of limited resources; development of relevant curriculum and learning materials; identifying and addressing problems that hinder the development of education; realization of democracy; and improvement of accountability.

The effect of community participation in Ethiopia would not be different from these experiences. In Ethiopia, past studies conducted where community participations initiatives were promoted through NGOs are known for increasing efficiency of educational resources, increasing enrollment, and improving equity (Muskin, 1999; Swift-Morgan, 2006). In the target areas of this study, however, there are no prior studies that have been conducted to trace past effects and challenges of community participation in education.

2.8. Summary
The chapter has established an analytical framework for the subsequent analysis of decentralization and community participation in education. The main argument has been that devolution of financial, political and administrative power increase community participation in education and enhances efficiency and effectiveness of education. The chapter has made

review of rationales underlying decentralization and community participation in education. The underlying assumptions include finding alternative sources of financing, creating a sense of ownership and meet demand side pressure, promoting democracy in decision-making and increasing accountability, increasing efficiency, and meeting educational choice and creating competition. The chapter has made review of challenges, essentials and effects of community participation in education.

Chapter Three: Educational Policy Context of Ethiopia

This chapter presents a brief review of education policies in Ethiopia. The chapter is organized in two parts. The first half of the chapter presents historical review of educational policies in Ethiopia under three consecutive government systems – the imperialist regime, the Dergue regime and the current federalist government. The second half of the chapter presents educational management and financing strategies in Oromia National Regional State (Oromia region) of Ethiopia. A short description of the target area of the study is also included at the end of the chapter.

3.1. Historical review of education in Ethiopia

The traditional education system of Ethiopia was religiously oriented for centuries (Teshome, 1979) and dominated by males (Hoot, Szente, & Mebratu, 2004). The Orthodox Church from about the 4th century, and Mosques from about the 7th century, had established religious education for people in their religious realms (Dufera, 2005). The church education had maintained its monopoly power until the end of 19th century and hindered the introduction of modern education because modern education was expected to undermine it. Consequently, attempts by European missionaries to introduce modern education in the 16th and 17th century failed (*Ibid*).

Modern education was introduced in the late 19th century as a result of the establishment of a central state authority and permanent urban seat of power, the arrival of foreign embassies and the development of the modern economic sector (Dufera, 2005, p. 4). Educating young Ethiopians in Western countries were intensified due to foreign missionaries' commitment to modern education's contribution to the development of the country and the desire of the then king to build very strong government in Ethiopia (*Ibid*). Foreign missionaries started modern education by opening schools alongside their religious preaching where they settled. However, the Italian occupation of Ethiopia from 1935 to 1941 disrupted the emerging education of the country (*Ibid*).

Ethiopia education system has been changing following change in government. After the period 1940s Ethiopian education is known with three government system experienced consecutively and known for their different educational systems - the imperialist regime (1941 – 1974), the socialist regime (1974 – 1991) and the federalist government (post 1991).

3.2. Education in the imperialist period (1941 - 1974)

During this period the education of Ethiopia was restarted from the scratch where it has fallen during the Italian occupation. The first post occupation school was opened in 1942; and for the first time foreign missionaries were in 1944 requested to help in educational provision. During the same year, the language of instruction was changed from Amharic to English and all text books and educational materials were to be printed in English. English was used at all levels until 1954 when Amharic replaced it from kindergarten to second grade (U.S. University Directory, 2010).

During the period 1941 - 1974 the education system of Ethiopian was influenced by two major ideas (Negash, 2006, p. 13). The first influence was the emperor's conviction that modern education, preferably carried out by the Lutheran missionaries, was the best one to educate and train citizens who respect their king, country and religion. The second was influence from UNESCO that investment on human capital is crucial for economic development of a nation.

The goal of education during the imperialist regime was production of staffs for the state machinery, diplomats and translators. There were attempts to modernize and expand education that was shown in increased number of schools and enrollment. But the expansion and enrollment were not equitable because most schools were concentrated in big urban centers and were exclusively for the elites (Negash, 2006).

From 1960 onwards there were two major attempts in the history of Universal Primary Education in Ethiopian education (*Ibid*). The first was an All African attempt to universalize primary education by 1980 as declared in Addis Ababa. The Second attempt was the Ethiopian attempt to achieve UPE by 2000 based on the Education Sector Review of 1971/2 conducted by Ethiopians and international experts. However, the Education Sector Review itself was disrupted in 1974.

The education system of the imperialist regime had increased access and also achieved certain outcomes. But the system was inefficient and inequitable having the very low level of enrollment in African standard (Dufera, 2005). In the mid 1970s, Kenya and Tanzania had reached a high stage of UPE and others like Somalia, Sudan, Zimbabwe and Zambia had respectively achieved gross school age enrollment of 50%, 51%, 72% and 95% (UNESCO,

1981, as cited in Dufera, 2005, p. 6) but Ethiopia had gross school age enrollment of 15.3% at the time (Dufera, 2005, p. 6).

3.3. Education during the Dergue regime (1974 - 1991)

The socialist government who come to power in 1974 inherited the multifaceted educational problems of its preceding government. Following the downfall of the emperor, the socialist government drafted its education strategy. The designed education system was based on socialist doctrine and directed to fight against feudalism, imperialism and capitalism. Marxist/Leninist ideology was made a subject of education at all levels and intended to indoctrinate young Ethiopians into the ideology (Dufera, 2005).

The education system at the time was structurally similar to the education system in Soviet Russia. Many young Ethiopians were sent for higher education to Soviet Russian Universities; and educational advisors from the Soviet Russia also entered into the country (*Ibid*). The government attempted to extend schools to the rural area; and in the late 1970s the National Literacy Campaign led by UNESCO helped to expand primary and adult education to the rural areas (Hoot et al., 2004). During 1975 - 1989 the enrollment rate has increased at a rate of 12% and 35 % of children aged 6 – 17 were in schools (Negash, 2006).

During the period, more than 50% of government budgets were directed towards the military; and little funding was directed to education. More than 50% of funding for schools was to come from international aids and Sweden funded more than 50% of schools built during the period. A shift system (morning and afternoon) was introduced in order to accommodate the increase in enrollment at the time. The emphasis of the education system on the indoctrination of students to Marxist-Leninist ideology, however, affected the quality of education. The system suffered from shortage of teachers and the existing teachers were incompetent and the government had budget constraints to upgrade their competence. (*Ibid*)

At the downfall of the Dergue regime educational access, equity and quality were found to be low. The system left the country with a low enrollment ratio, low level of education in rural areas, and lower level among girls, low quality and inefficient system, high regional inequality gap and inadequate management systems (MoE, 1998, p. 2).

3.4. Education in post 1991 Ethiopia

After the collapse of the socialist regime in 1991, the current government designed a new Education and Training Policy. The Educational curriculum is organized as a 2 + 4 + 4 + 2 +

2 structure. There are two years of pre-primary education, four years of first cycle primary education, four years of second cycle primary education, two years of lower secondary education and two years of upper secondary education. The fist ten years of education that is termed general education is free for all children. The upper secondary education that leads to tertiary education has a cost-sharing arrangement in that students are charged fees.

The Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) was designed to implement the Education Training Policy. The ESDP has been designed with the main thrust of educational quality; relevance, equity and expanding schools with special emphasis to the rural and a marginalized areas, improving girls' education and with a target to achieve UPE in 2015 (MoE, 1998). The program was launched in 1997 and has a twenty-year life span divided into four phases of implementation. Regions have been made to design their own ESDP according to specific regional educational needs and guidelines of the Federal Ministry of Education. The program encompasses all levels of education and demanded huge educational resources; more than what was possible from the existing economy. Consequently, its implementation required participation and contribution of internal and external stakeholder including communities and international donor agencies.

There has been good progress in educational development in Ethiopia since the launching of ESDP (Chali, 2010; MoE, 1998, 2002, 2005). The ESDP has given more emphasis to expansion of schools in the rural areas and the periphery and has increased enrollment. Private and public higher education has mushroomed everywhere. Enrollment of girls at primary, secondary and tertiary levels have improved, especially the population of females in primary schools has increased dramatically. Alternative Basic Education is given to the peripheries (pastoral and semi-agricultural area) where introducing formal basic education is difficult. School feeding is incorporated in some areas to retain children in schools and improve their performance. Higher education has expanded and enrollment the level has increased.

In spite of the positive outcomes, the education system still suffers from many problems (Chali, 2010; MoE, 2005). There is a large disparity in educational achievement among regions, between urban and rural areas, and between males and females. The low quality of education and shortage of teachers is one of the many problems of primary education all over the country and found to be the lowest in schools in the rural parts. Internal inefficiency and dropout rate are still high. International sources notes as Ethiopian education system is

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suffering from lack of quality and equity problems (UNESCO, 2008). These sources states as quality of the Ethiopian education system lower than the average of the corresponding African countries.

3.5. The decentralization policy of Ethiopia

Unlike the previous government, the post 1991, government embarked on decentralization policy to legitimize the new state and empower the citizens and/or country's ethnic groups located by regions (Galshberg & Winkler, 2003) and devolve power to the local level following the 1992 constitution of the transitional government of Ethiopia (Garcia & Rajkumar, 2008; Gebre-Egziabher & Berhanu, 2007). It was intended to open the way for regional and local governments and through them for local communities, to take greater responsibility, financial and otherwise, for managing their own affairs, including the delivery of social services (Dufera, 2005; Garcia & Rajkumar, 2008). Since its inception the decentralization process has passed through two phases: decentralization-cum-devolution (1991 - 2002) and district level decentralization policy (from 2002 to the present).

During the decentralization-cum-devolutions period the transfer of power and function were limited to the regions. Regions were made to deliver all health and education services except tertiary education and training of secondary school teachers (Garcia & Rajkumar, 2008). At the time regions were dependent on federal government while woredas were dependent on the regions (Gebre-Egziabher & Berhanu, 2007). The woredas and their constituencies had limited administrative and fiscal autonomy and this has hindered public sector efficiency, grassroots empowerment and accountability and hence replaced with the second wave of decentralization (Garcia & Rajkumar, 2008, p. 8).

Unlike in the first phase, district level decentralization was characterized by devolution of power and service delivery function further to woreda and sub-woreda and their institutions and the development of block grant intergovernmental transfer systems. The regions and sub-regions were to use own resources and to generate additional income from existing resources and was to increase autonomy in plan and in budget preparation. The regions were given the power to redeploy more skilled and experienced manpower and to recruit more staffs depending on local decisions and available budget. This was supposed to make sub-national levels of government become more independent and more autonomous compared to decentralization-com-devolution or regional decentralization (Gebre-Egziabher & Berhanu, 2007, p. 26).

After the Woreda level decentralization system, the Ethiopian administrative system has been structured in three-tier systems: federal, regional, woreda (Garcia & Rajkumar, 2008; Gebre-Egziabher & Berhanu, 2007). The federal state is federated from nine regions and two chartered city administrations. The regions are formed based on ethno-linguistic locations while the two city administrations are created based on special consideration. The regions are sub-divided into woredas, which are again sub-divided into kebelles. Regions have also established zones in their respective area. The zones are not self autonomous. They serve as intermediaries between regions and woredas and help to facilitate administrative and development activities with technical assistances from regions. The legal and institutional structure of regions and woreda mirror the structure of the federal one. The Federal constitution defines the power and function of the regions and the regional constitution defines the power and functions of woredas. Officials in kebelles are the only paid part-time workers though they have similar functions and responsibility as officials at the woreda level. Recently, kebelles have been sub-divided and sub-sub-divided into *"Gare"* and *"Gooxii"* respectively for ease of administration and grassroots mobilization.

The sub-national levels are underpinned by bi-directional accountability to their respective constituencies and their upper tiers. Regions enact and execute state constitutions and other laws; formulate and execute economic, social and development policies and strategies; administer land and other natural resources; levy and collect taxes under their revenue source. The woredas implement regional policies, plans, laws, directives and guidelines; coordinate activities of woreda sector offices; and oversee socio-economic and development activities of their kebelles. Finally, the kebelle controls the day-to-day socio-economic and development activities in their jurisdiction; and prepare a consolidated plan in consultation with sub-kebelle and government teams.

The financial strategy is designed so that the federal and regional governments share both the revenues and cost in order to boost the capacity of regions for developing themselves through self-initiatives (Gebre-Egziabher & Berhanu, 2007). Resources and finances are also further devolved to lower levels. The amount of government funding for social services is determined by identifying community contributions - cash, material and labor. Regions transfer funding in block grants to woredas that are then to reach the sub-woredas and their institutions. The block grant is intergovernmental transfer of funds from region to woredas

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according to a predetermined formula and with minimum conditionality (Gebre-Egziabher and Berhanu, 2007, p. 10).

3.5.1. Education financing strategy in Oromia region

Oromia region is one of the nine regions of Ethiopia and one of the four regions undergoing district (woreda) level decentralization policy. The four regions that are currently undergoing district level decentralization reform are Amahara, Oromia, Southern Nation Nationality and Peoples region and Tigray. In Oromia region schools get their funding in a block grant funds (*baajata dilboo*) through their corresponding woreda. The block grant fund is intended to increase school autonomy, give school the right to decide over the use of internal revenues, decrease dependence on government funding and create a sustainable source of funding (BBO, 2006). This is to enable schools to prepare both short-term and long-term school development plans. The block grant fund comprises salary, non-salary recurrent expenditure, capital expenditure and funds for incentives *(maallaqa onnachiiftuu)*. The incentive fund is given to schools, headmasters and teachers who show the best performance.

In Oromia region as in other regions of Ethiopia, primary education and lower secondary education is free for all and families will not incurs any cost associated with a child's education. But the government demands support from parents and other community members through voluntary participation. The government provides the largest portion of school finance that will assure the minimum requirement for operations of schools - salary and non-salary recurrent expenditures. Other sources of school funds include community support, school internal revenues, NGOs, philanthropic bodies and others.

Woredas allocate block grant fund into salary expenditure, non-salary recurrent expenditure, capital expenditure and incentive fund. The woreda administers salary, capital budgets and incentive funds while the schools administer their non-salary recurrent expenditures. Allocation of salary of teachers is based on the number of teachers and other staff which is in turn determined based on the number of students, periods and shifts in order to use the teachers to their full potential and to avoid misallocations of teachers. The non-salary recurrent expenditure is allocated based on a predetermined amount per student head called unit non-salary expenditure whose amount is different for different cycles. The annual unit non-salary expenditure for grade $1 - 4$ is Birr 10, for grade $5 - 8$ it is Birr 15, for grade $9 - 10$ it is Birr 20 and for grade $11 - 12$ it is Birr 50. If the unit non-salary recurrent expenditure for

a given level is below 75% of the amount required for that level (e.g. below Birr 7.5 for first cycle primary education), the level would not be expected to be operational.

The woreda also reserves part of non-salary recurrent expenditure for the incentive fund. The incentive fund is given as an additional allocation to schools that have used their normal budget efficiently and effectively, schools that have improved enrollment, educational quality, dropouts, and girls' education, and schools that have improved their internal sources of revenue. The amount of the incentive grant is different for different achievements and is determined by a predetermined formula (for detail see BBO, 2006, pp. 83-89).

Another source of funding for school was to come through community support for education. There is different between urban and rural areas. In the urban areas community support for schools is coordinated through municipalities, and in the rural areas it is coordinated through kebelle administration. The rural part is supposed to have more educational problems and shortages than the urban one; consequently, community support is more active and more coordinated in the rural than in the urban centers.

In Oromia region, community support for school is supposed to be carried out according to the economic status of localities, particularly for financial contributions (BBO, 2006). This was intended to tackle equity problems because different localities have different resource endowment (*Ibid*). In light of this, community support is arranged in three ways depending on resource endowment and economic condition of localities. In '*high income*' localities, where community are supposed to construct schools with their own initiatives and funding, the government recruits and pays teachers salary, provides operational costs and fills required inputs for commencing educational service delivery. In '*middle income*' localities where community are supposed not to be capable of financing the whole cost of school construction, schools are built in cost-sharing arrangement between the community and the government. In '*low income*' localities, where communities are not capable of contributing money, the government covers the financial cost of construction and the local community supplies non-financial construction inputs from the surroundings.

The terms high income, middle income and low income are relative comparisons of localities. Households in high income and middle-income locales are considered to be self-sufficient and surplus producing localities. However, the high-income localities are expected to produce more than middle income ones. The low-income economic localities are considered not to be

self-sufficient; consequently, they are supposed not be able to support educational and other social services provisions financially.

3.5.2. Educational administration strategies in Oromia region

3.5.2.1. Parent Teacher Associations (PTA)

The PTA is a joint body of parents and teachers to be composed of seven executive members elected at the parent-teacher assembly. These are an elected community member as a chairman, male and female teacher representing teachers and other four members representing the community. The association is accountable to the parent teacher assembly and serves for a three years term unless removed from the position because of their low performance. The parent teacher assembly has the power to appoint as well as to remove the PTA members from their positions. PTAs are intended to strengthen school-community relationships; make the school a good teaching and learning environment; foster a good academic relationship between teachers and student; and lead and administer schools on behalf of the community in collaboration with local government bodies.

A PTA is responsible for leading and administering the affairs of a single school depending on regional guidelines. In all schools in Oromia Regions, PTAs are expected to function according to duties and responsibilities assigned to them by the regional government. According to the guideline, PTA is to have more than 25 stated functions (for detail see BBO, 2006, p. 30-33). The duties and responsibilities of PTA would not seem to be less that the duties and responsibilities of a regular office worker. In Mortena Jirru and Bereh Aleltu woreda of Northern Shoa, Ethiopia, a study by Tadesse (2007) observed that the PTA members were not able to identity these functions and perform them effectively because of lack of competence and training.

3.5.2.2. Kebelle Education and Training Boards (KETB)

A KETB is legally nominated body that oversees all schools in a kebelle. The board is composed of nine members. These are the kebelle administrator as a chairman of the board, the school headmaster as a member and secretary of the board, three representatives from parents, two representatives from youth and women associations, and one representative from the Kebelle Teachers Association. The establishment of the board is expected to alleviate physical distance between rural schools and woreda and to enable schools to get decisions made promptly. In addition, the board is intended to coordinate the community in a school catchment area and to solve educational problems of a kebelle, to identify and bring school aged children to school, to promote girls' education, to watch out for and counter factors that

obstruct girls and other children from going to school (e.g. dropout and forced marriage) and to facilitate expansion of private schools.

The KETB is accountable to the kebelle council. Like the PTA, its duties and responsibilities are defined at regional level (for detail see BBO, 2006, p. 27). Tadesse (2007) also noted in his investigation, that the KETBs were nominated because of political consideration rather than because of their qualification or experience; and that they were unable to identify their duties and responsibilities and perform their functions effectively.

Figure 3.1: Organization structure of local school governing bodies in Oromia region
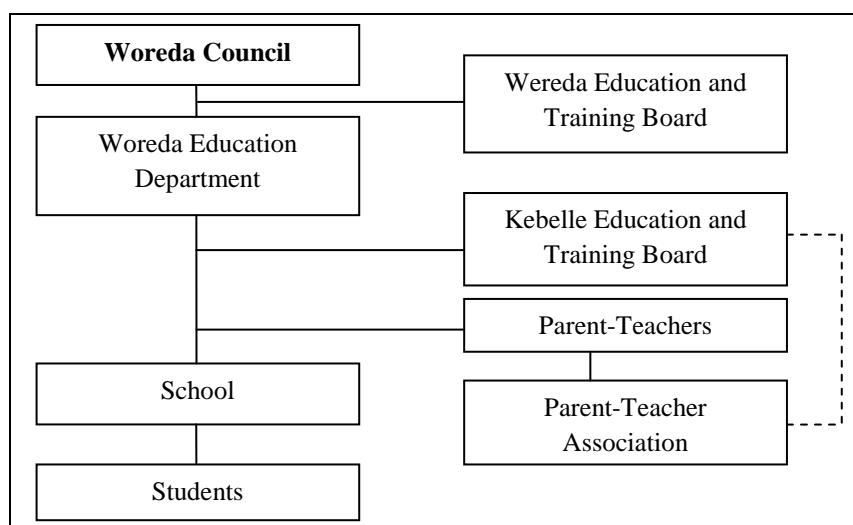
Source: Biiroo Barnoota Oromiyaa [Oromia Bureau of Education] (BBO, 2006, p. 28).

Figure 3.1 depicts PTA, KETB and WETB organization structure. PTAs are accountable to parent-teachers association whom they represent. However, they report their activities to KETB. PTAs are regularly to meet on every 29th of each month (Ethiopian calendar and a local holiday), in order to minimize absentees from meeting, unless wanted for urgent matters. Though the headmaster is not a member of the PTA, he/she is to attend PTA meetings for giving information without any formal authority or voice in the meeting or in decisions. KETBs are directly accountable to WEOs who nominate and incorporate them. KETBs are not representative of the community but they are supposed to listen to and represent the community. Unless urgent, the board regularly meets bimonthly. Students are not represented in the PTA, KETB and WETB.

3.5.2.3. Woreda Education Office

The Woreda office is the most local full time government office. A woreda education office leads and administers all educational affairs of the woreda. While the PTA and KETB seem to be selected on the basis of political consideration; the WEOs are appointed on the basis of their professional experience.

With regard to community participation in education, the office is responsible for coordinating, and providing technical assistance and capacity building arrangements for headmasters, PTA, KETB and community. The office also approves community proposal for school construction, provides financial and expertise assistance, finds non-government sources of fund for community works in education, promotes competition among schools or kebelles and provides incentives for those who perform best. The woreda education office also hires teachers for primary school, appoints headmasters and Cluster Resource Center (CRC) and removes them from their post if they are found to be under performing.

The Cluster Resource Center (CRC) is established to overcome challenges of transportation and communication among rural schools. Schools close to each other are grouped together and form one cluster. The most accessible school (closer to transportation facilities) serves as a CRC and the member schools are to get their resources (for example, textbooks) from this center called CRC. The CRC serves as a center where the government or other bodies supply educational resources and where the member schools get these resources (e.g. educational materials and school supplies). The CRC also serves as a meeting place for member schools.

3.5.2.4. Zonal and Regional Education Offices

Above the Regional Education Bureau is the Federal Ministry of Education. The Regional Bureau of Education prepares primary education curriculum; administers teacher training collages and trains teachers for primary education; provides technical, material and financial support for woreda and zonal education offices; controls the standard of education of the region and designs regional educational strategies.

On the other hand, Zonal Education Offices are established to serve as facilitators between Regional Education Bureau and Woreda Education Department. The office coordinates purchase and distribution of educational materials; provides technical support for woredas and also performs other functions allocated to them by Regional Bureau of Education.

3.6. Areas of community participation in education in Oromia region

In Ethiopia, the role of community in educational provision has been placed at the center of the design (FDRE, 1994) and implementation of the country's education and training policy (FDRE, 2002). The policy mandates the whole society to support the course of educational provision in various ways (*Ibid*). The local communities are encouraged to support the government with existing local resources in order to meet the resources needed to finance and to manage the growing demand for educational opportunities.

In the ESDP community participation in support of the implementation of the program is defines as "a development strategy in which the beneficiaries are active participants at all stages of the development and execution of a project - from identification of a project, selection of a site, supervision of work and provision of labor to appropriate utilization, management, and maintenance of the final product" (MoE, 1998, p. 14). This was intended to increase wider sensitization, awareness and inclusiveness in development efforts, efficiency in implementation, local capacity building, and assurance of sustainability (*Ibid*). To these ends strategies are designed at regional levels regarding how communities are supposed to participate in management and finance of education. The government provides teachers, salary and other operational costs, curriculum, textbook, management and supervision. Communities are encouraged to participate in management and share in the cost of school operation and development. In Oromia Region communities are supposed to participate in eight aspects of education:

– *School finance* – refers to participation in construction of new schools, maintenance and expansion of existing ones, and filling internal inputs like chairs, tables and others.

– *School based research activities* – involves participation in studies that are intended to find solutions for retention, drop out, absenteeism, investigation of student discipline … etc

– *Educational quality improvement* – this involves making and supporting schools and teachers to improve their performance, direct or indirect follow up and attendance of teachers and control of performance of headmasters, encouraging and making student to concentrate on their academics …etc.

– *Promoting girls' education* – this involves participation in tackling and solving parental and social factors that hinder girls' from education and promoting their enrollment.

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- *Preparation of learning materials-* this involves participation in preparation of learning materials for basic education according to the local socio-economic and cultural context so that the materials can be easily understandable by children.

- *Support and help to solve problems of teachers*, socializing teachers with the community such as through making local social self-help association and providing security and safety especially for female teachers.

- *Strengthening community-school relationships* through sharing constructive ideas for schools on the part of community and participating on community life on the part of the school.

- *Identifying and providing apprenticeship* areas in order to practically train TVET trainees and others.

3.7. Background of the study Area

This study was conducted in Abay Cooman Horro and Jimma Gannati Woredas in Horro Guduru Wollaga Zone (HGWZ). HGWZ is located in the Western part of Oromia National Regional State of Ethiopia. The zone was part of East Wollaga Zone which was divided into two as East Wollaga Zone and HGWZ itself during the year 2004/05. The current Horro HGWZ has 9 woredas (districts) and 1 municipal administration. It has a land area of 7,869 kilometer squares. Its administrative capital is Shamboo town located at 9* 34' 0" North and 37* 6' 0" East. According to information from the Oromia Bureau of Finance and Economic Development office in July 2008 the Zone has a total population 624,372 of which 307,513 are male and 316,860 are females. Of the total population of the zone more than 540,000 live in the rural part.

At the end of the 2008/09 academic year, the zone has 19 kindergartens with total enrollment of 4,340 children, 140 first-cycle primary schools with total enrollment of 80, 245 students, 120 second-cycle primary schools with total enrollment of 48,009 students, 16 lower secondary schools with total enrollment of 17,219 and 7 upper secondary schools with total enrollment of 3,095 students. Of these figure, girls' enrollment was 2,129 in kindergarten, 41, 303 in first cycle primary school, 23,992 in second-cycle primary school, 7,274 in lower secondary school and 489 in upper secondary school.

The three target woredas of the study are among the nine woredas in the Zone. Abay Cooman, Horro and Jimma Gannati Woreda are located in the South-West part of Horro Guduru Wollaga Zone. Abay Cooman Woreda is sub-divided in to 17 Kebelles and has a total land

area of 857 square kilometers. Horro Woreda is sub-divided into 22 kebelles and has a total land area of 731 square kilometers. Jimma Gennati has 13 Kebelle and has a total land area of 397 square kilometers**.**
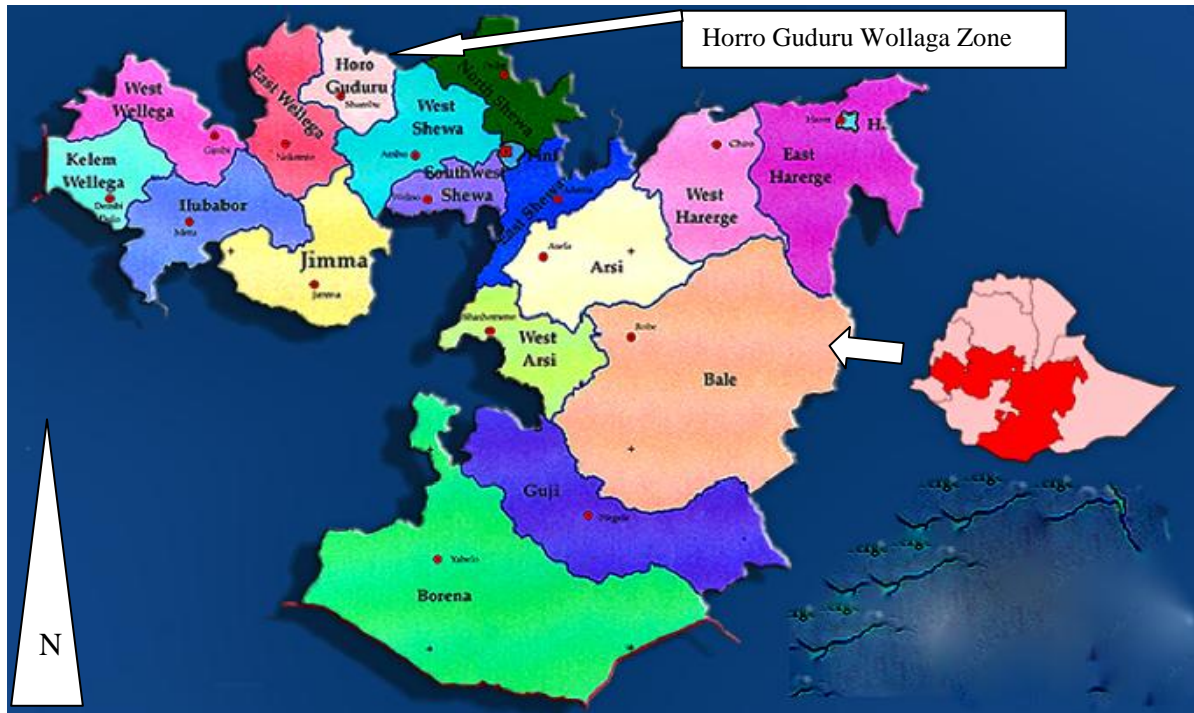
Figure 3.2: Location of study area.

3.8. Summary

This chapter has presented a brief review of educational policy context of Ethiopia. This chapter was intended to develop an understanding of educational decentralization policy framework of Ethiopia in general and Oromia region in particular. In light of this, the chapter has reviewed historical context of Ethiopian education including the present system, the decentralization policy of Ethiopia, educational financing and management strategy in Oromia region. Lastly, the chapter has given a brief description of the target area of the study.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

Documenting the research methodology is important for seeing how the conclusions are drawn from the empirical evidence, to help others who might want to do the research over again and to assess the overall quality of the study. This chapter presents research methodology applied in this thesis. It comprises of the research approach; research design that includes research strategy, unit of analysis and research method; validity and reliability issues and ethical considerations.

4.1. Research approach

Research approach refers to the general orientation of conducting a social research (Bryman, 2008). According to Bryman, there are two broad approaches to social research (qualitative and quantitative) and a recently growing interest in another research approach (the mixed method research). The quantitative research approach which may follow a deductive view of the relationship between theory and social research, maintains the position that reality is objective − which is the positivist or natural science perspective - and involves mostly analysis of phenomena indicated by numbers than words. Mixed method research combines both qualitative and quantitative approached to social research at the same time. This study employs a qualitative research approach for gathering data and analyzing the evidence and the approach.

In the qualitative research approach knowledge is constructed in an inductive view. The main emphasis is placed on understanding of the social world through the examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants in a constructivist perspective (*Ibid*). A qualitative finding mainly involves verbal statements and emerging open-ended data in constructing meanings and knowledge (Bryman, 2008; Creswell, 2003). It involves participating in or immersing oneself in the social world where people and their institutions are located and interact with each other, and examining the way they interact together, the meaning they give to their interactions and the world they are living in (Bryman, 2008; Patton, 2002).

This study has used a case study research design in selecting the site and in collection of data to explore how communities participate in primary education. Three primary schools were purposively selected and data were collected using open-ended qualitative interviews, focus

group interviews, field observation and documents from the corresponding local communities and their representative in school management, headmasters and woreda educational offices.

I applied qualitative research methodology for four rationales to build an understanding of community participation in education in Abay Cooman, Horro and Jimma Gannati Woredas in Horro Guduru Wollaga Zone, Ethiopia. Firstly, qualitative methodology allows flexibility in collecting relevant data emerging from respondents that were not included in the interview guide but worth to answer the research questions (Bryman, 2008). While the field work, this advantage had helped the researcher to obtain broad understanding of how community participate in school by posing supplementary questions in all the interviews held at all levels.

Secondly, the topic under study demands 'seeing through the eyes of the community, placing oneself in the local community and exploring their views about how they interact with their schools ad each other. Qualitative methodology is appropriate for a kind of study that demands going into where people and their institutions are located (Bryman, 2008). The use of qualitative methodology, therefore, has enabled the researcher to interact with community face-to-face in their own words and to develop an understanding of the research question at hand based on practical experience of the communities. The face-to-face interaction has enabled the researcher to collect enough data using different qualitative research tools to address the research questions.

Thirdly, from practical point of view, prior research in community participation in education in the focus area of this study is not available. Qualitative research approach is, therefore, appropriate for studies that are conducted under such circumstances. This is due to the fact that qualitative research approach serves to explore a phenomenon when little is yet known about a topic, a community or an area (Bryman, 2008; Creswell, 2003).

Finally, I applied qualitative research approach as purposive selection of the participants is at the heart of the study. Qualitative research approach is appropriate when the researcher seeks freedom for selecting information rich participants, documents or site that would help to address the research questions (Creswell, 2003, p. 185). The data that could address the research questions were available from community, their representatives in school management, headmasters and woreda education offices.

4.2. Research design

A research design is crucial in thinking how to guide data collection, its analysis and

interpretation; how to establish a link between research question, data, analysis and conclusion; and how the research question can be addressed. Yin (2003, p. 20), for example, defines research design as "a logical sequence that connects the empirical data to the study's initial research questions, and then ultimately, to its conclusions". A research design comprises five elements: the research questions and strategy, its propositions, the units of analysis, the logic linking the data with research question and its prepositions, and the criteria for interpreting the findings (*Ibid*). While the first three elements helps to decide what data to collect, the latter two elements helps to select strategies for analyzing and interpreting the data sets.

4.2.1. Case study

To achieve the objective of this study, a case study research design is applied. A case study design is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 1994, p. 13). Case study design can be a *single case*, such as, a person (e.g. a student), a principal, a program, a specific policy, a school, a community or organization or a *multiple case* study, such as when it involves two or more cases at the same time (Merriam, 1998). Case study involves an intensive examination of the case in question with the primary task of understanding the case per se (Bryman, 2008; Stake, 1995).

Similar to other social researches, a case study design is not perfect because of weaknesses embedded in the methods. Other research designs in social research could be equally or more important to collect data for the same purpose. Therefore, the use of case study will not discredit the worth of other social research designs for this study. Nonetheless, case study design is preferred for the following six considerations.

Firstly, a case study is appropriate to answer research questions of the type in this study. Yin (2003, p. 1) urges that case study is appropriate for 'how' type of research question. The first research question of the study is '*how*' type of Yin's category research question. While the last research question, besides the views of community members, headmasters and local educational officers, it needs the analysis of documents as part of a case study (*Ibid*).

Secondly, community participation in expansion and development of social services in general and in education in particular is a recently emerging contemporary phenomenon in Ethiopia. For a case in point, Yin (2003) notes case study design to be appropriate when a

study deals with a contemporary phenomenon as opposed to past event.

Thirdly, case study is appropriate when the researcher has little control over the subject of the study or events (Yin, 2003). The researcher has no control over the participants of this study. Because manipulating the participants will affect the authenticity and accuracy of data that then affects the result of the study. Due to this fact, the data has been collected in a natural social setting of respondents without any manipulation and control except for the gathering of the community members for the focus group interview.

Fourthly, the general objective of the study can be addressed with the use of case study design. The main emphasis of the study is to explore the current practice of community participation in education in the three woredas of HGWZ. Case study design can be employed for exploring how a phenomenon is undergoing (Yin, 2003). Though the objective can be arrived at through in depth understanding of a single sample to achieve this objective, a multiple case was undergone for the sole of purpose of getting broader understanding of the implementation of decentralization and community participation in education.

Fifthly, case study involves multiple sources of evidence - 'documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations and physical artifacts (Yin, 2003, p. 85). This provides the opportunity to deal with issues of validity and reliability of the study through triangulating the data. The use of case study, consequently, has helped the researcher to understand the research questions through triangulating data from focus group interview, qualitative interview, filed observation, field notes and documents.

Finally, the study has opted for a case study because small number of carefully selected respondents, which were twenty-four, can provide accurate and rich information about the topic at hand through in-depth examination of issues. This has advantaged the researcher to manage the fieldwork with the available fund and time. Case-oriented approach also works well when the number of participants is relatively small (*Ibid*).

In nutshell, a case study is preferred because of the kind of research questions proposed; the contemporary nature of the phenomenon under investigation; necessity for collecting evidence in real life setting of the participants; to exploit the advantage of the availability of multiple sources of evidence that corroborate each other; the demand for in-depth understanding of issues; and the possibility of using small number of respondents.

4.2.2. Unit of analysis

This study is based on rural community participation in education in three woredas in Horro Guduru Wollaga Zone of Oromia Regional National State, Ethiopia. One primary school each was taken from each woredas. Three of the participant schools are public schools found in the rural part of the woredas and serve mostly the rural communities. These schools follow the same school management and financing strategy designed at the regional level. They follow the same curriculum and get their funding in block grants for teachers' salary and non-salary recurrent expenditure. There are few NGOs operating in other fields in the zone while their role in promoting community participation in school is insignificant. A school catchment area in known and the corresponding community are supposed to support and participate in management the school. With these considerations the three primary schools are purposively selected. The views of the corresponding community members, headmasters and WEO were collected. These participants are information rich about the issue at hand. Their views were then used to critically examine community participation in education and its effects in the three target woredas.

4.2.3. Research method

Research method is a technique used for collecting data that can involve different specific tools of data collection through which the researcher listen to and observes others (Bryman, 2008). The following section present data collection tools used in this study.

I. Interview

Semi-structured or qualitative interview was the main data collection instrument for this study. According to Bryman (2008, p. 699), a qualitative interview refers to a process in which "the interviewer has a series of mostly general questions that are in the general form of an interview guide but in which the interviewer is able to vary the sequence as well as ask further questions in response to what are seen as significant replies". Interviews serve to get insight into things that cannot be observed directly such as peoples experience, knowledge, feeling, attitude, perspectives, activities that happened in at some point of time, how people organize and define their activities or the world through questioning them (Patton, 2002).

A qualitative interview is used based on the above arguments in order to get perspectives of peoples to develop understanding of the issue at hand with the required level of flexibility. This attribute has helped the interviewer to change the sequence of questions and to be curious about things not fully understood on previous interviews. The face-to-face interaction

has helped to get into both verbal and non-verbal communication - through reading the interviewee non-verbal expressions. It has also provided the opportunity to ask and get clarifications for questions depending on the interviewee interest to add more explanation. At both the woreda and school level, interviews guides were prepared before the interviews were conducted. The interview sessions were tape recorded.

II. Focus group interview

Focus group interview was the second data collection instrument used for data collection. The focus group interview is a form of group interview in which there are several participants ranging from six to ten or twelve, who were known to have had a certain experience in a specific issue participate in the questioning of about that experience in a form of particularly fairly tightly defined question and the focus is up on interaction within the group and the joint construction of meaning (Bryman, 2008, pp. 474-475). With this consideration, household heads, PTAs and KETBs members were organized and interviewed together.

The focus group interview was used with the expectation that when people are questioned in-group they will bring idea that they think important and significant, argue on it, clarify it, modify it and they may challenge each other. This was found advantageous to get factual understanding of issues and to filter incorrect ideas from the focus group interview. The focus group interviews were intended to get understanding of how community participates and view their participation in education, to probe their knowledge and perspectives for holding a certain views and to enhance community participation in education. The focus group interviews were conducted based on interview guides prepared before the session and the views were tape recorded. In addition, short notes were usually taken while the interview to get into none verbal expressions and for memorizing views that needs further explanation.

III. Documents

Documents refers to those sources of data that are not produced at the request of the researcher but produced and out there waiting to be assembled and analyzed that include such forms as letters, diaries, photographs, newspapers, magazines, videos, audios and autobiographies (Bryman, 2008). Such documents are important, in case studies, "to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources" (Yin, 2003, p. 87). In light of this, documents were collected to supplement the primary data. These documents include school reports, education policy documents and strategies, action plans, annual educational abstracts, community participation and financing guidelines and others. The documents were collected

from schools, woredas and zone education offices and the regional education bureau. Besides documents from the offices, the Internet was another potential source of information throughout the study.

IV. Field observation

Direct field observation was another data collection instrument used in this study. Field observation involves making a field visit of a study site, observing whether the phenomenon of interest is actually there (Yin, 2003). One of the many advantages of making field observation is that it permits an enquirer to get closer to the people in the setting or the settings studied and get firsthand experience of the setting or the people that helps during the formal interpretation stage of analysis (Bryman, 2008).

To exploit the above advantage, field observation was conducted in and around schools as part of interview conducted with headmasters to see what tangible things communities have done. Observations of five additional communities built schools were made during the fieldwork. The observation were intended to check the quantity and quality of offices, classes, school fence, chairs, blackboards, school farms, teacher houses and others. Field notes were taken and used to complement data from other sources.

4.2.4. Participants of the study

The total numbers of participants in the formal interview schedule were twenty-four. The participants were three Wereda Education Department heads, three primary school directors and 18 participants in the focus groups. Of the 18 focus group participants there were 3 KETB and 2 PTA community members and the remaining were community members. Other people were also contacted informally in a 'covert' manner. This was intended to corroborate data from the formal data collection tools and to get into points that the focus group participants were not free to express due to privacy cases while they were in group. Most of the informal interviews were made during the period from March 18 – 28, 2010.

The selection of the participants has taken purposive sampling. The participant schools were randomly selected and then the focus group participants and qualitative interview were purposively selected because they were believed to be 'information rich' about the issue at hand. The qualitative interview participants, WEO and headmasters, are information rich more than anybody concerning the overall district level and school level community participation activity respectively. The focus group participants (community members) were

selected randomly while the PTAs and KEMTs are purposively selected and made part of the participants for being information richness.

Table 4.1: Participants in the focus group interview

Schools	Community members	PTA members	KETB members	Total participant
School A	6	1	1	8
School B	5	0	1	6
School C	2	1	1	4
Total Participants	13	2	3	18

Source: Authors construction

4.2.5. Data collection procedures

The interview schedule was held in bottom up approach i.e. community to schools and then to district educational department. Presenting cover letter from the University of Oslo to HGWZ education office started the fieldwork. Then, the zone accompanied me with a cover letter to the woreda education departments. In turn, the woreda education department gave me a permit to contact schools and the local community. It was after this point that appointment is sought for interviews with the participants and to collect documentary data.

The focus group participants were formally interviewed at schools' compounds which all end up in recording the interviews using a tape recorder. This was followed by interview with headmasters based on the interview guide primarily given to them for preparation along with the cover letter from the district education department. Here also the interviews were tape-recorded. However, all intended relevant documents were not obtained because of the overlap of summer school holiday with the fieldwork and absence of copy machine in and around the schools.

Then, at the district education department, appointment was sought depending on the already submitted 'support letter' from zonal education offices. The officers were given the interview guide in advance of the interview session to get ready for the interview and to prepare relevant documents as necessary. The interviews were held based on the appointment given that all ended up in recording the interview and obtaining relevant documents. The documents obtained from districts had compensated the documents that were not taken from the schools.

Generally, the data collection process was conducted in bottom-up sequence having three

levels: community, school and district education department. Parents and other community members formed the lower category of respondents. The extent to which and in what forms the community involve in schools; and how do they see their participation in schools, were the cores of the focus group interviews. Their commitment, awareness, relationship with teachers and school managing bodies, and how do they represent themselves in the school management as well as what challenges they encounter to participate were part of the interview. At this level attention had been given to form a representative focus group from community, PTA members, and KEMTB.

The headmasters of the participant schools formed the middle category of participants. This was intended to get what community participation in the schools looks like because the headmasters knows the roles communities, PTAs and KETBs than any other member of the school community and woreda education offices.

The woreda education offices were the upper category of the participants. The woreda education officers at the three sample districts were interviewed to get overall information about community participation in education and school governing bodies at the woreda level, their views regarding the conditions that enhance community participation in education and the challenges and successes of community participation in education. The interview at this level had helped to get the overall understanding of community participation in education in the districts.

4.2.6. Data analysis procedures

Through data analysis, a researcher addresses the research question depending on the evidence collected. Data analysis "consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, testing otherwise recombining both qualitative and quantitative evidences to address the initial proposition of the study" (Yin, 2003, p. 109).

Data analysis was started with transcribing and translating interview records followed by coding, and then by categorizing. The data were categorized into different roles community or their representatives in school management have played in different aspects. The analysis and discussion was then undergone by corroborating evidence from the primary sources and secondary sources through examining and comparing with each other in relation to the research questions.

The analysis had adopted a special procedure for maintaining the anonymity of the schools and participants. The participant schools were named School 'A', School 'B' and School 'C' and the corresponding focus groups, woreda, woreda education officers and headmasters were named accordingly. For example, a focus group held corresponding School 'A' has been named as focus group 'A' and the woreda or WEO is named as woreda 'A' or WEO 'A'.

4.3. Validity and reliability of instruments

A piece of research to be acceptable, the researcher should show that the data collection instruments are reliable and the conclusions are valid. Data collection, interpretation and analysis are based on some logical set of statements (research design); therefore, the process that undergo from data collection to the conclusion needs certain logical test for judging the quality of the study (Yin, 2003). A social research is not entirely precise science when one studies social interactions, the question for researchers and consumers of research is then to be able to evaluate the veracity of results and the soundness of the research conclusions based on the appropriateness of the methodology and the quality of the data upon which the conclusions are based (Cano, n.d.). In line with this, reliability and validity are the two criteria for judging the acceptability and quality of this study. Reliability is concerned with whether data collection instruments can provide consistent results provided that the same data collection procedures and instruments are used (Bryman, 2008; Yin, 2003). And validity refers to, the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from the research (Bryman, 2008). That means, to what extent the instruments used actually measure or explain what a researcher intends to measure as the conclusions depends on the result of these measurements

The main purpose of reliability test is to eliminate bias and errors in a study (Yin, 2003). To this end, at all levels of fieldwork, I had introduced my role as a researcher, expressed what the research is all about, for what it is going to be employed, and assured the confidentiality of documents and information to participants of the field work. This decreases the extent of receiving misleading information and losing the relevant documents that would have happened if these disclosures were missing. To minimize the errors in data collection, an interview guide is prepared and approved by my advisor to guide the focus group and qualitative interview. Furthermore, "case study data base" (Yin, 2003, p. 101), in the forms of field notes, reviewing documents and reports before and after interviews were parts of the fieldwork. These steps are taken to address issues of reliability of data.

A good or valid case study uses as many sources of evidence as possible for establishing multiple measures for corroborating evidences for the same fact or phenomenon (Yin, 2003). Multiple source of evidence (data triangulation and investigator triangulation) adds strength to construct validity (*Ibid*). In this study, evidences had been gathered from communities, schools and regional educational offices through qualitative interview and focus group interview i.e. in a kind of multiple case study. Herriot and Firestone (1983, as cited in Yin, 2003, p. 46) argue that "evidences from multiple cases are considered more compelling and the overall study is regarded as robust". The researcher had also conducted field observations as a part of interview with school principals. Furthermore, secondary data that includes documents from zonal and district educational offices, regional education bureau, other similar studies and the Internet are part of the evidence used in the study. Besides, with the same rationale, the data collection is conducted in a bottom up approach - the data collection is started at the community then followed by school and lastly at district education offices. This chain of gathering evidence helped in explanation for doubt or question raised at the lower phase of the data collection. I have used my advisor and fellow friends to check the reliability of methods, interview guides, before the fieldwork starts and will also use in the analysis, for the matter of checking coherence between the research question and conclusion based on the existing data sets. While the fieldwork I have triangulated ideas with investigators who have knowledge of the topic and target area of the study.

Furthermore, internal validity is not applicable in this study, as examining cause effect relationship is not the main intention of this study. Yin (2003) notes internal validity is not applicable in exploratory or descriptive studies that do not involve causal relationships. Similarly, because of exploratory nature of this study, external validity or generalization is not at its heart – 'a peculiar failure of case study' (Yin, 2003). However, this does not mean that efforts have not been made to increase representativeness of the participants during evidence gathering. Besides the formal ways of data collection, I have made informal means of data gathering to get representative evidence about community participation in education of the case. In addition, documents were secured from corresponding sample district education offices to get overall understanding of community participation in education in the district.

4.4. Ethical consideration

The cover letter from the University of Oslo was presented to Horro Guduru Wollega Zone that then accompanied me with a support letter to introduce me with district education

departments and as a permit to conduct the fieldwork. The district education department then directed me to schools with a support letter that asks the school to help me with all needed by me from the school and localities. At all levels of the fieldwork, participants were asked to participate in the interview for which they can agree or disagree to participate. Then, I explained what the research is about, the research objectives and what is expected from them to participate. Besides, I assured them the confidentiality of their ideas and documents and anonymity of participants when I would analyze the data and report the result. Subsequently, the interview was conducted and recorded.

4.5. Summary

This chapter has presented research methodology undergone in this study. The chapter has discussed the research strategy and research design, the reliability and validity of research tools applied and ethical consideration followed in the study. A case study design is applied with such research methods as qualitative interview, focus group interview, direct observation and documents. The chapter was intended to illustrate how the data are collected and the conclusions are drawn from the data. The methods and procedures discussed in the chapter also important if there is a need to conduct similar or the same study over again and for assessing the reliability and validity of data collection instruments and conclusion drawn from the data. Based on the method and procedures discussed in this chapter, the empirical data will undergo analysis and discussion in the next chapter for addressing the research objective.

Chapter Five: Analysis and Discussion

This chapter presents analysis and discussion of decentralization and community participation in primary education in Abay Cooman, Horro and Jimma Ganatti Woredas of Horro Guduru Wollega Zone, Ethiopia. The analysis and discussion is based on views of community members collected through focus group interview and views of school headmasters and Woreda Education Officers (WEO) collected through qualitative interview. The analysis has also made use of field notes from direct observation of school and informal interviews with different peoples as well as official documents and reports from woreda, zonal and regional educational offices. The data were collected in July and August 2009, the main fieldwork, and from March 18 – 28, 2010. The chapter is organized in two main parts in order to address the research questions. The first part presents modes of community participation in different aspects of education. And the second part presents the successes and challenges of the implementation of decentralization and community participation in education.

5.1. Forms of community participation in education

As has been discussed in chapter three, local participation is at the center of the design of the Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia. In line with the power given to regional government, the Regional National Government of Oromia has designed strategies according to which the local communities shall be organized and participated in school management and development. Regarding the former, two schools management bodies were organized from the communities – KETB and PTA. Regarding the latter, the strategy has identified eight areas of education where communities are supposed to participate. These include participation in school finance, promotion of girls' education, teacher support and help to solve their problems, strengthening community-school relationships, educational quality improvement, finding places for practical training of trainees such as apprenticeship, finding solutions for local factors that hampers school performance such as school level disciplinary problems, and preparation of teaching materials for basic education. Concerning these forms of participation, community views corresponding to three schools located in different woredas were collected. The next sections discuss the role of community in primary education based on these data.

5.1.1. Community financing for school

In Ethiopia, the issue of educational decentralization is an issue of support for financing of education. This is evident in the rhetoric as well as the implementation of the education and trading policy. The ESDP demands huge resources for its implementation, which the

government has claimed exceed its capacity, and participation of stakeholders is therefore encouraged for financing the shortfall (MoE, 1998, 2002, 2005). The Oromia regional government recognizes this problem and given recommendations and demands regarding community participation in local educational development (BBO, 2006; Chali, 2010). Evidence collected at the local level demonstrated that more emphasis is being placed on community financing for school construction and rehabilitation.

In HGWZ, schools demand community support for two aspects of school finance. Schools in the zone, as other schools in Oromia region, get their budget in block grant form for salary of teachers and non-salary recurrent expenditure. The woreda officers told that the block grant is often inadequate to cover the non-salary recurrent expenditure. Thus, the schools demand community support to finance the shortfall. Besides this, communities contribute for school construction and rehabilitation. As stated in the guideline, the extent of community support in school construction and rehabilitation is dependent on economic capacity of localities. In places where communities are able to build their own school, the government recruit teacher and allocate budgets. In places where communities are not capable of building their own school, the government and the community share the costs of construction based on '*middle income*' economic category. In the target woredas, the government finances at most 35% of the cost of school constructions and rehabilitation and the community finance the remaining cost.

In Abay Cooman, Horro and Jimma Gannati Woredas, community support for school construction and rehabilitation involve all local community members regardless of having a child in school. All the participants in the three focus groups had made financial, material and labor contributions at least once in a year. Compared to funding from all other sources, as WEO 'A' explained, community contributions make the largest share of the cost of school constructions and rehabilitation, followed by government funding and small amount of support from NGOs, charitable and philanthropic bodies. Most schools have internal revenues from farms, school plantations and others, but these are very small.

The fourth quarter reports of the fiscal year 2008/09 indicates, in Abay Cooman, Horro, and Jimma Ganatti Woredas community support for schools were found to be more than Birr 1.6 million - cash, material and labor (Appendix A). These were used for construction and rehabilitation of schools, offices and classrooms; purchases and making of classroom and office furniture; paying community employed school guard; and subsidizing shortfalls in

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operating costs and others. At the regional level, from 2003/04 to 2006/07 communities had contributed more than Birr 300 million in cash and in kind for similar purposes (Appendix B).

In Abay Cooman, Horro and Jimma Gannati Woredas, financial contributions are made per household head. In the year 2008/09, the minimum amount of per household financial contributions in the three participant schools were three times of the government per student funding of 10 Birr for the first cycle primary education and two times in the amount of 15 Birr for the second cycle primary education. The amount of per household financial contribution does not incorporate the household material and labor contributions made while school works. A study conducted in Oromia region where Basic Educational Strategy Objective (BESO) was operating investigated a community support that was accounted at Birr 12.7 per household that was again more than government per student funding of 10 birr for the level (Dom, 2004).

5.1.2. Community support for teachers and students

Housing problem was the major problem for new teachers who go to rural schools because rental accommodations are not available around most of them. The existing teachers' houses were poorly constructed traditional huts that need maintenance every year to stand the rainy seasons. In woreda 'A', "due to housing problems, new teachers were not happy to go to the rural areas" said the WEO. The officer added, "Housing problems were frequently raised in the rural parts of the woreda and had been the number one reason for teachers' transfer application". In the other two woredas, for similar reasons, teachers migrate to private schools or to non-teaching posts in towns. Some teachers were traveling long distances to school and be physically exhausted before class. These problems were great challenge for many teachers. Now, communities have ameliorated the teachers' housing problems. This is said to have enabled schools to maintain teachers that would otherwise have migrated because of housing problems. For instance, in Abay Cooman, Jimma Ganatti and Horro Woreda in the academic year 2008/09 alone, communities have built 51 new and rehabilitated 8 existing teacher houses by contributing cash, material and labor estimated at more than Birr 77,000 (Appendix C). Likewise, during the period from 2003/04 to 2006/07, at the regional level communities have constructed more than 32,000 houses for teachers (Appendix D).

Parents and other community members could improve many aspects of student life. For instance, they could provide improved safety for girls, prepare good academic environments for their children at home, check whether their children are ready and supplied with necessary

things for their education, provide follow up and make their children concentrate on their study. A KETB who participated in focus group 'B' said "to control disciplinary problem, parents were given the obligation to follow-up their children before and after school and to improve their behavior". Another role of community is the promotion of girls' education such as doing more to provide safety and security for girls and tackling cultural and social factor that hinder girls from attending school.

In the area, educating a child is seen as *wealth*. Consequently*,* most parents are keen to educate and provide their children with what their children need depending on their ability and interest. But this is said to be problematic for children from poor families and orphans. Since the households in the area are farmers, they prioritize farm works and fail to make their child concentrate on their education at home. This was evident from the three focus groups. It was reported that parents commonly engage their children more on household works than on academic works.

5.1.3. Ways of mobilizing community support

The schools and the local governments employ different strategies for mobilizing community support. The two most common strategies that had been used in schools are school *bazaars* and *conferences* (for mobilizing community support for capital expenditure) and *school-community gatherings* such as parent teacher assembly and parent days (to ask for support or promise of support). School *bazaars* and *conferences*[1] are events designed to create awareness and mobilize resources simultaneously. As the headmasters and WEOs explained, at school bazaars those attending can become aware of school needs and problems through observation of, and participation in, everything in a school compound. Those who attend help find solutions for the needs and problems they have identified through discussing and working out proposals collectively. In Horro Woreda, official reports indicate that bazaars have not only enabled resource mobilization but also competition and rivalry among kebelles as to who will make the greater contribution. According to the report, bazaars had been conducted in eight out of the 34 primary schools found in the woreda and arrangements were under way to conduct such events in the other 28 schools. In eight of the schools, where bazaars were

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[1]The events are typically entertaining and educational, the main purpose of which is awareness creation and resource mobilization. Though bazaars and conference are used with little difference and different names in different woredas, they are used for similar purposes.

conducted, resources estimated at about Birr 336,000 were mobilized from more than 10,000 household heads (Appendix E).

School assemblies are another strategy for collecting contributions and/or getting community promise for school support. The focus group participants reported that at different gatherings (e.g. parent-teacher assemblies) schools frequently ask for community support. Parent-teacher assembly, also called parent day (*Guyyaa Maatii Barattootaa*),[2] is one of these gatherings that can be considered as an old strategy that school had used for a similar purpose as bazaars - awareness creation and resource mobilization. In Horro Woreda, in 14 out of the 28 schools where bazaars were not conducted, more than Birr 141,000 was collected from more than 11,000 household heads (Appendix F).

5.1.4. Community views: Why supports in school?

In three of the participant schools, community support is the second major source of funds for their general operation. One of the factors for the need for community support in schools is associated with government resource constraint to meet the commitment to achieve EFA and other Millennium Development Goal (MDGs). To these ends, local participation is propagated locally and nationally and demands community participation in all social services sectors. This was evident in conversations made with ex-KETB, when I first met him to get his consent to participate in focus group to be held corresponding to school 'B'. His comment while I told him the title of the study was organized as in the go after:

> Participation [many times]; you cannot believe it. I was getting orders from woreda many times to coordinate people once for school, once for clinic and once for the other sectors.

This expression shows how frequent community participations are and how often the government demands community support in basic social services provisions.

In the area, government effort is not the only factor for promotion of community participation in education but the local communities also have their own thoughts about what is the most needed. The focus group participants and other people who were informally contacted want to abandon direct and indirect cost especially associated with educating a child when the family

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[2] Parent day is held twice in a year and all parents, teachers, students, invited guests and others are expected to attend the day. On the occasion, students entertain and educate those who attend with dramas and cultural dances. Schools give awards to students and teachers whose performance has been outstanding during the term; parents hear reports of school performance and ratify the next year's school plan.

lives in a remote location. When they were asked why they support schools, the participants justified the purpose of their contributions by comparing the benefits they get over a long run with the small amount of contribution they make now. Community members who participated in focus groups 'A' and 'B' respectively made the next justifications:

> In the past, our children go to Shamboo [the closest town] to attend grade 6 to 12. At that time, we used to transport food, firewood and others stuffs. They [their children] live in rented accommodations. Imagine how difficult it was for a child to live away from his parents and for a poor family to pay rent each month and transport food …

> If our children had been studying at Shamboo, imagine the distance our children would have traveled, the housing rent we would have paid, and the help we would have lost in the farm. So, don't you think paying Birr 30 is preferable!

These quotes imply that parents are supporting schools to solve their own problems. In the other focus groups similar types of reasoning were evident.

In the area, educating a child is viewed as future wealth for parents. A focus group participant compared educating a child to saving - *wealth*. In the local language the parent said: "*Ilmoo barsiifachuun, waan akka waa ol kaawaachuuti*". I asked the participant to explain it for the focus group and the explanation was: "if you save money you will withdraw when you need it, if you educate a child you will get support during your old age." Another participant brought another local saying to the focus group "*Harreen ilmoo ishee irratti hagalfatti*"; and the participant explained it as: "If you have educated your child, you will not worry about caring for family problems and educating younger children". As understood from the focus group regardless of their economic capacity the communities have interest to support schools.

Some community initiatives in the area were a response to failure of the government to solve their educational problems. This was evident from how two first cycle primary schools were built in Jimma Ganatti Woreda. Communities around one of the schools are settled on a triangular shaped catchment area surrounded by marshy land in its two sides and lake in the other side. Communities around the other school are located on island in Fincaa Dam. Children from these communities used to cross to the main land in such a hazardous and tiresome physical features to and from school every day.

Another local condition that could be a factor is the existing local social structure. The local informal social structure is very cohesive. In addition, the villagers are interconnected

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vertically and horizontally through the *Garee and Gooxii* system and *Idir*[3]. The importance of these local features has increased community participation for two reasons. First, the *Garee and Gooxii* members[4] are small in number and the leaders could easily identify those who don't take part in local activities and then absentees will be penalized. In school 'A' where *Garee and Gooxii* leaders are '*passive members*' (see the next section 5.1.5.) of PTA, it was reported that a high level of community mobilization was achieved. Second, in the area every household is at least a member of *Idir* and the use of *Idir* leaders had established another advantage for mobilizing community. Local society self-help associations around school 'C' have supplied construction materials and involved in school works. At bazaars in Horro Woreda, *Idirs* have raised money through bidding for materials, foods and animals presented on the event. Though these local structures have significant advantage for promoting community participation, households are directly or indirectly forced to participate and contribute money for local activities.

5.1.5. The functions of PTAs and KETBs

PTA and KETB are the two most current local school governing bodies organized from community, teachers and others, based on regional guidelines. Three of the schools visited and, according to information obtained from the zonal education office, all other school in HGWZ have a PTA and KETB. School 'A', however, had two groups of PTA members. The PTA is normally composed of seven *active members* that are supposed to perform all duties and responsibilities assigned to a PTA as in the guideline. And there are other members of the PTA that can be considered as *passive members* because these members are contacted only when they are needed for special purposes. The *passive members* are composed of sub-kebelle or village leaders which are considered to have potential advantage for informing and coordinating households under their administration when the school demands community support.

In three of the schools, the PTA and KETB are supposed to participate in school affairs based on the function assigned to them in the guideline. According to the headmasters and PTA members who had participated in the focus group, the PTAs participated in control of

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[3] *Gare* and *Goxii* are government created sub-kebelle level administrative structures while '*Idir*' is a community own-formed self-help association.
[4] A *Gooxii* is a composition of five to 10 *Garee's* whose members are not more than 20 households living closer to each other in rural neighborhoods.

teaching and learning process; control of school resource and finance; arbitrating disputes and dealing with school level disciplinary problems; selection of teachers and other staff for performance award called '*badhaasa onnachiiftuu*' and for professional development; and creating collaboration with different stakeholders. For instance, in school 'C', the PTA has got more than Birr 40,000 from Ethiopians living within and outside Ethiopia. The headmasters reported that the PTAs had been participating in identification of school problems and finding their solution, school planning and implementation, management and control of school resource and finance, and evaluation of school performance; except in teachers' performance appraisal.

The duties and responsibilities of KETB were found to be broader than the function of PTAs. The PTAs are executive body of their respective school while the KETBs are responsible for administering and leading all schools affairs under their administrative area. The PTAs make decisions pertaining to their respective school, and the KETBs oversee all schools affairs in their jurisdiction. The PTAs are intermediary between communities and schools through the KETB and the KETB are an intermediary between school, community and woreda education offices.

Even though KETB were supposed to perform equally all their function assigned to them in the guideline, the interview with the headmasters and WETB revealed that KETBs were more concentrated on resource mobilization than their other functions. In the interviews it was reported in a way coordinating community and mobilizing resource for school construction and rehabilitation in order to prepare more places that will enables to cater more enrollments is the main function of KETBs.

Furthermore, it was reported that the KETB had performed substantial work in creating awareness related to promoting enrollment of school-aged children and girls. But little was reported about activities related to bringing the poor and out-of school children to school. Some concerned people laments that many school-aged children are still out of school and that who failed to continue are not returning to school. Actually, in the area there are children with age above the normal school age in households who are capable of sending their children to school. This shows that the KETB has not fully succeeded in getting all children to come to school.

5.1.6. Participation in teaching, learning, school resource control and planning

The impression is that parental participation in teaching and learning activity directly or through their representative (e.g. with regard to teachers' attendance and student follow-ups), increases both teachers' and students' performance. True, and as the headmasters noted, however, parental involvement in the teaching and learning and visit to school are rare except for certain occasions such as during parent teacher assemblies. Out of the non-PTA and non-KETB participants in the focus groups, only three, and of the other peoples I have met, few parents used to visit school on normal school days.

The PTAs take teacher attendance, control headmasters' performance and deal with student and teachers disciplinary cases. This was reported to be monthly. In school 'A', besides teachers' attendance, the PTA informally follows teachers' diligence in classroom - how a teacher impart a lesson. But PTAs do not involve in performance appraisal of teacher because the PTA are considered to lack knowledge of the day-to-day activities of teachers. Teachers contacted during the fieldwork, however, had a rather different view. The teachers explained that evaluation of teachers is complicated. Though this was not within the intended scope of this study, one of the teachers comment is noteworthy to organize and present it as follows:

> A teacher is evaluated for his political view rather than his performance. If PTAs are involved in teachers' evaluation, the evaluation will be performance oriented rather than political. Because PTA member knowledge is limited to what a teacher is doing in school and will not include the teacher political membership.

The PTA controls the allocation and use of school resources. In three of the schools, the PTA collects contributions through the KETB and then deposit cash in a bank account opened in a schools name and controls the operation. According to the Woreda Level Decentralization policy of Ethiopia, budget plans are prepared in a bottom up manner and consequently the community participates in its preparation directly or through their representative (Garcia & Rajkumar, 2008). In the three schools, it was told that the PTAs participates in formulation of the school plan along with the schools headmasters. The budget plan is prepared with the headmaster identifying available resources from the community – cash, material and labor contributions. It is then presented to parent-teacher assembly, KETB and Woreda Education Offices consecutively for approval. The approval of the plan at these levels, however, will not guarantee funding equivalent to the intended amount. Other studies also investigated that the amount of block grant fund is unpredictable at the beginning and found to be below the

planned amount when it is declared later at the end of the third or fourth quarter of the ending fiscal year (Garcia and Rajkumar, 2008, p. 61).

5.1.8. Who is the community and who is involved?

Community support involves parents and other local community members, local self-help association, youth and women's associations, religious institutions, students, teachers, and philanthropic bodies. The church (protestant and orthodox), the mosque and local NGOs (e.g. Education for Development Association and World Vision) had sponsored school festivals (such as anti-HIV/AIDS awareness campaign), supported orphans and students from poorer family with clothing and stationeries. Teachers at Robi Gebeya Primary School have contributed Birr 200 per head; while students of Sakala Primary School have contributed more than Birr 5,000. Laga Worke Primary School has obtained donation of more than Birr 40,000 over the past three years for electricity and clean water supply and purchase of office and classroom furniture from an Ethiopian living abroad. Other residents around schools like local shopkeepers, cafeterias and restaurants owners and others are told to be in the domain. Thus, community support for schools in the target area of the study involves mostly local household heads. And all other stakeholders operating in a school catchment area and school aluminum are involved as "the value of education is not only to those who are involved in formal learning, but also to the society at large" (FDRE, 2002, p. 64).

5.2. Community power in decisions concerning support for school

The educational decentralization policy empowers community to decide in matters pertaining to their concerns (Gebre-Egziabher & Berhanu, 2007). Based on the principle of participation as in good governance package the country "the local community is mobilized and organized to participate in development activities in their localities willingly without obligatory rules and enforcement mechanisms based on one's own interest, understanding and belief" (Chali, 2010, p. 137). This is reported to be observable in decisions pertaining to community support for schools in the three woredas but the existence of genuine community power and voluntary participation is questionable.

Evidence collected from the target woredas indicates the existence of some merits of democracy i.e. collective decisions and actions. This is evident from the view points of community members who participated in the focus groups. Regarding this, the views of a focus group participants held corresponding to school 'A' are organized as in the go after:

In the school community members had contributed Birr 30 to 500. The school invited the community to school and then the community had observed everything in the school compound including classrooms and offices. They found old classes, broken rooms and tables. After observation the participants brought what they have observed and identified to an assembly. Then, they [the assembly] discussed on how to solve the problems they have identified. After analyzing whether everyone is able to pay or not, the assembly had decided 30 birr as a minimum limit of contribution for everyone. There were people who had promised to contribute up to Birr 500. Then the school had mobilized more than Birr 100,000 intended to build additional classrooms for opening new high school grades.

The focus groups in the other schools also described similar modes of decision making practiced on school bazaars. Similar modes of decisions-making were reported regarding parent-teacher assembly except for the fact that headmaster and PTA, sometimes with KETB, identify school problems but they are not entitled to decide what the community ought to do. An explanation of a head masters regarding the mode of decision-making on parent-teacher assemblies are organized as follows:

The school does not determine and ask the community to contribute money or any other things. What the school does is to gather the community and tell that the school has this and that problem; it needs this much amount of money or materials. It is the assembly that decides whether to participate in or contribute for the school problem or not. If yes, they [community] will contribute for the school and if not, we will find another source, [if any]. But they [the community] haven't said no to support the school so far.

In the above discussion, the mode of decision making seems the decisions are made democratically based on collective interest and decision. Nonetheless, the decision-making process needs further analysis before one can conclude that the local decision-making practice is democratic. First, whether the community actually makes the decision or whether it is very strongly influenced by some other body (school director, PTA, and/or someone from local government bodies). Second, whether the decision made takes community interest and capacity into account and the communities are happy with the decision. Third, what consequence will follow if a parent or other community member does not participate in the decision or contribute what is expected as per the decision or promise?

As regard to the first question, the local communities not only have limited decisions making authority but also have little voice, because of lack of bargaining power and the political power of local administrator and influence. Some of the focus group participants and other

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parents I have contacted informally characterize the role of community in local decisions pertaining to support for education, as 'symbolic participation'. The administrators have more political and decision-making power than community, headmasters and teachers. They use the power as a weapon to influence local decisions and force the community. They impose their views as opposed to being facilitators and attentive to the community. They reflect and enforce national educational interests or objectives, like achieving EFA goals (expansion of school), rather than promoting local educational interest and priorities. In this sense the administrators seem to serve as an agent for the government rather than for the community.

As regard to the second question, not only because of the local governing bodies' influence but also because of the majority of the community interest and society's pressure, individual and minority interests are disregarded according to signals from peoples I have contacted formally and informally. Similar view was reflected in an interview with WEO 'A' in his response to a question "Is there resistance on the part of the community as regard to their involvement in education?"

> At a conference in school 'A', the majority of the community had accepted 30 Birr as a minimum limit of contribution. But two farmers were arguing that most farmers are economically too weak to contribute Birr 30. …. What we [the woreda officers] did was, we have collected information about these two people from the meeting; then, we understand that these two people are actually economically poor, and unable to contribute Birr 30. But, their arguing was for a different reason; it was not directed straight forward … they did not send their child to school. One of the two people has been renting his children out to work for others. … Therefore, the meeting condemned them. … Later, we [the officers] advised these fathers [the two people] after the meeting and they were OK to accept the decision.

The above quote shows how officers from woreda and the majority (of the community) combine to influence the minority at school assemblies in an open. Provided that the kind of pressure as in the quote is imposed on individuals by the local governments with regard to the amount of contributions, it might appear difficult to predict how successful the collection would go and how much the communities are fairly treated during the collection process. In principle, contributions are voluntary and based on capacity, therefore, households have right to express their level of willingness; but this may be interpreted as a resistance rather than as a relevant input for decisions. Because of the informal social control, individuals are also directly or indirectly influenced not to be exceptional and for free of penalty. Such social control may be quite strong. Once the amount of contributions is decided, as a community

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member informally revealed, "there is no room to escape from paying the amount". This makes the critical issues of empowering the poor, the representativeness of the minority interest and consequently the relevance of local decisions to be questionable.

As regard to the third question, in the early period of the fiscal decentralization policy, financial contributions were levied per student head. If parents did not contribute, the child would be sent home. As one of the headmasters had explained, those students were mostly from poorer families who are financially insecure. The kind of practice has been blamed for causing loss of interest; drop out, and for expelling the poor (Bray, 1996). Swift-Morgan (2005)[5] had investigated such practice in the Southern Nation Nationality and Peoples Region, Ethiopia. To assess the present situation with regard to this practice I have asked WEOs and headmasters if the practice is still undergoing. WEO 'B' response to a supplementary question: "Do children will be sent home if parents do not contribute or participate in school works?" is worth quoting:

> There is no forced participation at present. Communities participate according to their interest and capacity. Contributions are determined after analyzing households' interest and economic capacity. If the household has no capacity for financial contribution, the kebelle 'social court' examines the economic capacity of the household and frees the household from financial contribution and replacing it with other forms like labor and material contribution. A child will not be sent home if parents do not pay financial contribution. The community is not forced to participate in any form. Anything that is against this principle, is against the law and, therefore, illegal.

Thus, at present, a child's education is not contingent upon its parents' financial contributions. However, as discussed previously, parents are nonetheless directly or indirectly forced to contribute or participate or there is penalty. Though it is against the principle and affects the development of sense of ownership, under certain circumstance the use of a modest level of force is necessary. If school contributions are completely voluntary, those who are able to contribute could free ride for service at the expense of those who support schools.

Another interesting point is the extent of power of school governing bodies. Analysis of the interviews and documents revealed that the role of PTAs and KETB in some important

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[5] According to the study, parents pay cash contributions per-student. If parents don't pay their contributions, schools send their children back home and the child stay home until parents settle their contribution.

decisions is a minor one. Decision on the budget plan, hiring, firing and professional development of teachers are centered at woreda. PTA prepares budget and school development plan and the woreda approves the decisions. PTA manages school process (teachers and school director) and the woreda hires and fires teachers, appoints and removes headmasters from position. These and other similar decision-making authorities are centralized at the woreda level.

Thus, it is difficult to judge how far the PTA, KETB and community are empowered to decide on matters of their local concerns and how far the way the government treats the community increases sense of ownership. Because forced participation or maltreatment in collection affects promotion of sense of community ownership (Condy, 1998, as cited in Rose, 2003, p. 57). In fact, it is difficult to exercise local democracy and efficiency simultaneously (Saito, 2008) but there shall be consensus on how contributions are collected (empowering the community) to cultivate community ownership and augment participation.

5.3. Accountability and transparency of the system

Proposals for decentralization and local participation in education are intended to realize efficient and effective service delivery i.e., improved school performance. Some of the factors for achieving efficiency and effectiveness under decentralization are improving accountability structure and installing transparent operation system (Di Grolpello, 2007; Galshberg & Winkler, 2003; Saito, 2008; USAID, 2005). In this context, KETB, PTA and school shall be accountable for their actions upwards to the policy-makers and downwards to the beneficiaries. And there shall be competent and responsive actors. These fundamentals are true in the school governance strategy; however, it is translated in to action in different way, and is questionable.

Responsiveness is one the fundamental of good governance package of Ethiopia and it is also at the center of the regional educational management strategy. However, according to people perspectives responsiveness of local government bodies, particularly of KETB, is lacking. KETB members come to their position by government nomination while supposed to represent the community as opposed to the nominator – the government. It is said that the KETB are nominated for their loyalty and contemplation of political advantage for enforcing and implementing government objectives rather than being based on the interest of the community that they serve. According to the World Development Report 2004: making service work accountability model, citizens (community) participates in local activities and

accountability works best when the community represent themselves and remove the representatives from position for their performance (Hammer, 2007).

In principle those who have contributed money have the right to be informed about how their contribution is used and for what it is used. Normally, schools or PTAs have the responsibility to provide information regarding community contributions and other aspects of education. Though it is claimed that parents are informed how and for what community contributions are used, there were parents who complained whether their contributions are used appropriately or not, implying some lack of transparency. The next quotation from a focus group 'A' further elaborates the problem of lack of transparency.

> We [community] are contributing money for solving school problems; but there are still shortages of classes and chairs. However, we [community] do not know anything; [if] there may be misuse of our [communities'] sweat.

Regardless of the above conditions, there were signals that indicate parental concern for better services and of initiatives to make schools and government responsible for certain education problems. In the focus groups, some parents who were not in PTA members raised critical school problems and their concern for better service. In focus group 'A' a parent said: "Many parents are complaining the shortage of teachers, parents are afraid of the consequence it will have on their children. … They [the children] fail to get the required knowledge". In school 'C', "parents have reported teachers' absenteeism and their children [student] punishment", said the headmaster. Parents' concern for better service and holding institutions accountable for their performance, increase when they participate in education than when they are not participating in any form (Bray, 2001; Uemura, 1999; Watt, 2001).

It has been argued that direct interaction and production of more information to improve accountability and transparency, will then improve efficiency and effectiveness (Saito & Kato 2008; USAID, 2005). Apart from direct contact on few events (parent-teacher assembly, parent days and few others), schools and community communicate through students, PTA and KETB, and teachers. The absence of basic infrastructure and scattered location of parents, however, seems to be the biggest challenge in order to achieve a prompt information flow. Nonetheless, the CRCs said to have minimized the problem, particularly the flow of information between woredas and schools.

Another means of communication investigated was the feedback and complaint giving system used in schools. Schools have prepared a feedback register book and a suggestion box for students, parents, teachers and others, in line with the principles in Business Program Reengineering (BPR) reform on implementation currently. This was intended to enable the schools to know their weaknesses and strengths and to check and correct their service delivery accordingly. In one of the three schools, "After the feedback system was installed parents have reported teachers' and students' disciplinary and educational problems using the opportunity" said the headmaster. The headmaster also added: "We [the school] respond promptly to the feedback and complaints in a way that encourages parents to report further". However, the outcome of the system is not well known at the time of the field work.

5.4. Current status of community participation

The current status of community participation in education has been a gradual achievement. Two of the schools were established in 1969. In both schools, according to the headmasters, communities have been involving in the school all along, though in a relatively informal manner. At the time of their establishment, both schools were grade 1 to 6 but at present additional grades are opened up till 10. Regarding this, the view of a vice headmaster who has been working for the past ten years in school 'B' is as follows:

> At the beginning there were resistances from teachers extended towards community participation in education because the teachers had no understanding of the dependence of the school on community support. But now, they have accepted community participation in school. [Now], teachers are happy if the PTA or community always comes to school.

During the focus group, a father of five children in school 'A' told his visits to the school as:

> The teacher is sociable and attentive; he knows what the students lack and need. Other teachers have also invited me to school, they told me about them [the students] and advised me [parent] what to provide for the student.

Community members were also unenthusiastic during the early periods. At the time "parents were considering education as duties and responsibilities of teachers and government", said a WEO 'C'. Schools 'A' and 'B' have experienced such conditions. At present it has been improved due to the efforts of the school, PTA and KETB; improved community-teacher relationship; advantage of the local social structure and community thought about their own

educational problems. In fact community participation is evolutionary and often has its up and downs (Shaffer, 1994; Watt, 2001).

In addition, the present status of community participation in Abay Cooman, Horro and Jimma Gannati Woredas can be understood from community work outcomes. Closer examination of the documents indicated active community participation in the woredas. In these woredas, during the period 2008/09 the levels of community work outcomes were almost greater than the targeted levels of outcomes (Appendix G). It can be understood from the outcomes that community participation in schoolwork and school support is improving and increasing school resources and efficiency in their use.

5.5. Prevalence of community participation

Community participation improves school efficiency and student performance result (Muskin, 1999). Now, it is possible to judge which aspect of education has improved from community participation given the prevalence of community participation in different domains of participation. For this purpose, figure 5.1 is constructed based on two headmasters' rankings of prevalence of community participation in different domains of education and additional inputs from documents and interviews.

Figure 5.1:   Prevalence of community participation in different aspects education.

School financing
Girls' education
Teachers' support and solving their problems
Strengthening community-school relationship
Education quality improvement
Practically training TVET trainee
School based research (School dicipline)
Preparation of teaching material
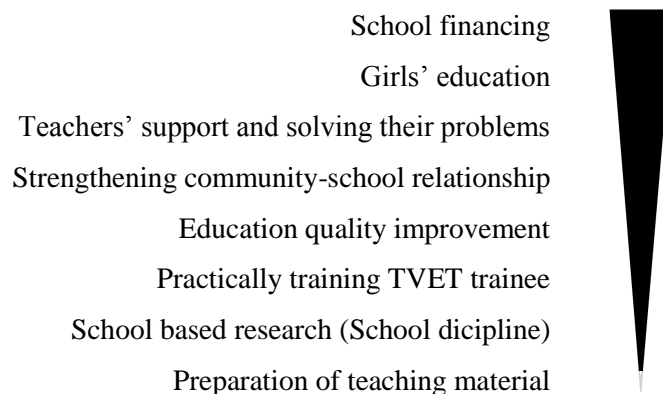
Source: Author's construction

Figure 5.1 illustrates that the prevalence of community involvement decreases towards the direction of the arrow i.e. highest prevalence in school financing and lowest or absent in preparation of teaching materials or media. This implies that community involvement is more emphasized on improvement of school infrastructure than on improvement of the teaching

and learning process. Therefore, the role of community in educational quality improvement is insignificant.

It is also possible to judge from the prevalence of community, PTA and KETB participation in different aspects of decisions to judge on which aspect of education is more advantaged.

Figure 5.2: Prevalence of community, PTA and KETB participation in school decisions.
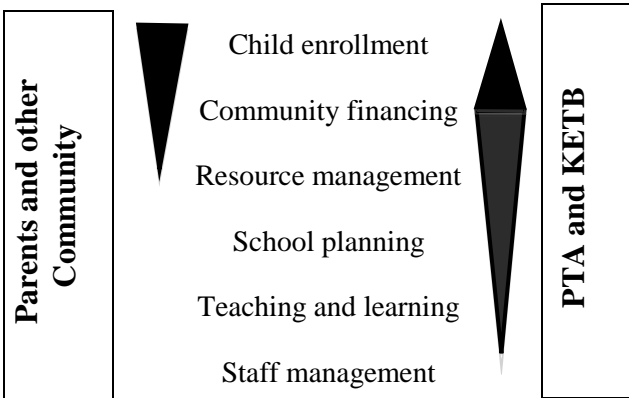
Source: Author's construction

The width of the arrow in figure 5.2 illustrates the prevalence of community, PTA and KETB involvement in decision pertaining to different aspects of education. As the arrow on the left side depicts, the prevalence of community involvement is limited to the continuum from child enrollment (the highest) to control school resource (the lowest) such as through hearing of school annual reports and keeping school properties from theft.

The bidirectional arrow on the ride side illustrates the prevalence of PTA and KETB involvement in decisions. The figure indicates, this to be more pervasive at the middle i.e. on community financing. This indicates PTA and KETB works are more concentrated on mobilization of resources than on child enrollment and control of teachers' and headmasters' performance. Thus, community, PTA and KETB would contribute more directly to improvement of school resources than to improvement of teachers' and student performance.

In nutshell, the prevalence of community participation in different domains of participation and the focus of PTA and KETB indicate more emphasis placed on community financing for the improvement of access and equity in education. However, the role of community in activities that could improve quality education is very minimal.

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5.6. Effects of community participation in education

Community participation increases efficiency and effectiveness of education, demand for, and acceptability of education, and resources for education. Communities in Abay Cooman, Horro and Jimma Gannati Woredas have contributed to improvement to certain aspects of education. In the three woredas, community participation in management and finance of schools was attributed to improvement in access to and equity in education, sense of community ownership and school level disciplinary problems.

5.6.1. Expansion of school and its infrastructure

School expansion is the foremost outcome of community participation in education. Many new schools have been constructed and additional grades have been opened. In the academic year 2008/09 in Abay Cooman, Horro and Jimma Ganatti Woredas communities had constructed 87 additional classrooms and rehabilitated 98 old ones by contributing resources estimated at more than Birr 1 million (Appendix H). During the same period, communities had built other five primary schools in Horro, three in Jimma Gannati. In HGWZ, during the period from 1998/99 to 2008/09 the number of primary schools has increased from 79 to 259 (Appendix I). Available data indicates in Oromia region from 2003/04 to 2006/07 community has constructed 1,947 new schools and built more than 17,000 additional classrooms (Appendix D).

Currently, all kebelles in HGWZ has at least one primary school. This has increased in take capacity, reduced physical distance between home and school and consequently increased enrollment of younger children. In focus group 'A' a parent said: "In the past children age 6, 7 or 8 were not enrolling because of distance. At present, however, I [the parent] have a daughter, age 9, who is attending grade three. This would not be possible, if school was not constructed here". At focus group 'B', an Ex-KETB also commented, "At present students have enough time to help their parents. Students from poorer families have got the opportunity to help their parents and to support their study simultaneously. People who cannot take the regular day classes have also got the opportunity to take evening classes".

5.6.2. Increase in enrollment and retention

Increase in enrollment and retention in schools were another educational outcomes that had been attributed to community participation in education. In fact, factors like demographic change and others could lead to increase in enrolment. Nonetheless, the headmasters and WEOs coupled increase in enrollment with the expansion and closeness of schools, changes

in attitude and understanding of education and increase in safety and security for girls. The informants argued these changes were achieved through KETB efforts and community participation. Longitudinal data for nine years obtained from Oromia Regional Statistics and Information Bureau seems to confirm the increase in enrollment. In Oromia region, during the period from 1998/99 to 2007/08, Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) for primary schools had increased from 42% to 92% and the Net Enrollment Rate (NER) had increased from 38% to 84% (Appendix J).

Improvement in wastage (drop-outs) is attributed to parents and other members of the community participation in education. Non-school factors for dropout and absenteeism are more controllable through involvement of parents and change at home than by schools (Dunne et al., 2007). The present study investigated that dropout and absenteeism are more controllable through parent's participation in education, particularly in the rural part. In the rural part, parents demand their child to help them in farm works. In the area of this study, dropout and absenteeism were reported to be common during pick agricultural seasons - harvesting seasons. To address these problems schools are closed during harvesting time and students are sent home to help their parents i.e., as an attempt to avoid educational wastage by adjusting education to local conditions.

Moreover, in the area parents are penalized if they fail to enroll their child or if they force the child to quit school. Parents corresponding to school 'A' were advised to provide follow-up of their child and to arrange good home learning environment, but its effect was not known at the time of the fieldwork. Practical circumstances show that follow-up of what children have learned; where children have spent and preparation of good home learning environment makes children to focus on their study (Uemura, 1999).

Nonetheless, the dropout rate is still high at the zonal and regional level. And the progression of improvement of drop out was slower and uneven. Available data indicates, in HGWZ from 2003/04 to 2007/08 the number of dropout had decreased from about 7, 000 to 5,000 (Appendix L). In the year 2007/08, at the regional level, more than 22% of child enrolled to first grade dropped out of school (Chali, 2010).

5.6.3. Promotion of girls' education
Sensitizing communities to the benefits of girls' education promotes girls' education, according to the Ministry of Education (MoE, 1998). Evidence from the three woredas seems

to confirm this policy argument. The headmasters and WEOs attributed the improvement in girls' education to changes brought by community participation like change in parental and society attitude, and establishment of different associations of women that promote girls' education. At present, the local government and women associations has been shaping parental and social factors that endangered girls' education in collaboration with the community. In schools different institutions are established to strengthen girls in their education, to safeguard them from abuse by boys or male teachers. According to the headmasters, in the three participant schools, Female Clubs and guidance service are established for helping girls. The schools provide awards to outstanding female students. Community corresponding to the schools participates in safeguarding of girls and in reporting conditions that affect girls' education.

Female Club is a legally organized forum of female teachers and students in a school. The club organizes various discussions and debates with the community at least four times in an academic year. Official reports indicate that the club had organized debate and discussion on topics like should boys or girls be sent to school, is girl's education important, how can girls' academic performance be improved, girls have the right to education and others in all schools.

There was an improvement in girls' education after the execution of the ESDP. In HGWZ, from 1994/95 to 2008/09, girls' enrollment had increased from less than 14,000 to more than 70,000 (Appendix K). At the regional level, from 1998/99 to 2007/08, GER of girls in primary school had increased from 30% to 92% and the NER had increased from 27% to 79% (Appendix J). Nonetheless, the gender gap is still higher and found to be 17% in 2008/09 (Appendix J).

5.6.4. Promotion of sense of community ownership

Decentralization of education is supposed to increase participation in education that in turn is supposed to increase a sense of community ownership. A sense of community ownership develops more easily where the community involves itself in the management and financing of schools than where schools are physically and functionally separate from the community (Watt, 2001). This was evident from trends in community participation in the three schools visited.

According to the headmasters, community participation in schools seems to have lead to gradual change of sense of community ownership. Headmaster 'A' explained: "As long as

three to four years, communities were perceiving schools as government or teachers' belongings. At present, I can say that the community view has been changed". Likewise, the majority of the focus group participants had expressed their views with words or phrases that point's promotion of sense of community ownership. A participant in focus group 'A' reflected his view representing many other parents saying: "Community perceives schools as its own property, they say it is our property; they know that it is our common good". In focus group 'B' an ex-PTA member added similar reflection saying, "… the school belongs to us [the community], and so we [community] have to participate in all is matters".

Moreover, while the focus group, community members were found using possessive pronouns and phrases. They used *"our school"*, *"the school belongs to us"*, *"… to improve my …"*, *"… to improve our child education"* and *"to improve our school"* when they were asked why they support school. The future plan of community was another indicator of emergence of sense of community ownership. At focus group 'B' a participant told:

> In the future we [community] have a plan to develop our school more than the present. We will participate with whatever we have. … The school is our property; it is the place where our children are learning...

Correspondingly, headmaster 'B' replied to the question "How do the communities view their participation in the school?" saying, "The community perceives school as their own property; no one claims schools as something that belongs to the government or teachers".

5.6.5. Improvement of student discipline

Another outcome of community participation in education is improvement in student disciplinary problems. Student strikes and protests were frequent phenomena in schools found in HGWZ. These were sometimes part of an illegal political movement by students and they were very severe. Sometimes the disciplinary problems were initiated due to conditions that were internal to a school such as disputes between students and teachers, or students and students. And schools were closed for days or weeks.

At present, however, the establishment of KETB and parents involvement in control and follow-up of students were said to have improved disciplinary problems in schools. There are local codes of conduct enacted for school level disciplinary problems. According to the law,

regardless of other external penalties[6] a student could be deprived his/her study right for about two years. Parents have the obligation to provide follow-up and to monitor their sons and daughters activity and make them concentrate on their studies,[7] otherwise the parents could be held responsible for their children's action. The next quote, view of school 'A' guard whom I contacted during the fieldwork, more elaborates the present status of disciplinary conditions in schools:

> I was community employed school guard for three years [2004 to 2007]. During the first years of my work [2004/05], there were student strikes. There were disputes between students'. But now [2008/09], students are studying peacefully.

In school 'C', disciplinary cases go through a complex legal process. In the school a student who violates school discipline is deprived of his/her study right for two years and would return to school provided that the kebelle administration confirms that the student had been in a good state of behavior. A teacher whose behavior is below the required level of conduct is fired from his/her teaching post and could be deprived his employment right in any government institution for certain years depending on the degree of the case.

5.7. Challenges to community participation in education

The previous sections have discussed how community participation has affected local educational development. As it has been discussed in chapter two, the outcomes of decentralization are both tantalizing and at the same time conflicting. The present study has investigated some challenges. The next section discusses the challenges that are expected to affect the implementation of decentralization and active community participation in education.

5.7.1. Economic challenge: stability and sustainability of community support

The major sources of funding for schools in the three target woredas comes from the government and community. The funds that are obtained from both sources need to be adequate for schools to be effective. However, this was a big challenge for three of the

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[6] Students who are claimed with disciplinary problems or claimed who have participated in disciplinary problems could be deprived their study right and they may also be charged with imprisonment.
[7] In one of the school, parents have given their consent and are made to sign a legal agreement to keep their children away from disciplinary problems. It was said that such legal agreements are available in other schools. According to the legal agreement, parents are charged with the duty to correct their child behavior unless they will take the responsibility or the child could be taken to the law.

schools. The block grant fund for schools was reportedly inadequate for the operations of the schools. The evidence collected from the three focus groups revealed that communities have interests in supporting schools. However, they fail to contribute as much as they wanted because of fluctuation in their income and poverty in the community. The following quotes taken from focus groups 'A' and 'C' elaborates this condition more:

> I have interest to contribute. But the number of my family and my wealth are not matching. Therefore, it is difficult for me to contribute at least the smallest amount of contribution that everyone is expected to contribute...

> We [community] have great interest and motivation to contribute for the school. But we have financial problems; most of us are poor farmers; what we produce is not adequate for our needs.

Large family size, lack of enough farmland, instability in harvest and soaring market price for agricultural inputs (fertilizer and selected seeds) were commonly mentioned reasons for eroding community income and then causing financial insecurity for households. The headmasters and WEOs reported poverty in the community to be the single most challenge that would affect the stability and sustainability of community support. According to headmaster 'B':

> Parents' livelihood depends on farming. [But] parents in this kebelle do not have enough farmland to produce for their family needs. [Therefore] they have limited economic capacity to support the school where their children attend. Thus, I do not think communities would provide all what this school need (*emphasis added*).

The devolution of financial responsibility and the block grant system was intended to increase school autonomy, to decrease dependency on government funding and to create a sustainable source of funding which then enables schools to prepare effective short-term and long-term school development plans (BBO, 2006). Institutions are said to be autonomous when they receive their own financial and other essential resources and decide over its use according to their needs and priorities. And will be able to prepare long-term plan when they have stable and sustainable source of funding (*Ibid*). According to interview with WEO 'A' these attributes of autonomy are lacking. School plans are prepared depending on regional education plan that comes from the woreda, in a top-down manner. The schools have no stable and sustainable source of internal revenue. In three of the woredas the block grant fund is inadequate to run all school operations. It is supposed that the shortfall be subsidized

through community support; however, the adequacy of community support itself is questionable.

5.7.2. Quality and quantity of school resources

The availability of adequate resources at the local level is vital for the success of educational decentralization (Welsh & McGinn, 1999). If the local groups, in this context schools, have no adequate material and human resources, they will probably fail to achieve their intended goals. Where schools have no adequate infrastructure, enrollees could be sent home or they will be overcrowded in the existing facilities. In schools where teachers are not available to the required number or level of qualification, students will fail to get the required knowledge and skill. These conditions deteriorate the quality of education.

In two of the three schools it was reported that though more classrooms have been constructed and more teachers had been deployed every year, the schools lack adequate classrooms and teachers. Headmasters 'A' and 'B' respectively commented these problems as:

> The newly opened high school grades have shared classrooms and offices. Then, the primary school was left with older ones. The old classrooms are full of holes and broken windows and short of tables and chairs. The community has tried their best to fill the shortfall. Yet, many are unfulfilled …

> I do not believe community will solve all school problems. Still classes are overcrowded. There is shortage of rooms for resource centers and offices. The library is not stocked with the required reference book.

Sub-standard community buildings and constructions are common feature of schools visited and of other schools located in rural parts. Headmaster 'A' commented the standard of community works as follow:

> A chair made today will be out of use the next day. A classroom built this year need maintenance the next year. As you will see when you go out, the school fence that was constructed in September [of 2008] is now [July, 2009] falling down.

In three of the schools the existing classrooms, offices and resource centers are older and new ones are poorly constructed with inadequate inputs. The libraries have to small space and are

stocked with few reference books. In school 'A', a 'Plasma TV'[8] that was installed two years ago in the secondary school classrooms had not started service when the fieldwork was conducted. Lack of and/or the disruption of electric power was the main challenge for office work and communication for schools, woredas and zonal offices.

I had witnessed five additional primary schools on my way to conduct interview with headmasters during the fieldwork. Four of the schools were constructed with materials from the surroundings and were sub-standard constructions that do not have enough chairs. Most of the classes I had observed had at most one table located near the blackboard, probably for the teacher. Many broken chairs are observed at the back of the classrooms. As headmaster 'B' had explained the long-term use of the classrooms and other inputs were not taken into account when they were constructed and the insufficient resources have forced them to construct low quality classes and offices. But it is imperative to look at the present and the future picture of the construction (Bray, 2001). On the other hand, school 'C' get support from an alumni living abroad; consequently, the school has relatively standard infrastructures.

Moreover, three of the schools have no enough teachers. It was reported that many of the schools have no enough teachers and the woredas have no enough budget to deploy enough teachers. The headmasters of the schools and some participants were worried about whether their children are getting the basic knowledge or not. These problems are common in other schools. Official documents from zonal office and other studies in Ethiopia (Ayele, 2009; Garcia & Rajkumar, 2008; Tadesse, 2007) state the shortage necessary infrastructure and resource at the local level as critical challenges of the implementation of the decentralization policy.

5.7.3. Competency and performance of PTAs and KETBs

Another essential for the success of decentralization is filling the local institutions with the right person who could be able to lead and administer the institutions effectively (Rondinelli & Cheema, 1983; Welsh & McGinn, 1999). But if this is not available at the local, providing training is the major option for building the capacity of the local actors and improving their performance. Unless this fundamental is available, as Welsh and McGinn (1999, p. 66)

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[8] Plasma TV - is a television for a centrally broadcasted television to assist teachers in instructional delivery in selected subjects at high school level.

asserted there is no advantage gained from making decisions closer to where an action takes place. The competence of PTAs and KETBs in this regards is questionable.

The PTA and KETB seem to be ineffective. An official report states, PTA and KETB are incompetent and dependent on teacher members and on the WEO to perform their duties and responsibilities. Two reasons can be stated for this problem. First, the guideline for organization of PTA and KETB does not mention anything about the qualification of these bodies. And educational level, experience or related qualities were not given much consideration, neither during PTA elections nor during KETB nominations. According to headmaster 'B', "educational level is not this much worth because there are teachers in the PTA; what matters is commitment and interest of individuals to work for the school". The headmaster explained individuals who are competent and have interest to serve as a PTA, are seldom available.

Second, though appropriate persons for the positions are not available, the PTA and KETB performance can be improved through training but this was impossible for the woredas. This was evident in the views of headmaster 'C':

> We [the school] need the government [WEO], to work with the school and community. We need technical and financial support from them, but they pass orders and guidelines downwards instead of coming down and working with us.

In addition, a kebelle administrator, the KETB Chairman, is responsible for running the day-to-day economic and social activities of a kebelle. Consequently, the administrator could be overloaded with work from different activities. This is true for the other members of the board who have other main posts for which they dedicate their time. As a WEO 'A' had explained, kebelle administrators' workloads had weakened community involvement in schools and created delays in approval of PTA decision and actions. Other studies conducted in Ethiopia note lack of trained man power to be a critical problem for the implementation of the local governance policy (Ayele, 2009; Garcia & Rajkumar, 2008; Tadesse, 2007).

5.7.4. Out-of-school children: Challenges to EFA

One of the rationales of encouraging community participation in education and organization of KETB is to promote enrollment and address the EFA goal. But this is questionable as there are many out-of- school children in the target area of this study. This tends to challenge addressing the EFA goal.

Communities in the target area of this study are mainly dependent on farming and expect their child to work in the farm. This is considered to be normal practice among the households. At focus group 'B' a parent reflected many people views saying: "We are farmers. Therefore, we give emphasis on those activities that give results in a short time like farming rather than making our child focus on their education." Nonetheless, there were parents whose views deviate by far from those of the average parents. In the focus group, it was reported that some parents have wrong conception about late age enrollment and consequently the parents encourage their teen-age daughters and sons to help in the household or to prepare themselves for marriage rather than sending them to schools. Moreover, it is possible to observe out of school children in families that are capable to educating their child compared to other families that are educating their child in the area.

Household poverty is another factor for out of school children. In three of the woredas it was reported that poor parents who have many children enroll some of them and while those parents in absolute poverty rent their children for other households to generate income in return. It is said that child renting practice is common in most rural parts of the country mainly among landless poor households and drought victim communities who have been resettled in the zone. At regional level there were large proportion of school aged out-of-school children which accounts to 21% of girls and 11% of boys in the academic year 2007/08 (Appendix J). A studies conducted in Ethiopia by Garcia and Rajkumar (2008) shows more than 4 million children were not served by any schools and many other children who have access to school were out of school for many other reasons. UNESCO (2009) also projects that by the dawn of 2015 more than 1million children to be out of school in Ethiopia.

Evidence collected for this study pointed out some factors that left some children to be out of school. First, KETB were not succeeded in creating community awareness concerning enrollment, and bringing out-of-school children to school. Second, there is no support for children from poor families. Third, according to WEO 'C' and as widely said among the educated people, civil organization that assists in development activities, including education, were not directed to the zone due to political and economic reasons. Nonetheless, during the fieldwork for this study, an NGO called World Vision was conducting preliminary needs assessment in Jimma Ganatti Woreda.

5.7.5. Repetitive participation

Frequent participation is another potential challenge found to affect community participation. It was understood from the focus group participants that schools frequently ask for community support on school-community gatherings. Frequent participation likely make the community less enthusiastic about supporting the school and cause to dislike to attend school gatherings (Baganda, 2008). Headmasters 'B' told: "Now some peoples I know are not enthusiastic like in the past two to three years. … Frequent contribution, participation and dependency of this school on community support for a long time are making the community less enthusiastic". Headmaster 'A' commented "some community members are demonstrating disinterest for paying contributions". The schools, however, need support from parents, especially at the beginning of an academic year. Because, as headmaster 'A' revealed "the number of enrollment to first grade is increasing each year. So, there must be additional classes. To enroll these children, parents shall build additional classrooms; otherwise we [the school] cannot accommodate all children who come to school". Likewise, the poor quality of community construction increases the number of times schools need community support.

Too frequent participation, in addition to the economic challenge, tends to aggravate the frequency of community support for school. Though the headmasters were reporting that community participation is increasing, still the support schools obtained from the community is not sufficient to meet school financial needs. Thus, the headmasters were questioning how far community support would bring changes in the school.

5.7.6. Community awareness

One of the rationales of educational decentralization is to empower local community, and encourage their participation in school decision and consequently to improve educational quality, efficiency and effectiveness (Welsh & McGinn, 1999). This is because under decentralization accountability will not improve unless the parents and other community members are pulled in to the system (Garcia & Rajkumar, 2008, p. 76). This more likely happen when local communities are aware of and concerned about the importance of their participation in local development activity, consider how to enhance their ability and take actions (Saito & Kato, 2008). Community awareness and empowerment are essentials if communities are deemed to solve their problems by themselves (*Ibid*). However, according to evidence from the participants, community awareness was low and again dissimilar.

According to community members, headmasters and education officers those who are well informed and concerned are small part of the community. At focus group 'C', a community member said: "All community members have no the same level of understanding of the importance of our participation. I know that people who have never participated in school work". Corresponding to school 'B', as the headmaster explained, the level of community awareness and participation changes as one goes away from the school. Likewise, as a community member participated in a focus group held corresponding to school 'A' has reflected: "People raise good points [about community participation], but they criticize the absence of strong body that could coordinate and bring them [the community] together and make them [the community] do the work". Consequently, some of the focus group participants call for more coordination and awareness creation.

5.7.7. Collaboration of local actors and sectors

Collaboration of actors and sectors is one of the characteristics of successful decentralization reforms (Dunne et al., 2007; Shaffer, 1994; Saito & Kato, 2008). In this context, it involves collaboration of the education sector with other sectors and collaboration of the government with civil society and civil organizations. This essential was true in the rhetoric; however, it was found to be weak based on the participants' perspectives. At focus groups 'A' & 'B', community members were reflecting signals that indicate absence of strong coordinating body and unity while headmasters 'A' and 'C' explained that woreda education offices often send orders down ward rather than going to the community. According to the WEOs the interrelationship and cooperation between the education sector and the other sectors are almost absent. The officers, however, admit the importance of collaboration of actors and sectors not only for the development of education sector but also for the other social service sectors.

5.7.8. Equity challenge

Equity problem is another challenge that could happen in the implementation of decentralization of education. Difference in the level of resource endowment is a common cause of inequality. In HGWZ, however, local resource endowment is not the main problem because the zone is reported to have a comparatively uniform resource endowment and schools are said to have similar source of funding. The inequality was said to be caused by difference in commitment and strength of KETB. The WEO stated that: "Where kebelle administrators are committed enough and strong, the community has built classes for high

school grades and constructed new primary schools while in kebelles where the administrators are weak, the kebelles still have one primary school".

The government incentive system is another cause of disparity of outcomes among schools and/or Kebelles. The woreda give awards, also called additional budget, for those schools that achieved best results in order to create constructive rivalry, and to distinguish the best performing schools from the less performing ones. Consequently, areas that have strong and committed enough local management bodies are getting the incentives and are stepping further away from the weak ones.

5.8. Summary

This chapter has discussed community participation in primary education in Abay Cooman, Horro and Jimma Gannati Woredas of Horro Gudurru Wollega Zone, Ethiopia. The chapter has discussed the forms, and successes and challenges of community participation in education. The analysis and discussion revealed that community participates in management and finance of schools, teachers and student support and promoting enrollment of children more than others. This has contributed to school performance through improving school infrastructure, enrollment, student discipline and sense of community ownerships. However, economic, management and awareness problems are found to be potential challenges for active participation of community and the realization of potential outcomes.

Chapter Six: Summary and Conclusion

6.1. Summary and conclusion

This study explored decentralization and community participation in primary education in Abay Cooman, Horro and Jimma Gannati Woredas in Horro Gudurru Wollaga Zone of Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia. Specifically, the study investigated how communities participated in schools and examined the successes and the challenges in the implementation process.

The study was guided by the decentralization theory and existing literatures in the field of community participation in education. Decentralization of education was discussed under the principle of subsidiary. The discussion has been made under four forms (deconcentration, delegation, devolution and privatization) and three dimensions (fiscal, administrative and political decentralization). It was argued that promoting community participation requires devolution of fiscal, administrative and political functions to the local level. And transformation to effective local participation necessitates collaboration and partnership with different actors in development; the encouragement of new norms, creation of new mechanisms and strategies; and developing new knowledge, skill and attitude.

The study was undertaken based upon qualitative research approach for data collection, presentation, analysis and discussion. The field work was conducted in July and August 2009 and from March 18 – 28, 2010. Data were collected using focus group interview, qualitative interview, documents and field observation. This involved 24 informants – 3 WEOs, 3 headmasters, 3 KETB chairmen, 2 PTA members and 13 community members. The data from these sources were corroborated with views of people from different grounds contacted incidentally in an informal manner. The data were, then, categorized into forms, effects and challenges of community participation to address the research questions.

The study portrayed improvement in community participation in primary education. In the three woredas, per household financial contributions were collected from all households for school construction, rehabilitation and to complement shortfalls in non-salary recurrent expenditure funded by the government. Households also contribute material and labor for school works. Poor households were exempted from financial contribution and made to provide materials inputs from the surrounding. Communities are supposed to determine the amount of voluntarily per household contributions made according to economic capacity of

households. Nevertheless, the local governments are influential in determining the amount of per household financial contribution and use force in its collection. In the target areas of the study, during the year 2008/09, the minimum amount of per household financial contribution was three times government per student funding for the first cycle primary education or two times in that of the second cycle primary education.

Kebelles in the three woredas has a KETB, legally nominated based on political consideration and loyalty to government, to oversee all schools under the kebelle constituency. Each school has a PTA, elected community members that is accountable to parents and teachers assembly, to lead and administer a school. The PTA participates in identification of school problems planning, implementation, management and evaluation whereas the KETB coordinate and organize community for school works; create awareness to promote enrollment of children and community participation in education. These groups are supposed to equally perform their function; nonetheless, they emphasized more on mobilizing community support for schools than their other functions. The PTA and KETB have limited decision-making power pertaining to performance of teachers and headmasters. There is lack of transparency concerning how school use community contributions.

The study has investigated encouraging results after the launching of decentralization of education and community participation. Access to and equity in education has improved. In HGWZ, during 1998/99 to 2008/09, the number of schools increased from 79 to 259. At the regional level, during the period 1998/99 to 2007/08 GER increased from 42% to 92% and the NER increased from 38% to 84%. Within the same period, GER of girls in primary schools increased from 30% to 92% and the NER increased from 29% to 79%. Moreover, it has improved sense of community ownership and student disciplinary problems.

Despite the encouraging outcomes, this study investigated challenges that affect active community participation. Poverty and fluctuation in income were the major challenges for community capacity to support schools. This placed the adequacy, consistency and sustainability of community support under question yet community support is a must for schools to cater increase in enrollment. On the other hand, community school constructions and other infrastructures such as chairs and classrooms were intended to quickly fix problems at hand and hence lack quality. Government funding is inadequate and schools internal revenues are also small.

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The PTA and KETB lack basic knowledge and experience to carry out their functions independently. To worst, building their capacity was not likely to happen due to the budget shortage. On top of these problems, the KETB were not succeeded in creating awareness. There is fragmentation in participation and as a result only small segment of the community, particularly, those closer to school were said to be concerned and participated. There are school-aged out of school children because of child renting and for other unknown reasons. Difference in performance of KETB and government incentive for best-performing schools is increasing equity gap among best and low performing localities. Another shortcoming of the decentralization policy was weak relationship between educational actors and lack of relationship with other social sectors.

Generally, community participation in education is characterized by high emphasis in school financing, less emphasis in school management and almost none in steps to improve the quality of education. Thus, the decentralization of education can be referred as the devolution of financial responsibility to the community and a tool for lessening state responsibility for provision of education. Moreover, the lack of the necessary resource and trained manpower at the local level challenges the promotion of active community participation and consequently the local educational development.

6.2. Recommendation

The following recommendations are forwarded depending on the findings of the study:

1. Community awareness and empowerment: the importance of promoting community awareness, strengthening community-school relationship and surrendering local decision-making power to the community.

2. Building local capacity: the importance of strengthening the competency of the existing school management committees and local educational administrators as well as recruiting adequate financial and human resource.

3. Collaboration and cooperation: this involves strengthening cooperation with educational actors and establishing collaboration with the other social service sectors, NGOs, individuals, institutions and philanthropic bodies.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Community support for schools in three woredas of HGWZ

Contribution	Woreda			Total (Eth. Birr)
	Horroo	Abay Cooman	Jimma Ganatti	
Cash	302,268	415,620	154,711	872,599
Material	91,666	69,231	67,054	227,952
Labor	314,028	193,017	78,211	585,257
Total	707,963	677,870	299,976	1,658,809

NB: This data is compiled based 2008/09 data obtained from the woredas education offices

Appendix B: Community contributions in Oromia region

Year	Money contribution	Raw material provision (estimated)	Service provision (estimated)	Total
2003/04	16,700,000	13,572,947	16,282,944	46,557,887
2004/05	46,648,642	17,010,400	32,186,460	95,845,502
2005/06	28,076,874	13,130,510	18,816,803	60,024,187
2006/07	40,428,718	34,188,753	20,185,951	94,803,422

Source: Nasise Chali (2010, p. 99)

Appendix C: Community support in construction of teacher houses

Community Work	Abay Cooman Woreda		Horroo Woreda		Jimma Ganatti Woreda		TOTAL	
	Quantity	Value in money	Quantity	Value in Money	Quantity	Value in Money	Quantity	Value in Money
Newly built houses	5	1,205	20	25,336	26	42,936	51	69,477
Maintenance for old houses	8	3380	12	4,527	----	----	20	7,907
Kitchen Built	1	470	----	----	----	----	1	470
Total		5,055		29,863		42,936		77,854

NB: This data is compiled based on 2008/09 data obtained from Oromia Regional statistics and information bureau

Appendix D: Community works in education in Oromia region

Year	New schools	Additional Classrooms	Student seats	Teacher housing	Lavatory constructions	Teacher salary
2003/04	458	2186	1915	26697	32675	1326
2004/05	392	6870	23224	94215	43724	3212
2005/06	884	5130	4045	96346	44131	2819
2006/07	213	3516	11,442	32769	43874	2854

Source: Nasise Chali (2010, p. 98)

Appendix E: Contributions on school bazaars in Horro Woreda schools.

School	Local community mobilized			Resources mobilized (Donation in Birr)*
	Male	Female	Total	
Diddibbee	1983	986	2,968	36,626
Dachaa Caabir	834	391	1,225	17,246
Diggaa Akaaloo	837	459	1,296	21,000
Daaddoo Siree Budoo	1,347	617	1,964	98,376
Daraartuu Baaqelaa	583	219	802	23,236
Haroo Shooxee***	_	_	_	115,000
Ashaayyaa Sholokoo	791	428	1,219	29,700
Harroo Aagaa	1,843	781	2,624	51,347
Total	6,547	3,490	10,037	335,905

NB: This data is compiled based on 2008/09 data obtained from Horro Woreda Education Office.
　* The column is a sum of in cash and in-kind donations (cows, ships, goats, grain, horse, donkey, birds etc.) donations their value estimated based on their price at the local market.
　** Number of household heads participated on the bazaar is missing

Appendix F: Contributions on Parent-School Days in Horro Woreda Schools

	School	Participants			Contributions as estimated in monetary Value*
		Male	Female	Total	
1	Abuunaa	846	491	1337	18239
2	Wandoo	734	312	1046	7514
3	Saqalaa	1742	681	2423	27000
4	Haroo Suphee	814	329	1143	12210
5	Biqiltuu Boonaa	236	84	320	3500
6	Gabaar Iggum	273	94	367	3127
7	Caabir Gabar	374	184	556	3948
8	Laaloo	316	78	394	6096
9	Baqqalee	713	214	947	13814
10	Gitiloo Naajoo	763	436	1202	27008
11	Rifeentii Caabir	316	98	414	7167
12	Igguu Abbaay	327	92	419	2318
13	Guddina Abuunaa	573	248	821	5417
14	Odaa Bulluq	431	127	558	3974
Total		8,458	3,468	11,926	141,332

NB: This data is compiled based on 2008/09 data obtained from Horro Woreda Education office.
　*The column is a sum of in cash and in-kind (cows, ships, goats, grain, horse, donkey, birds etc.) donations estimated at a monetary value depending on their price at the local market.

Appendix G: Targeted and actual outcomes of community work

Community work	Abay Cooman Woreda			Horro Woreda		
	Targeted	Achieved	Over achievement	Targeted	Achieved	Over achievement
New classrooms	14	36	175%	27	30	11.1%
New chairs	130	336	176%	365	387	6%
School compound	800m	2023m	52%	6000m	6000m	0%
Toilet	1	2	100%	6	6	0%
Teachers' house	5	5	0%	18	20	11.1%
Cash contribution	50,000	59,422	18.84%	235,871	302,268	28.7%

NB: This data is compiled based 2008/09 data obtained from the woredas education offices

Appendix H: Community work in schools

Community Work	Abay Cooman Woreda		Horroo Woreda		Jimma Ganatti Woreda		Total	
	Qnt.	Cost	Qnt.	Cost	Qnt.	Cost	Qnt.	Cost
Classroom constructed	36	271,840	27	288,478	24	67,670	87	627,988
Classrooms rehabilitated	22	11,070	30	18,547	46	18,624	98	48,241
Chairs	363	128,813	387	13,267	264	20,666	1,014	162,746
Tables	471	115,790	235	22,586	245	2,996	951	141,372
Rest houses	2	5,808	6	23,670	7	1,528	15	31,006
New school fence*	2023	7,950	6000	1,637	151	4,706	8,174	14,293
Repaired school fence*	2445m	10,558	16800	10,700	15,788	23,984	35,033	45,242
Total		279,989		378,886		140,174		1,070,889

NB: This data is compiled based on 2008/09 data obtained from education offices of the three woreda.
  * Quantities are measured in meters of fence (school compound) constructed.
  Qnt. = Quantity;   m = meter

Appendix I: Primary schools expansion in HGWZ

Woreda	Number of primary schools	
	1998/99	**2008/09**
Abay Cooman	11	29
Abe Doongoro	13	32
Amuru	12	36
Guduru	19	27
Harro Shooxee	-	27
H/Gudurru	-	34
J/jartee	9	30
J /gannati	7	21
J/rarree	8	23
Total	79	259

NB: This data is compiled based on the information obtained from Oromia Regional statistics and information bureau

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Appendix J: Primary school enrollment features in Oromia region

Year	Gross Enrollment			Gross Enrollment Rate			Net Enrollment Rate			Gender Gap
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
1998/99	1338230	659465	1997695	60	30	45	49	27	33	24
1899/00	1530614	810581	2341195	67	36	52	55	32	44	30
2000/01	1703847	9581090	2661966	73	41	57	60	38	49	30
2001/02	1860236	1086554	2946790	77	46	62	66	41	53	31
2002/03	2026659	1228848	3255507	82	51	67	64	45	56	31
2003/04	2211566	1461845	3673411	86	58	72	81	52	61	28.4
2004/05	2794950	2090067	4885017	105	80	92	69	66	74	25
2005/06	2929829	2281925	5211754	105	84	95	82	70	76	21
2006/07	2930193	2329115	5259308	106	85	97	83	72	77	15.2
2007/08	3145687	2613435	5759122	110	92	101	89	79	84	17.4

Source: Naise Chali (2010, p. 84 - 86)

Appendix K: Enrolment of boys and girls in HGWZ

	1998/99		2001/02		2003/04		2004/05		2006/07		2008/09	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Abay Cooman	3750	3240	4440	4308	4078	3999	5119	5275	5770	6020	5940	6243
Abe Doongoro	2520	1302	3604	1613	2185	2270	5976	4118	6296	4608	6179	5195
Amuru	2226	1614	2785	2448	4643	4338	5446	5025	6421	5793	6234	5973
H//Guduruu	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5034	4896	9946	10759
Guduru	6872	2246	1040	5899	11344	9414	9621	9259	8641	8988	5466	5765
Horro	4444	2538	6341	4220	8771	8323	9621	9259	8573	8190	8791	5519
J/jartee	1079	514	1731	1215	4503	3682	4920	4445	5436	5247	6280	5932
J gannati	4099	2328	4842	3423	5111	4475	5193	4840	6152	6317	6372	6992
Jimma Raaree	960	276	1552	589	4161	3921	4769	4519	5415	5774	5750	6578
M/Shamboo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2191	2321	2005	11135
Total	25950	14058	35755	23715	44796	40422	50665	46740	59929	58154	62963	70091

NB: This data is compiled based on the information obtained from Oromia Regional statistics and information bureau

Appendix L: Dropouts in HGWZ

Woredas	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
Abay Cooman	729	196	643	445	538
Abe Doongoro	109	85	403	90	100
Amuru	486	315	466	274	388
Hababoo Guduruu	-	-	-	109	97
Guduru	630	626	933	424	581
Horro	687	353	557	242	348
J/jartee	185	184	414	150	225
J gannati	324	550	590	149	596
Jimma Raaree	2008	172	651	1117	127
Magaala Shamboo	0	0	152	175	285
Total	7154	4478	6807	5174	5285

NB: This data is compiled based on the information obtained from Oromia Regional statistics and information bureau

Appendix M: Interview guides

Interview Guide for Woreda Education office (English)

       Sex: _____

       Stay in the office: _____

       General Question: What does the practice of education decentralization and community participation in education in the woreda looks?

1. In this woreda, what constitute communities participation in education in any of the following?

       a. Management of education,
       b. Development of schools
       c. Teaching
       d. Learning?

2. In this woreda, to what extent is educational decentralization which meant that parents' take part in how the school be run?
3. What is the role of your office for the management of schools?
4. How does your office coordinate community participation at school level?
5. Where do schools get their sources of funds: government, community, aid agencies and/or NGO?
6. How and for what purpose do communities make contributions to their schools?
7. Who determine the forms and amount of contribution?
8. Are there any problems that have happened as a result of parental financial contributions made to schools?
9. How does the woreda education office notice these consequences?
10. What advantages have been achieved so far as a result of community participation in education?
11. Are there problems in participation encountered by the community?
12. Are there differences between different kebeles or community in their level of participation?
13. What factors do you think enhances community participation in primary education?
14. What factors do you think hinders community participation in primary education?
15. What should be done to maintain the successes?
16. What should be done to overcome barriers?
17. Do you have anything you want to add to things we talked so far?

Thank you for your participation.

Interview Guide for Woreda Education office (Afaan Oromoo)

Aanaa: _____

Gaaffii Waliigalaa: Aanaa kana keessatti 'decentralization' barnootaa fi hirmaannaan uummataa maal fakkaata?

1. Aanaa kana keessatti, kanneen armaan gadii irratti hirmannaan uummataa maal maal ofi keessatti qabata?

    a. Gaggeessummaa barnootaa (management of education)
    b. Guddina mana barnootaa (development of education)
    c. Baruu fi Barsiisuu (teaching and learning)

2. 'Decentralization' barnootaa aanaa kanatti hangam uummataa adeemisa mana barnootaa keessatti hirmaachisa?

3. Waajjirri keessan gaggeessummaa mana barnootaa keessatti haala (bifa) akkamiin hirmaata?

4. Waajjirri keessan hirmaannaa uummataa sadarkaa mana barumsaatti haala akkamiin gurmeessa?

5. Manneen barnootaa madda fandii isaan eessa argatu:- mootummaa irraa, uummataa irraa, walidaa gargaarsaa moo miti-mootummaa irraatti?

6. Uummannii akkamittiinii fi maaliif (form and purpose) mana barumisaa isaaf gargaarsa godha?

7. Eenyutu akkaataa fi hirmaannaa uummataa murteessa?

8. Qarshii uummannii mana barnootaaf buusu waliin waaliqabatee rakkinnii umamu ni jira? Yoo jiraate maal?

9. Waajjirri keessan rakkina umamu ykn umamuu danda'u akkamitti ilaala ykn hubata?

10. Hanga yoonatti hirmannaa uummanni barumisa irratti qabu irraa bu'aan argame maal fakkaata?

11. Rakkinni isaan yookiin hirmaannaa isaanii irratti isaan mudate hoo ni jira? Yoo jiraateef maaliif sitti fakkaata?

12. Haal hirmaannaan uummataa gandaa gaandatti garaa gartummaa ni qaba?

13. Maaltu hirmaanaa uummanni mana barnootaa sadarkaa tokkoffaaf godhuu sadarkaa ammaa irra jiruu olitti fooyyessa jettee yaadda?

14. Hirmaannaa uummanni mana barnootaa sadarkaa tokkoffaa irratii qabu maal maalittu ni xiqeessa jettee yaadda?

15. Hirmaannaa uummataa sadarkaa amma jiru irra akka hin buunee maltu godhamuu qaba?

16. Rakkoolee hirmaannaa uummataa keessatti sin mudatan mo'achuudhaaf maaltu godhamuu qaba?

17. Waan hanga ammaa haasonee ala waanti itti dabaltaan ni jiraa?

Hirmaannaa keessaiif galatoomaa!

Interview guide for PTA/school director (English)

Number of PTA members: ……….. No. Male: ………… No. Female: …………..

Experience in PTA membership/office: ---------------------------------------

What is the general trend of community participation in your school look likes?

1. What means community participation in your school?

2. Who participates?

3. To what extent is decision-making decentralized at your school?

4. Do community or PTA members participate in any of the following?

    a. Education management,

    b. Development of schools and

    c. Teaching

    d. Learning

5. Who appoints or elects the PTA members for school management position? What criteria should be fulfilled to be elected?

6. What are the functions of PTA?

7. What channels do schools use to communicate decisions, create awareness, motivate and convince the community for participation?

8. How does the community see participation in education?

9. Is there any form of resistance from the parts of community for participation in education?

10. What do teachers think of the involvement of community members in the school governance?

11. What successes are so far achieved as a result of community participation in the school?

12. Are there challenges that you have encountered?

13. Are there certain kinds of community members who participate more? Who?

14. Are there certain kinds who participate much less? Who?

15. What is your view of the economic capacity of the community in financing schools?

16. What has been done to solve problems related to community participation in education?

17. Do you have any suggestions/ recommendations?

Thank you for your participation.

Interview guide for PTA/school director (Afaan Oromoo)

Lakk. GM-B. _____ Lakk. Dhi. _____ lakk. Dha._____

GM-B keessa hangaan turtaan? _____
Walumaa galatti hirmaaannaan uummataa mana barumsaa keessan keessatti maal fakkaata?

1. Hirmaannaa uummataa jechuun akkaata mana baumsaa keessanitti maal jechuudha?
2. Eenyutu hirmataa?
3. Angoon murtii murteesummaan isaa hangaam gadi bu'ee (decentralized) jira?
4. Uummannii ykn GM-B kaneen armaan gadii keessatti ni bifa hirmaatuu?
    a. Gaggeessummaa barnootaa
    b. Guddina mana barnootaa
    c. Baruu fi Barsiisuu
5. Gagessummaa mana barumisaaf eenyutu kore mana barumisaa fila? Filatamuuf filatamitoonni maal-maal guutuu qabu?
6. GM-B hojiin isaanii maalii?
7. Manni barumisaa kun murtee murtaa'e dabarsuuf, hubannaa uumuuf, uummataa kakasuuf daandii fi mala akkamii fayadamaa jira?
8. Hirmaannaa godhuuf uummanii ilaalcha akkamii qaba?
9. Hirmaannaa gama uummataan mana barumsaa keessatti godhaamu irratti diddaan (resistance) godhamu ni jira?
10. Bulchiinsa mana barumisaa (school governance) keessatti uummannii hirmaachuu isaa barsisonni ilaalcha akkamii qabu?
11. Hirmaannaa uummanni barumsaa irratti godhu irraa kan ka'ee bu'aaleen argaman maal faadha?
12. Rakkooleen mudatan hoo?
13. Uummataa keessaa irra caalaa kan hirmatan ni jiru? Eenyufaadha?
14. Kanneen hirmaannaan isaanii xiqqaa tahee hoo? Garagarumaan kun maaliif ta'e sitti fakkaata?
15. Dandeetti uummannii qarshii mana barumsaaf buusuu qaban akkamitti ilaaltu?
16. Hirmaannaa uummannii mana barumsaaf godhu fana wal kan-qabatee rakkoolee mudataan akkamiti hiiktanii?
17. Kana alatti yaada dabalataa qabdu?

Hirmaannaa keessaniif galatoomaa!

Interview guide for focus group (English)

Number of: Male: _____ Female: _____

Kebelle: _____

1. What means community participation in education?
2. What are the forms of participation in your local school?
3. Have you participated yourself? What have you done?
4. Who else participates?
5. Do you think that your participation has helped your local school? How?
6. Do you think that it has helped your own child's education? How?
7. What do you think of the per student financial contribution to schools?
8. Does it create any problems for parents? What?
9. What makes it difficult for you to participate?
10. How do you view community participation in education?
11. Have you taken part in school gathering or meetings which have influenced decisions for the schools? What kind of meetings? Which decisions were made? How the meeting did influenced what was decided?
12. How do schools communicate with you?
13. What do you think enhances community participation in education?
14. Is there anything you want to say about community participation in primary school?

Thank you for your participation!

Interview guide for focus group (Afaan Oromoo)

Lakk. Dhi.: _____ Dha.: _____

Ganda: _____

1. Akkaataa mana barumsaa keessanittii hirmaannaan uummataa jechuun maal jechuu dha?

2. Haala akkamitiin dhimma mana barumsaa nanno keessanii keessatti hirmatu?

3. Atti hirmatee beekta? Maal goote?

4. Namoonnii biraahoo eenyufatu hirmata?

5. Himaannaan kee sun mana barumisaa nannoo kee san fayadeera jetee yadda? Akkamiiti?

6. Hirmaannaan kee sun barumisaa mucaa kee irratti jijjirama fideera jettee yaadda? Akkamitti?

7. Buusii mallaqa tokko tokkoon baraataaf maatiin buusuuf yaada akkamii qabda?

8. Rakkina matii irratti uumu ni qaba? Maalii? Barataa irratti hoo?

9. Hirmaannaa mana barumisaa keetiif gootuuf maaltu sirakkisa ykn cima?

10. Hirmaannaa uummannii mana barumisaaf godhu irratti ilaalicha akkamii qabda?

11. Walga'ii dhimma mana barumsaa ilaalatu irratti hirmaattee beekta? Walgahii akkamii? Murtee akkamiitu murtaa'e? Gara murtee san ummannii akkamitti dhufuu danda'e?

12. Mannii barumisaa akkamitti siin quunnama?

13. Hirmaannaa uummataa kan yeroo ammaa irra caalaa fooyyeessa jette yaddu maalii?

14. Hirmaannaa uummataa mana barumsaa kan sadarkaa tokkoffaadhaaf godhu irratti yaada dabalataa ni qabdaa?

Hirmaannaa keessaniif galatoomaa!

Appendix O: Cover letters

I am only attaching the introduction prepared by the University of Oslo. The letters addressed to woredas and schools by the Zonal and Woreda Education officers, Ethiopia, are not included on the grounds that they refer to schools and individuals by name, and there is the need to protect the anonymity of the schools and individuals.

UNIVERSITETET I OSLO
DET UTDANNINGSVITENSKAPELIGE FAKULTET

To whom it may concern

Institute for Educational Research
P.O. Box 1092 Blindern
N-0317 Oslo

Date: 2009-06-08
Your ref.:
Our ref.:

Visiting address:
Sem Sælandsvei 7, Helga Eng`s Building, 5nd floor
Telephone: +47 22 84 44 75
Fax: +47 22 85 42 50
www.uv.uio.no

ASSISTANCE IN THE CONDUCTION OF FIELD-WORK

This is to confirm that the Ethiopian student, Obsa Tolesa Daba, born 14.02.81, is a second year student in the Master programme in Comparative and International Education at the Institute for Educational Research at the University of Oslo, Norway.

In the second year our students are required to write a Master thesis of 80 to 110 pages. This thesis should preferably be based on field studies conducted in the student's country of origin. The field-work may incorporate interviews with educational practitioners and decision-makers, class-room observation and documentary analysis. The type of data gathered should of course be discussed with the relevant authorities. It is our hope that the work produced by the student will not only benefit her in her academic career but also be of use to the future of Ethiopia.

We kindly ask you to give Mr. Obsa all possible assistance during his field-work in Ethiopia.

Yours sincerely,

Kristi Barcus
Senior Executive Officer
+47 22 85 53 56

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO
Institute for Educational Research
Box 1092 Blindern
N-0317 OSLO

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The end!