

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

**THE PRACTICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: THE
CASES OF TWO KINDERGARTENS IN OROMIA REGION**

BY:

Adane Kitessa



June, 2008

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**Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies Addis Ababa
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Acronyms and Abbreviations

DAC:	Developmental Appropriate Curriculum
EPRDF:	Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front
ESS:	Educational Sector Strategy
FYWOE:	Family and Youth Welfare Organisation of Ethiopia
ICDR:	Institute of Curriculum Development and Research
KG:	Kindergarten
LKG:	Lower Kindergarten
MOE:	Ministry of Education
MOES:	Ministry of Education and Sport
NAEYC:	National Association for the Education of Young Children
PTA:	Parent Teachers Association
SNNPR:	Southern Nation, Nationalities and People Region
TGE:	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
Three Cs:	Child, Content, and Context
Three Rs:	Reading, Writing and Arithmetic
UKG:	Upper Kindergarten
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Fund.
U.S.A:	United States of America
WEO :	Woreda Education Office

ABSTRACT

This study has six chapters. The first chapter is about the ground of the study. In this the rationales, the significance of the study and the research questions is explained and a general view about the topic is high lighted. In chapter 2, review of related literature about early childhood education is tempted and analysed for theoretical frame work. It includes sub-topic from which the research tools are developed and used.

Chapter 3 is the methodological chapter. It includes evidential bases for the case, tools employed, research design, analysis and ethical issues. In addition the background of the respondents is given on the table. A total of 16 respondents were interviewed from the two kindergartens using audio-recordings.

Chapter 4 and chapter 5 present the description and description of the two cases independently. Different issues are themed and analysed accordingly in the last chapter presents is the conclusion part in which the research questions which emerged and evolved thematically answered, by cross site analysis. The number of findings is listed for each research questions. Finally an implication is forwarded giving some insight.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Education is a life long process and a universal practice of human. Human beings are social animals who can learn and share their experiences. As the developments of societies become complex 'State' social institution assumed the role and responsibility of promoting formal education. In this connection, Dewey (1916:13-14) suggested the need for intentional education of the society and the role of the state towards educating citizens when he said; *"The realization of education destined to produce a new society is after all dependent upon the activities of the state"*. This implies a necessity of education for human development and the responsibility of a social institution, state, to accomplish it by way of organizing an institution called school. One of the functions of the state, therefore, is to guide and realize the education of the society. The state as a social institution must also be responsible for the education of children of the nation. Concerning the importance of early childhood care and education Masslow, Gabrbarino, et al. in MOE & UNICEF (2007:10) described in the following way:

If children at early stage of development are not provided with better nutrition, health care and education, they are deprived of the opportunities to develop as productive citizens and to enjoy better quality of life and eventually contribute to society's growth

Care, nutrition, and health of the child should be accompanied with education to enable the child interact, happy and free in the environment in which he/she lives in. *Progressive pedagogy* of Pestalozzii (who lived between the years 1746 and 1827) changed international views and attitudes about children's education (Norman Brosterman; 1997: 16-19). Subsequently, more active, direct, and concert observation approaches for learning substituted traditional lecture approach. Mutual respect and love between a

teacher and pupil also replaced the pedagogical terror. Froebel, a student of Pestalozzi, introduced the theory and methods of early childhood education between the years 1782 & 1832. Accordingly, the first kindergarten was opened in the year 1837 in Germany (Grace Owen, 1949:5). The years between 0 and 8 were described as the period in which children are constantly engaged with things present to their senses, receive multiples of vivid impressions of objects for latter thinking (ibid: 22). Therefore, it is of paramount importance to create an environment for children that could potentially contribute to their physical and intellectual development by way of bringing to them a rich variety of ideas of a desirable kind. Formal schooling and kindergarten are therefore the ones which potentially can create the desirable environment. The early years of childhood (0-8 years) are the years where children are under the care of family and / or institution. Forest (1949:3-4), for instance, had the following relatively innovative view about the role of kindergarten and teachers:

The kindergarten is the natural starting point, and the teacher's are to be trained to guide children rather than to drill them in the three R'S or cram them with facts, and play method as being the best and modern effective method of early childhood education.

The quality of educational experiences provided during the early years, presumably at kindergartens, could potentially serve as foundation for the future higher level of adult intellectual capacity. The methods in use, the freedom of the child, the free-play the child makes during these early years, the context/the environment , and the training of teachers teaching children in the kindergarten are among the factors which influence early childhood education (Tina Bruce; 1991: 8-11 , Elkink in Stephen White & Mick Coleman; 2000:52).

The history of early childhood education in Ethiopia goes back about hundred years. The first kindergarten was opened in Diredawa in 1908 by French railway workers (Aregash, 2005; MOE & UNICEF; 2007). Subsequently a number of private kindergartens were opened by foreign

communities among which were English school (now Sanford), the German school (closed during the revolution of the 1974), and Lyce Gebremariam. There were also state sponsored kindergartens opened in different parts of the country in 1955 E.C. The following, for instance, were among the then kindergartens owned by the then government and structurally placed under the then Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs: Bishoftu, Debrebrhan, Awassa, Addis Ababa, and Asmara (MOE & UNICEF; 2007:14).

In 1975, the number of kindergartens in Ethiopia reached 77. The outbreak of the 1974 revolution in Ethiopia was a turning point in the history of early childhood education in the country in terms of both increasing public awareness and official recognition of the pre-school system of education. Emphasis had been put on early childhood education to the extent that it was believed to be central to the then educational ideology. Accordingly, the number of kindergartens in Ethiopia reached 912 in 1990 (MOE UNICEF, 2007:17). Most of the kindergartens during the Derge regime were either Government or public owned. Unfortunately, after the fall of the Derge regime the emphasis that was in place came to be seriously eroded to the extent that most government as well as publicly owned kindergartens collapsed. The early childhood program itself neglected presumably because of absence of owner to the program or shift of ownership of the program.

The 1994 Education and Training Policy which was stipulated by the then Transitional Government of Ethiopia tactfully highlights kindergarten education as a threshold of the later learning (MOE: 1994). It also calls for participation of private sector to exclusively own and run pre-school education system in the country. On the other hand, the same policy strongly asserts the role of the government, regarding kindergarten education, to be limited on giving general guidelines, set curricula and standard, and give accreditation. Accordingly, the private sector aggressively embarked on the business of early childhood education in Ethiopia more than ever. To this end, according to the 2005 - 06 Ministry's national education statistical abstract, there are 471 pre-schools or kindergartens in

Oromia regional state , 230 in Amhara Regional State, 14 in Benishagul-Gumuz, 560 in Addis Ababa, 101 in Tigray Regional State, and 376 in SNNPR state which sum up to 1752 kindergartens (MOE, 2007).

Despite the mushrooming of kindergartens, there are very few, or no research outputs, which investigated the way, they work or the process under which their teaching and learning process is going on. Put differently , there are not research outputs attempted exclusively at examining their curricula in use , the methods and strategies they use to implement their program or curriculum, and the type as well as level of communication these kindergartens have with education offices and children's parents .

However, Temesgen (2006), Amalework (2007), Shewakena (1997), Dereje (1995), and institutions such as the MOE & UNICEF (2007) have done survey studies on the adequacy, equity, and access of early childhood education. Even though these studies have indicated several findings related to the matter under discussion, they did not explore the actual teaching – learning process in the kindergartens. Hence, examining the process that synchronizes the child, the curriculum, and the context is indispensable.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Although the growing number of kindergartens is positively encouraging, their teaching and learning practices as well as the details of contexts under which they are functioning need to be fully studied in light of current perspectives about early childhood education. Hence, in order to contribute towards filling this observed gap, I decided to study the practice of early childhood education under discussion. Furthermore, my nineteen years experience in the education sector in Ethiopia in general and my experience, observations , and insight on early childhood education for the last four years in particular instigated me to conduct my current study.

1.3 The Self

The experience I had during my childhood in *Kessbet* (traditional church education in the Ethiopian context) is the threshold for my current study. It was about 40 years, when I had enrolled in *Kessbet* in my village. I saw the Kess with long stick beside him at my first arrival. There were children of my age including my brothers and sisters. We counted ሁ ሁ.. .. አቡጊዳ መልዕክተ and others during our stay . The methods used were recitation and repetition of the contents, to remember orally from the beginning to the end of the content .My early childhood experience was dominated by the Kess at *Kessbet* and by the elders at home. Every body seemed to have had the right over us presumably because of the then cultural influence. I remember the cruelty of the Kess. He used to beat, kneel, insult, and harass us. This was the experience I had in Horoguduru, a place where I was born and grown up. After I have had enough of the *Kessbet*, I joined a government school as primary pupil that was at a distance of about six hours walk from my village At the age of 24, after completing my under graduate study, I became a high school teacher. My early experience and later training had made an impact on my teaching in high school. I became a “Kess” myself except with different content of teaching. After nineteen years of experience of working at high school, I quit teaching in high school, and then opened a small kindergarten in Bishoftu city in 2005. Since then I came to be more curious about children and childhood education and experiences. I had an access to view and see literatures on the early childhood education. Besides, I am a father of two children, who are in the range of early childhood right now.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to explore, examine, and describe the practice and challenges of implementing early childhood education programs in two selected kindergartens in Oromia Region. The teaching-learning process, the quality of service provided, and the content of the programs are the focal points of the study.

Research Questions:

To address the above relatively broad aims and focal points, the study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of curriculum (learning programs) in the two selected kindergartens?
2. How are the contexts of implementation in the two kindergartens?
3. How are the practices of communication in the two kindergartens vis-à-vis the implementation of early childhood education programs?
 - a. *Communication and interaction between children and their teachers*
 - b. *Communication between the school and children's parents*
 - c. *Communication between the principal and teachers*
 - d. *Communication among the teachers*
 - e. *Communication between the K.G s and the concerned educational authorities*
4. What are the challenges in the processes of implementing early childhood education in the two kindergartens?
5. What are the major factors affecting and/or facilitating the implementation of early childhood education in the two kindergartens?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study on early childhood education in Oromia region is significant for:

1. Teachers of the two studied kindergartens, the community of the two kindergartens and for professionals involved on educating children it can develop their insight and understanding about the curriculum of children's education in light of the theory of development and learning.
2. Oromia Regional Education Bureau curriculum experts it can help understand the actual practices, and add further dimensions that can help them develop appropriate and alternative curricula, for

kindergartens in the region

3. Researchers on the area and for early childhood educators it could serve as springboard to conduct further deep and large-scale research.

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

This study is about the practice of early childhood education in two kindergartens in Oromia region. Although early childhood education includes the education of children of age zero to eight, both at home and in institutions, my study deals only with the teaching learning process that takes place only in kindergartens. The study also does not include the education of children with special needs. It is not also evaluative study rather it is descriptive interpretive study. It describes and interprets the process of program implementation that largely will be generalized to the two kindergartens.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

The actual period of time I stayed in each kindergarten for data collection was only about three weeks. Although there are good evidences I gathered during these three weeks, as qualitative researcher I sense that there could be some possible potential evidences that virtually cannot be generated within this relatively short period of time. Hence, shortage of time for in-depth understanding of contexts might have some limitation on the depth and breadth of my data.

1.8 Operational Definitions

Kindergarten: is a school where children of age 4 – 6 years are experiencing early childhood education in the Ethiopian context

Early childhood education: although it is an education of a child of age 0-8 years, in this study it refers to the education of children in Kindergarten.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 The Concept of Early Childhood Education

Different terminologies have been used to early childhood education such as early childhood development, early childhood care and education, pre-primary education, pre-school education, kindergartens etc. (MOE & UNICEF, 2007: 7). The modern and perhaps the western conception about education of the child is imbedded in Woodhill's(1992:3) definition of early childhood education as the education and care of the child in-group settings out side the children's home. Another perhaps African definition of early childhood education is that forwarded by Ugandan Educators, as a guided education given to young children of age 0 to 8 years (MoES, 1994:133). The other definition that is largely accepted by most educators on the area as well as many countries across the world however seems to be that of Tina & Meggith (1996: 337-338), Roopinarine & E. Johnson (2005: ix), and White & Colema (2000:9) all defined early childhood education in terms of the age of the child and the experience they develop during the first phase childhood or during the age of 0-8 years. The justification for this age span 0-8 is based up on research findings about infant brain development. Human's neurons develop in the age 0 to 8 years. If a new born child doesn't receive sufficient nurturing nutrition, parental / care giver/ teacher/ interaction, and stimulus during this crucial period, the child may be left with developmental deficit that hampers his or her success in pre-school, kindergarten and higher levels (wikipedia; 2007:7).The operational meaning of early childhood education I used in this study is that education given to children in kindergarten in the Ethiopian context as mentioned in the Educational and Training Policy.

The years of children in kindergarten as described in the Policy are from 4 years age to 6 years (MOE 1994). At year 7, the child is supposed to enrol in to formal school (grade 1).

2.2 Historical Development of Early Childhood Education

New approaches of learning without whippings and beatings were started during 18th century in Europe. The first pioneers were Jean-Fredric Oberlin of French, Heierich Pestaliozy of Switzerland (Kurtz cited in Woodhill; 1992: 5-6).

In Germany the first infant school was opened in 1802 by prince Pauline (Rusk, 1993) later on kindergarten originated in Germany by Friedrich Froebel in 1830 to educate children (ibid 1992: 7) and 1837 the first kindergarten) opened in Germany. In North America and Australia the education of children of ages of four and six before they begin formal education is called pre-school. It includes nursery schools (Encarta, 2008). Many educators have found that children who enrolled in kindergartens develop positive self-concepts and basic understandings and skills that make them better able to apply their efforts to intellectual task when they enter school. Kindergarten programs emphasize creative play, social interaction and natural expression they teach social skills and provide with academic foundation for first grade. It strives to offer children a foundation for the development of social skills, self-confidence, motivation, and cognition the process of knowing (wikipedia, 2007:4)

The Voyage of early childhood education from Europe to the rest of the world sporadically spread and resulted in the opening of kindergartens different countries in the following years. In Wisconsin (USA) 1855, Woolloomooloo 1896 (Australia), in Costa Rica 1878, in Tokyo 1894, in Kenya 1940 by missionaries, in New Zealand 1889, in Lagos Nigeria 1896, , in Pretoria South Africa 1931, in Cape Town 1925, Nursery School for African Children 1936 in South Africa, in Sudan by Catholic Missionaries 1900 (ibid, 1992:9) and in Direedawa 1908, by French railway workers (Aregash; 2005).

2.3 Early Childhood Education Development in Ethiopia

Early childhood care and education in Ethiopia cover the period from birth to the first 6 years of development (Tirusew, 2005: 39) and kindergarten education from 4 to 6 years (TGE, 1994: 14). There were Traditional Pre-schools in Ethiopia these were Orthodox Church, Koranic (Tirusew; 2005:41, Abebe; 1991:45-46).

The first modern kindergarten was established in Dire Dawa (Aregash, MOE and UNICEF) later on a community service based kindergartens were established in different parts of the country. In 1963, in Ras Desta, Sefer Addis Ababa, Debre Zeit, Debre Berhan, Hawassa and Asmara (MOE and UNICEF, 2007:14) by the government.

The established kindergartens were small in number when compared to the number of children entered in the cities. After creeping many years early childhood education got emphases during the Derge regime. From 1975-1990 the number of kindergartens grew from 77 to 912 (MOE and UNICEF, 2007:16) and there were also kindergartens in some rural farmers cooperatives. The government in most cases as public ran these pre-schools. There were also some NGO care centres and educative institutions (Tirusew, 1995)

After the fall of the Derg regime, there came a shift of policy from socialist ideology to capitalist ideology (market oriented) as result, the Education of children (early Childhood education) was given to the private sectors and family. The policy states about the education given to the kindergarten "kindergarten will focus on all round development of the child in the preparation for formal schooling" (TGE, 1994: 14). According to children's Family and youth welfare organization of Ethiopia (1993: 7), the followings are some of the objectives of kindergarten education in Ethiopia:

- to develop a feeling of self-reliance
- to develop and encourage positive attitude towards work
- to make children aware of their rights and responsibilities

- to develop a sense of respect, and love of their society and country
- to prepare for formal schooling

The curriculum of the kindergartens as indicated in the document, "The guidance of kindergarten and primary education standard" issued by ministry of education of Ethiopia (MOE) in 1995 list the major areas of learning. These are:

1. Rule governed and creative play
2. Academics, (language, environmental education math's) and aesthetics (music, art and H.P.E)
3. "Work," that can be performed individually, and has useful social value.

2.4 Early Childhood Education and Theories of Development and Learning

2.4.1 Developmental and Learning Theories

Learning is the improvement in performance across a series of problems that have a common base of solution but involve different stimuli and acquired when new problems are solved with no more error (Fagen, 1977).

Development and learning theory was developed as a result of different scholars work. The most known were Thorndike (1874-1949), Ivan P. Pavlov (1849-1936), Watson (1878-1958), Guthrie (1886: 1959), Tolman (1886-1956), Hull (1884-1952), Skinner (1904 -1990) , Vygotsky (1896-1935) and Piaget (1896-1980) Tina Bruce, and Meggitt, 1996:188-195).

The bases for all curricular is development theory and theory of learning (Catron and Allen, 1993:7). Developmental theory is a set of beliefs how children develop and learn. The theory is the cumulative works of many scholars (Psychologist, physiologist, and Educators). There are different beliefs on the way children develop and learn. Catron and Allen classified them into five categories, (1993: 6-8) these are:

1. Maturation Theory

G. Stanley Hall, Robert Havighurst and Arnold Gesel were the founders of the theory. In the pre-school child's tasks are described by Havighurst as first to develop the ability to take directions and to be obedient in the presence of authority figure and second, to develop the ability to be obedient in the absence of authority figure Havighurst, cited in Catron and Allen (1993:8).

2. Psychodynamic Theory

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and Erik Erickson (psychosexual) born 1902 are the founders of the theory. Freud reclassified stages of children's development as oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital and their development and is characterized by the action of the sub-conscious forces called the id, the ego, and super ego (ibid:7).

The id refers to the inborn drives present at birth, the ego develops during the second stage (ages 1-3) it controls emotion, thought, and behaviour, and the superego develops during the phallic stages (ages 3 to 5) and represents ethical values and conscience. The ego is the one that mediates the two forces.

Erickson's classification is different from Freud's classification of stages of development. Erickson's stages are based on psychosocial analysis while Freud's is on psychosexual analysis. Some of the stages for children of age below six are, trust versus mistrust, (birth to 1 year.) autonomy versus shame (2 to 3) and initiative versus guilt (3 to 6) (Ibid: 7).

3. Behavioural Theory

The dominant figure of the theory is B.F. Skinner (1904-1990). The theory focuses on objectives, observable principles that influence human. In the theory learning is viewed as a process where by a child is "conditioned" to display expected and knowledge using consequences, or reinforcement and punishment (White and Coleman 2000:232). Skinner asserted the necessity of human and physical factors in the environment for child rearing.

4. Cognitive Development Theory

The founder of the theory was Jean Piaget (1896-1980). He discovered human intellectual development and proposed four stages in human cognitive development (Tina and Meggitt, 1996:188).

- 1 Sensor motor stages (birth to 18-24 months)
- 2 Preoperational stage (18-24 months to 6-7 years)
- 3 Concrete operational stage, (6-7 years to 12-13 years) and formal operational stage (12-13 years through adulthood).

Vanghan and Lilt, 1990, and Holt cited in White (2000: 65) defined development and categorized as follows: The concept of development defined as the orderly sequential and increasingly more complex levels of functioning that children display as they advance in age. Development takes place across three major areas of development. 1) The physical domain that reflects children's physical growth, perceptual skills, and motor skills 2) The cognitive domain reflects children's language development, thinking, and problem solving skills. 3) The social emotional domain reflects children's self-identifying, interpersonal skills, and their expression of feelings.

Regardless of age and stages of development, there are several processes that describe development and learning. Learning occurs as children construct knowledge through active exploration and discovery in their physical and social environment. Assimilation and accommodation permit adaptation to the environment. Besides the theory of development and learning empirical findings are useful for the curricular development of early childhood education. The applications of research output in different areas of development are important for educators such as teachers, early childhood workers and care takers.

Longitudinal studies made by educators and from organization of pre-school graduates all the way into adulthood have identified much positive significant relationship between pre-school participation and task related, social and attitudinal outcomes (Kattleen, 1989).

2.4.2 Principles of Early Childhood Education

It is a belief about learning -teaching process that educators use to guide (facilitate) the practices of an educational activity. There can be specific principles; however, there is an agreement on general principles for early childhood education. Beredekanp(1987) , Copple, Segel Savnders (1979), Kamii (1985), National council of Teachers of Mathematics (1989); NAEYC (1993) as cited in Clements H.(1993) grouped into four interrelated categorizes.

1. The child as an active learner

The base of this principle is theory of Piaget is theory of cognition. The principle states the child should not been seen as tabularize "or as a vessel to be filled." Instead, children should be seen as the one that construct their own knowledge. The principles emphasize children's active participation rather than passive reception.

2. The child as a learner of social and emotional competencies

Social interaction with children and adults is critical to learning, especially to learning new ways of thinking. Hence: Provides opportunities for social interaction and growth and the development of positive self-image. Provide many opportunities for learning without pressure for mastery.

3. The child as independent learner, specific principles can be developed from this.

Provide a minimally restrictive environment that encourages autonomy and exploration

4 The child as a learner in the real world

It emphasizes that education should involve children in meaningful activities directly tied to their out of school life.

2.5 Early Childhood Curriculum

2.5.1 Curriculum and the Development of the "Whole Child"

Curriculum is the foundation for learning. It provides the basis for answering questions about what to teach (content) and how to teach (methods) by providing a blue print based on a philosophy of how children develop and learn (E. Catron and Allen, 1993: 4). Curriculum is a guide to teachers and caregivers in the field of early childhood education. Early childhood curriculum is supposed to agree to the following sets of assumptions as mentioned by Seefeldt and Williamsin cited in Carton and Allen (1993: 5-6):

1. Curriculum is related to overall program quality it defines issues like teachers behaviour, teaching style, classroom organizations, relationship with families and others.
2. Curriculum must focus on the development of the "whole child" and programmatically integrates areas of development.
3. Play serves many functions for the young children and it is the primary mode for learning, the curriculum should focus on this mode of learning.
4. Teachers must agree with the philosophy and practices of the curriculum and understand its content.
5. Teachers must understand children's development and theories of learning. The main activity of the teacher is to understand the child.
6. Children are active learners the curriculum should provide varieties of activities that makes children to construct knowledge Piaget put the activity of children as "From birth, children engage in the reciprocal acts of "assimilation" and "accommodation" in order to form, extend, and expand the structures of their mind"
7. Curriculum and should developmentally appropriate this is to indicate the degree to which the program is developmentally appropriate.

Piaget further explained, the essential nature of human beings was their

power to construct knowledge through adaptation to the environment cited in (Seefeldt, 1992:44).

2.5.2 Curriculum Models

There are different curriculum based on the theory of development and learning. The followings are the models (Carton & Allen 1993: 18-27):

- 1 Constructivist models: or interactional models based on the cognitive developmental theory of Piaget. In this model, the child is considered as an active creator and constructor of knowledge and teachers assess children's levels of developmentally appropriate materials and practices (childe-centred).
- 2 Psychodynamic models: Based on the developmental theory of Freud and Erickson, The model is mainly concerned with the emotional environment, such as increasing children's self-esteem and motivation for learning (concerned on aesthetical values).
- 3 Behavioural models:, based on behaviour and social learning theories. In the model activities are teacher initiated and objectives includes academic and pre-academics skills. These models provide guidance techniques (teacher- centred).

And also different approaches were used to formulate curriculum for early childhood education. These are:

1 **High/scope cognitively oriented curriculum.** This curriculum is based on Piaget's theory of intelligence, and developed by David Weikart, in 1964. In this curriculum, children are both active learners and active planners in the classroom and materials. The teachers' role is to arrange the classroom and materials and schedule a daily routine that permits children to plan, experience and review activities (ibid, 1993: 9-10).

2 **Montessori Education Curriculum** The method was developed from the principle of Maria Montessori (1870-1952). In the curriculum children's personality, development and cognitive competence have high value. Children are encouraged to be self-discipline, self-directed and independent.

Most activities occur individually with the child interacting with the materials but not with other children (Montessori, 1949: 10). It emphasizes individualistic competence.

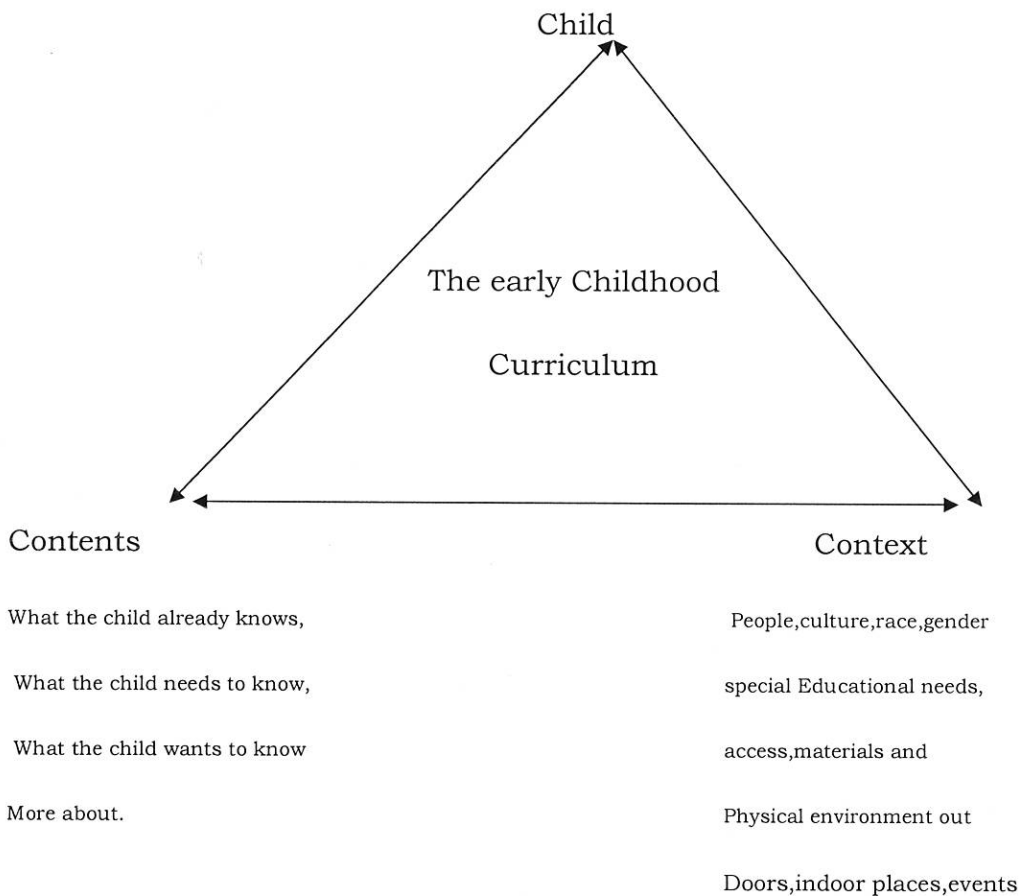
3 Behaviourist Curriculum: It is based on the behaviour theory of skinner, Pavlov, Watson. It was designed in the 1960s to provide compensatory education. The curriculum gives due attention to academics teaching. Such as Math, reading, and language. Lessons and activities are teacher- initiated and directed.

Tina Bruce and Carollyn Meggitt, (1996: 363) and Tina Bruce (1991:8) indicated the three parts in early childhood curriculum. These are:

- 1) The child's development (the child)
- 2) The child's access to the curriculum and contextual sensitive (context)
- 3) What the child learns and understand (content)

The three parts of the curriculum should get equal emphasis. When the three are not in balance, the quality of the curriculum is poor. Thus, early childhood curriculum is child-centred, the experts should know how child develops and learn frame them, understands the context and determine contents the child should learn. These components of curriculum are put in the following figure (Tina Bruce and Meggitt 1996: 364 and Tina Bruce, 1991:8)

The three C'S of early childhood curriculum



(Tina Bruce, 1991: 8)

2.6 Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum (DAC)

Practice

The curriculum was developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and coined by Bredekamp cited in Jaiaul (2005:27),). And known as developmentally appropriate practice, child development knowledge helps the practitioner to create a quality curriculum in which the three parts (C'S) of early childhood curriculum are balanced. In this practice, the importance of learning context for the learning of a child is emphasized. It refers to the belief of early childhood educators', professionals that knowledge about a child development should be the basis for making decisions about early childhood program and practice (White and Coleman, 2000: 69). The DAP is serving for children from birth to age 8 The

preparation of the early childhood curriculum should take into consideration the developmental theory and the learning theory of children and also the context in which it is working. It is not the nature only that determines human intelligence but also the nurture.

2.7 Contents of Early Childhood Curriculum

What to teach/ what to educate / dependences on the philosophy of learning. Every approach has the contents to be learned. In Cognitive learning curriculum, the contents are the one that much with the development of the child and the context or (the environment). The content of the curriculum is about:

- what the child already knows (experience)
- What the child wants to know more about and what the child needs to know according to the culture (social context) and society in which the child is growing (Tina Bruce & Maggit, 1996: 380).

According to Tina Bruce (1996:380-382) the curriculum content for (3-5) years children include the following areas of learning.

- Personal and social about the society
- Language and literacy
- Mathematics
- Knowledge and understanding of the world
- Physical development
- Creative development (Art and a aesthetics)

The content of the development of the "Whole Child" curriculum is divided the area of learning in to six categories (Tina, 1996: 382, Penny Tassoni, 2002: 4) E. Catron and Allen (1993: 21-24). These are:

Penny Tassoni (2002: 4-6) further subdivided each area of learning in to aspect of learning as follows:

Areas of Learning	Aspects of Learning
Personal, social and emotional development	Disposition and attitude <input type="checkbox"/> Self-confidence and self-esteem <input type="checkbox"/> Making relationships <input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour and self control <input type="checkbox"/> Self-care <input type="checkbox"/> Sense of community
Communication, language and literacy	language for communication <input type="checkbox"/> language for thinking <input type="checkbox"/> linking sound with letters <input type="checkbox"/> reading <input type="checkbox"/> writing <input type="checkbox"/> Hand writing
Mathematical development	Numbers as labels for counting <input type="checkbox"/> Calculating <input type="checkbox"/> Shape, space and measures
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Exploration and investigation <input type="checkbox"/> Designing and making skills <input type="checkbox"/> Information and communication technology <input type="checkbox"/> Senses of time <input type="checkbox"/> Sense of place <input type="checkbox"/> Culture and beliefs
Physical development	Sense of space <input type="checkbox"/> Movement <input type="checkbox"/> Health and bodily awareness using equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Using tools and materials
Creative development	Exploring media and materials, <input type="checkbox"/> Music <input type="checkbox"/> Imagination <input type="checkbox"/> Responding to experiences, and expressing and communicating ideas

Penny Tassoni (2002: 46)

The selection of content should be developmentally appropriate and in accordance to the theory of development and learning. The learning area mentioned by penny is not different from the work of Coleman (as cited in white 2000: 5) although categorized into three domains. It encompasses all the 6 categories in to three domains. Hence, the use of this curriculum contents for the kindergarten's education is indispensable. According to the context, to develop a curriculum that reflects our context, the approaches the models and the contents described above can be used as a threshold.

2.8 Strategy to Implement Early Childhood Curriculum

An appetite for learning should come from the child rather than being forced on them, (Penny, 2002: 6) make them feel learning is fun, challenging exciting and the like and if they gain satisfaction from what they are doing by themselves, they will be more motivated and learn best when they engaged in meaningful work (Seefeldt, 1992: 24). In early childhood education, practitioners, teaching strategies are sometimes so closely related to the preferred orientation toward child development; (Devries and Kohlberg, 1987, Kohlberg, 1968, Langer, 1969) as cited in Seefeldt(1992:18) that practitioners may not scrutinize their methods.

The inclination of the practitioners to only their belief (theory of development learning) is a rigid ideology for teaching children. The advancement of the profession and the enhancement of the education and development young children would be furthered by more active and reflective practice (Seefeldt, 1992:18).The strategy to implement early childhood curriculum depends on the beliefs of the practitioners or in the curriculum in use maturity, behaviourist constructivist or others. The best strategy as described by Seefeldt is to be more active (Child-centered) and reflective ((Seefeldt, 1992: 25-34).

Parent- kindergarten

In the education of young children the school is a supplementary institution. The home is the primary place of education. Thus, only when parents and teachers of kindergartens work in cooperation those children achieve the desired goal of their education. Hence, the agreement between teachers and parents has a great importance in both child-rearing and education. Hence, the agreement between teachers and parents has a great importance in both child-rearing and education (Heffernan, 1960:129).

The attitude of the parents towards the school depends upon the kind of the relation which the school attempted to make with the parents. That is to say, if the teachers make a good effort to establish personal relations with

parents, if the parents are feeling well of what the school is trying to accomplish with children, then the parents will provide their real support to the school. If, on the other hand, the teachers isolate themselves from the parents and go on their work without trying to know the attitude towards the school (Gould and Yoakam, 1954:340). Thus, to attain the educational goal aimed at the cooperative task of teachers and parents has an immense significance. Besides, teachers essential to cultivate children at their early ages. Therefore, for the good of children and for the progress of the education as a whole, the home and the kindergarten should work close together.

Regarding the contribution of pre-school and parents cooperation, Kuzin Kondakov (1977: 31) presented that kindergarten who work in close cooperation with family for the upbringing of the child improve health care, encourage practical skills and love of work, foster awareness, prepare children for school education and motivate them to respect their elders as well as love their country.

The role of the teacher

The teacher is an important public relations agent because he/she is the individual that deals directly with the children. Thus, he/she should apply different mechanisms to communicate with parents to understand better.

One way of communicating with parents is home visiting. Visiting the home helps the teacher to perform his/her task later well. That is, it can give the teacher a clue on how the child interacts with his mother, how he responds to a hissing sound, with whom he plays and the total features within which the child grows. Furthermore, he/she may come to understand the views of the parents of the children about the kindergarten education (Rudolph and Cohen: 406).

According to Heffernan (1960: 45), in the parent cooperative kindergarten the teacher keeps the parents more aware of the progress of their children. For example, he/she discusses with them about the attitude and activities that can help to intensify children development, and invites parents to

observe the school. Hence, a teacher who visits communicates and discusses with parents, and he/she who makes parents and suggestions practical contributes more to children's progress, development and later schooling. Parents, on the other hand, will develop a wholehearted trust on him/her.

Further, such teachers are essential and good for preschools to attain their objectives. For instance, Sherer (19959:34) presents the role of a good teacher is playing as follows:

- Forms a working partnership with parents, pools his/her information about the child with theirs, so that both teacher and parents may understand him better.....
- Work with primary grade teachers and with the nursery school, participate in curriculum planning with the faculty, keeps records about each child that became part of his/her cumulative record to be used by later teachers.
- Cooperate with community-school organizations to develop an understanding of the purposes and significance of early childhood education.
- Applies his/her professional and cultural knowledge in his/her daily work....

These agreements explain the role of a kindergarten teacher plays and the responsibility he/she assumed to shoulder. Hence, as Rudolph and Cohen (1984:6) sated "A teacher is expected not only to become a good professional man but also to do his/her work considering way what is done."

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Qualitative Case Study

Knowing what you want to find out leads to the questions of how you will get that information. (Milles & Huberman in Silverman: 2000: 88)

The above quotation indicates the need for methodological framework to explore, or investigate a phenomenon or a program under study. A methodology defines how one will go about studying a program or a phenomenon, and the choice of the research approach which depends upon the questions that are asked and the questions depend on the context (ibid: 2000:79).

Qualitative research approach implies an emphasis on examining a process and looking at meanings that cannot be rigorously examined or measured in terms of quantity. It stresses on socially constructed nature of reality, a kind of intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 128-129). The strength of qualitative research is driven from its inductive approach, and focuses on specific situations or people and its emphasis on words than numbers (Maxwell; 2005:22). In studying social institutions such as schools which require deep understanding, a qualitative case study is preferable than purely quantitative (Silverman; 2000: 5). Case study is a form of inquiry in which the researcher explores in-depth a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals (Creswell, 2003: 15). Case study is used when a 'how' or a 'why' question is being asked about the contemporary set of events over which the research has little or no control (Yin; 2003: 9).

Accordingly, I used qualitative method of study in general and descriptive-interpretive case study approach in particular. To understand the process of teaching and learning in the kindergartens by way of answering the research questions I posed, it necessarily requires me understand the social

phenomena of each kindergarten. The use of descriptive interpretive qualitative case study approach in my study is indispensable because:

The design treats social institutions for deep understanding of situations, and needs the investigators observation.

It can answer the questions of 'how,' having no control over the situations and focus on the existing events.

It has a unique strength, to deal with full variety evidence such as documents, interviews, and observations.

Moreover qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of abounded phenomenon, program, a policy, or a process of a program, (Yin, 2003:8).

In addition, case study concentrates on many issues in a single unit. Descriptive- interpretive- qualitative case studies are inductive in nature, which is appropriate for studying the process of implementation such as early childhood education in kindergartens. Different researches (MOE & UNICEF; 2007), Temesgen (2000), Shewakena(2005), Amelework (2007) and Dereje(1995) envisaged survey studies on kindergarten education in Ethiopia . However, the study of the on going process of early childhood education in kindergarten in general and the classroom aspects in particular needs more description and interpretation, and appropriate methods of inquiry than what have been done by the aforementioned researchers.

The practice of early childhood education in kindergarten involves many issues such as; the curriculum, teachers, teaching aids, contexts and others that have direct implications on teaching-learning process which take place under different situations. Thus, I decided to study the practice of early childhood education in the selected two kindergartens in Oromia regional state using qualitative descriptive-interpretative case study approach. The rationales mentioned at the beginning of this section are the bases for the selection of my methods of inquiry.

Oromia is the largest region in the country whose population is believed to be 30-40% of the country's population. It consists of 189 woredas and 32 city administrations. I selected two kindergartens from two different zones in the region. That is, one from Bishoftu City Administration and the other

from Horoguduru Wollega zone. I labelled the two kindergartens selected from Horoguduru and Bishoftu by pseudonyms *Abdibiyya* and *Yenegetesfa* respectively for the sake of confidentiality.

3.2 Evidential Base for the Cases

The experience of early childhood education is a recent phenomenon in our country. It started in 1955 E.C in some selected cities as pilot study by the then Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs. Among them was the one established in Bishoftu city. Bishoftu city was one of the pioneers of kindergartens in the country three years after the establishment of this kindergarten, another kindergarten by the name of Haremeda Mesenado was established by the then Air Force and civil personnel workers. (Harermeda Messenado 1960). After 45 years early childhood education gets momentum and the number of kindergartens reached 34 in 2000 (WEO). Because of its relatively long experience and its rate of growth in the field is one of the reasons to choose the case in this city. The other reasons are:

- The case under study serves a population of 237 children. This number is among the highest in city.
- It is one of the favoured K.G by intellectuals in the city
- The personal relation I had with the owner when we and the head teacher patted smooth access to data

These and others are that make an access to the data smooth and reliable. The other case is found in the rural area which is about 300km from Addis-Ababa in Horo Guduru Wollega zone. The education of early childhood in modern sense was not introduced until the late regime in the zone. During the derge regime there was one governmental (public) KG in the town and liquidated after the out break of the regime. Before two years, an indigenous person who was abroad for 15 years opened A.K.G, elementary and college in the city. This move is a good step in introducing early childhood education in a country where a Kess education was dominant earlier (traditional church education).

Reasons for choosing the case are:

- i. The contextual difference between the two cases in which one found in relatively better condition than the other
- ii. My previous knowledge about early childhood education in rural areas and my acquaintance with the people and the context
- iii. The overall access I have to the data

These are the evidential bases for choosing the cases.

Yenegetesfa kindergarten was established by a person who was a secondary school teacher in Bishoftu city in 1999 E.C. and subsequently grew to a primary (1–8) school. The K.G has about 237 children including children attending grade one within the K.G.

In addition to this, I want to see the practice of early childhood education in the remotest area and in relatively developed city. Hence, my acquaintance with the people, where I was born and grew and the intimacy I have had with the K.G owner in the city made me to choose the cases.

3.3 Research Design

Research design is a logical plan for getting from the initial set of questions to be answered to set of conclusions (answers) about these questions (Yin; 2003: 20). It has a major steps choice of appropriate instruments, collection of relevant data and analysis of the collected data. My research design is a holistic multiple case design. It is holistic because it studies the processes such as teaching learning in the kindergartens or the implementation of early childhood education, or the program in the kindergartens (Yin; 2003: 43), and it is multiple case because it contains more than a single case. Multiple case design has a peculiar advantages in comparison to single case design in that the evidence (data) from multiple case is often compelling, and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust (Herriott & Firestone cited in Yin: 2003:46). Any use of multiple-case designs follows a replication, not a sampling logic and the careful choice of the cases (ibid; 2003:53). In my study, the process of implementation, childhood

curriculum, the interaction that exists between the K.G and parent, and the factors that affect the program are the issues within the cases. Hence a multiple case study design I used consists multiple holistic cases .The case of implementation of early childhood education, early childhood curriculum, the interaction between teachers and children, among teachers and with parents and the KG, and the factors that affect the program.

Each of these multiple-holistic cases were replicated within different context, and not sampling logic used in selecting the two cases, but a necessary cautions were taken in choosing the cases beside my access to the data.

3.3.1 Tools for Data Collection and Sources of Data

Qualitative-case study uses different tools, depending on the types of design used to gather evidences for investigation. Based on this, I employed observation, interview and document analysis tools for data collection. In the following section, I will describe my sources of data and how the data were collected.

Who and what were observed? The observation tool as a means to collect data in case study is not only a visual perceptions ,but also based on hearing, feeling and smelling that are integrated in the field which makes practices accessible through observation (Adler & Adler in Flick:2002:134-135). Accordingly my observation started the first day I started visiting the cases. I stayed in the field continuously for three weeks but longer in Yenegetesfa .The followings are the ones that were observed Classrooms, L.K.G and U.K.G in Abdibiyya kindergarten, nursery L.K.G and U.K.G in Yenegetesfa kindergarten and grade 1 in Governmental school in the town where Abdibiyya is found were observed three times each. Playing fields, the talks and chats of children, teachers and personnel of the K.Gs, Parents talk during arrival and departure of children and the work habits of the kindergartens were observed .Flag ceremony ,lunch ceremony ,napping ,toilet and toileting ,film watching, children's playing ,crying and peoples talk were observed too.

3.3.2 Who were Interviewed?

Two teachers, one caregiver, unit leader, and the director from Abdibiyya kindergarten were interviewed by using audio- recording inside the K.G .The education expert, elementary school director and one Parent and also the K.G PTA member were interviewed outside the K.G of Abdibiyya .Concerning Yenegetesfa kindergarten a total of eight participants were interviewed, using audio recording inside the K.G, these were, three teachers, one assistant teacher, head teacher and one caregiver. Outside the K.G, the Woreda Education expert and one Parent were interviewed .Besides; different dialogues were made without recording within and outside the K.Gs. The interview was open-ended, in conventional manner; with certain sets of guide questions prepared earlier. The duration of the interviews was different, the maximum being fifty minutes and the minimum twelve minutes (caregiver of the Yenegetesfa kindergarten). The following table depicts the types, total number of respondents as well as duration for each interview

Abdibiyya kindergarten

Date of interviewed	Interviewee	Age	Sex	Martial	Educational background	Position	Duration of interview
13/02/08	Hunduma	34	M	Married	B.A	Expert in WEO	45min
15/02/08	Beka	47	M	Married	TTI	Director of elementary school	20min
22/02/08	Tsehay	25	F	Single	K.K.G	Teacher	35min
22/02/08	Mesret	24	F	Single	K.K.G	Teacher	22min
23/02/08	Teshale	23	M	Single	TTI	Unit leader	25min
23/02/08	Girma	60	M	Married	TTI	Director	55min
24/04/08	Parent	40	M	Married	Diploma	Teacher in the government school	23min
24/04/08	Almaz	24	F	Married	12 th Grade	Care giver	15min
	Yenegetesfa kindergarten						
10/03/08		24	F	Single	K.G.G	Teacher	16min
10/03/08	Firealem	24	F	Single	10 th complete Pursuing K.G.	Assistance teacher	17min
12/03/08	Fetnech	25	F	Single	K.G.G	Teacher	19min
12/03/08	Tigist	24	F	Single	K.G.G	Teacher	18min
14/03/08	Kassayit	27	F	Single	Diploma	Lead teacher	0.50min
14/03/08	Zinaba	20	F	Single	10 th	Caregiver	12min
15/03/08	Tarika	35	F	Married	12 th	Office worker	10min
20/03/08	Gammachu	42	M	Single	B.A	WEO	35min

Total respondents = 16

P1i – Participant in case 1

P2i – Participant in case 2

Document analysis: The analyzed documents include time-tables, annual plans, exercise books, records and daily lesson plans. In addition, first semester examinations of Yenegetesfa kindergarten were analyzed .The

documents from the Woreda education offices and from the MOE were used for different purpose in the study.

3.4 Analytic Strategy

The literature review developed in Chapter 2 becomes one of my frames of reference during analysis as it is the theoretical foundation of the study and the source of research questions as well. Hence, I used the theoretical framework and case descriptions and interpretation strategy. The two cases are represented in different chapters, chapter 4 and chapter 5. In each chapter a background of the kindergartens and the contexts are described. Under each theme (categories) direct quotations of the interviewees and observation are used for analysis when ever it is important. Finally the analysis is made thematically and accordingly cross analyzed in the conclusion Chapter. Each research questions evolves the themes under discussion which are used to make cross –site analysis. The analysis and interpretation are done to answer the research questions and discover the findings in the study; finally implication of the findings and conclusions has been forwarded.

3.5 Ethical Issues

I interviewed eight interviewees by using audio-recording for each. The interviews are transcribed to English by language expert from Amharic and Afan Oromo. To see the originality of the transcriptions, the English version was translated into the original version to Amharic and Afan Oromo by different expert for the sake of increasing the validity of the data. Each of the data from the different sources was triangulated for validation. Above all the documents, the real activities, and practices were taken as cross-check of the interview data, to enhance the validation of the data.

I explained the aim of the study, as it is for the partially fulfilment of masters degree, and the ethical issues in the study. The right to participate voluntarily, the procedure of the study, the right to withdraw, the right to ask questions, the rights to have their privacy respected and to keep the

confidentiality of their names and their schools name are discussed and agreed up on. The discussion and the consent reached helped me to get the data, and opened a friendly line among the K.Gs population. The children were also my source of data. The children in the Yenegetestfa used to call me "Abbaabbaa Ganaa" and Abdibiyya Barsiisaa .This helped me to gather relevant data for my study.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSING DATA

ABDIBIYYA KINDERGARTEN

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present my first case study of a kindergarten, which I labelled it by a pseudonym, *Abdibiyya Kindergarten*. It is found in Oromia region, Horoguduru Wolega zone about 300 kilometres away from the capital Addis Ababa. It is one of the components of educational package invested in the locality in 2005 by an individual who came back from abroad after fifteen years. Hence, Abdibiyya Kindergarten constitutes a section of a large compound planned for expansion to educational programs ranging from primary to college levels. Abdibiyya kindergarten is located at the center of the town whose population is estimated to be 20,000 (city administration). Currently it is the only kindergarten in the town.

In the following section I describe the context of the kindergarten as well as the Woreda in which the kindergarten is found. I then proceed to the descriptions of events and issues in the K.G with emphasis on two themes; the teaching and learning process, and factors influencing early childhood education in the K.G. Accordingly, I used direct quotations from my interviewees' transcriptions, data generated through observation, and documentary evidences for my analysis.

4.2 The Context of the Woreda

Horoguduru Wollega is one of the recently formed (1999 E.C) zones in west Oromia. It is known for its natural resources such as cattle, sheep, butter and different corn for national market. The capacity potential of its waterfall is under utility for the development of the whole country. Finicha, a sugar factory is a huge investment run by the government in the area. The zone has 10 administrative structures called woreda. Abdibiyya K.G is found in one of these woredas. The woreda has one senior high school, 7 elementary

schools out of which two are found in the town where this study is conducted. The number of students enrolled in grade one in 2000 are 2268, among these 1133 are female and 1135 are male (WEO, 2000) the age of the students who enrolled in grade 1 in year 2000 are described as follows; at the age of 7 are 1602 students, 748 males and 854 females. At the age between 7 and 14 are about 666 of which 279 are female and 387 are male. According to Hunduma Tola, the educational expert of kindergarten section in the Woreda education office, there are children who come to school without early childhood education experience in the kindergarten in the year 2000. Hunduma Tola, the education expert of the Woreda Education office explained the strategy, used to enhance kindergarten education in the rural area as follows:

We organized three '0' grades, programs in three rural elementary schools. The program started this year (2000), 93 children of which, 42 female and 51 male benefited from the program five high school graduates female volunteers are working in these special arrangements for children' education

These five untrained people are giving free service hoping that they will be employed in the future, and / or they will have advantage, over others, of work experience that might count in search of job for the future.

4.3 The Education Office

The education office is the highest body that runs exercises the education sector. The head is the member of the cabinet of the woreda. He is (should be) the member of the EPRDF. There are different divisions, high school, elementary, kindergarten education and others. The kindergarten section is the newly formed division. Hunduma Tola, an expert and head for kindergarten section have the following to tell:

The kindergarten section is formed just before three weeks. There are no guidelines or a curriculum guide; just I can say it is a forgotten sector. We were working in the way we run formal education. ... The bureau does not consider the kindergarten section as necessary as the other section.

4.4 Elementary school in the Town

In the town where Abdibiyya K.G is found there are two elementary schools. I visited one of the oldest schools to observe the practice of grade one, teaching-learning process. The overlap and / or the important role of the elementary school in addressing some problems of early childhood education is therefore, apparent when the director of the elementary school tell about the admission, learning process, and the entry age of these students as:

Children of different age come to school in September. We admit all; most of them come without early childhood education in kindergarten. Their age varies from 6-14 years, they start alphabet just in our school.

He further explained an instance or the case of a six-year boy who came to his school for the first time as follows:

The child who was admitted to grade 1 came to school with his father. The father escorted the child to the class and told him to stay and learn. The child requested his father to stay with him in the class other wise he will go with him. . We tried our best but the child cried and went with his father.

The director went describing his second experience with such types of children as follows:

The other newly admitted child came to school for the first time. He saw a teacher who frighten and beat children. The next day the child did not appear. He hates the situation after investigating the situation; we changed the class from A to B where he was treated better:

In this school, grade 1 students were assigned according to their age. There are four sections: 1A - are students of age 6, 1B - are students of age 7, 1C - are students of above ages 7 and 8, and 1D- are students of age 9 and above.

There are 196 students learning in grade 1 (95 female and 101 male).

Language

Most of the habitants of the town speak Afan Oromo but there are few dwellers who cannot speak, Amharic is used to mediate the gap. Both in the town and rural areas medium of instruction in elementary and kindergarten are Afan Oromo.

4.5 The Context of Abdibiyya Kindergarten

Abdibiyya K.G is located at the centre of the town in the big compound of about 35,000 square meters. The big compound constitutes a college in the south direction, elementary (1-4) and kindergarten in the North. The kindergarten and the elementary are separated by wire fence, where the elementary sections are located around the sloppy side of the compound.

The elementary and the kindergarten share the same compound and the same resource. The building of the sector is a U shaped (a wide u). The centre seems to be intended serving a flag ceremony although there is no flag there. There are four blocks, three sections in the west-facing block are: grade 4, computer class and director office. The North Looking block has four classes. The unit leader office, the staffroom, Lunch box room and logistic centre. The east-facing block has three classes, grade 1, grade 2 and grade 3. The outer part of the block adjacent to the east, facing north is the kindergarten section. It has two rooms one for lower K.G and one for U.P.K.G. Just a few yards in front of the K.G class, the growing up indigenous trees like, Zigiba, Tid and Mekanisa gave the compound a calm atmosphere. Under the shade of the trees, there is a horizontal sitting made from locally available bamboo. Below the trees there is a football field filled with dust. At the other corner of the compound about 100 meters away there are two dry latrine toilet rooms, for boys and girls. Adjacent to the trees there is a lunchroom, half open air. Regarding playing materials, there is merry ground that is not functioning, swing that is long and high, and slider inclined at the height 2.1 meters above the ground. Other playing materials are not available. For grown up there is a ball but for the kids there is no

ball appropriate to their age. Generally the sizes and the quality of the playing materials, in the K.G are not adequate to the development of the whole child.

Abdibiyya has lower and upper K.G. sections. There are 53 children, 23 girls and 30 boys in the lower K.G whose ages ranges between 4 and 5 years of 4-5 years. In the upper K.G there are 49 children, of which 18 female and 31 male of age between 5 and 6 years. The size of the class is 7 x 5 meter and 7.5 x 5.0 meter respectively. The rooms have two windows each. The wall painted blue and white. The ceiling is also painted white. Twelve benches locally made of wood with a good finish are arranged in two rows facing the blackboard. Each bench can accommodate up to 5 children. One chair and table lies near the blackboard. Different pictures of trees and animals were fixed on the walls. There are about 80 students to the other side of the K.G., the elementary section from (1-4). The two programs share the playing materials, the lunchroom and the playing field. There is a separate toilet for the elementary section. However, both programs are headed and managed by the same director. Two teachers are working in the K.G and 6 are working in the elementary. The owner assigns the director; he is also the administrative financial head of the college.

4.6 The Practice of Teaching Learning in Abdibiyya kindergarten

In the following section I will present and describe my observation in Abdibiyyaa kindergarten and as well as data from my interviewees

The first day in Abdibiyya Kindergarten:

I arrived on January 10, 2008 quarter to 8 at the gate of Abdibiyya to collect evidences for the study under way. The gate was open, no guard at a time. I met, two female teachers whom I know before, they welcomed me. I started glancing to the environment. Children were streaming to school, with red sweater and boys with black trouser and girls with (kemis). The K.G children and elementary students have the same entrance and exit. A few children

were accompanied by their parents, carrying bags, water with plastic glasses and lunch boxes they were chatting and talking with each other. While observing the ongoing activities, I heard the crying sound of a child, I stared to the source of the sound, it was a child coming to school with his father the boy was crying because his father was beating him. The child was responding, "I am sick, I want to go back." Both in Afan Oromo and in Amharic languages the father yelled, "*Let you die, you don't go with me.*" The process goes for a bout of five minutes. Then after I asked the father of *the child why he crying*, the father told me, "*every Monday he has such type of habit, wants to play outside of the school, he is not sick.*" After arranging with the teacher, the father of the child left the school. The child becomes one of the focuses of information during my observation weeks.

At 8.30a.m, flag ceremony was held without flag in front of the U-shaped classrooms. Oromia national anthem was song, then the students dispatched to their respective classes in line with K.G first. This week, I observed the on going activities of the K.G, and the elementary sections since they share the same compound. (The observation is described in the context of the K.G.)

The second week in the K.G (Classroom Observation): January 11, 2008

The first class I observed was L.K.G; Children of this class are at the age of (4-5) years. Every child stood up as I entered the class. I said "akkam bultan", they replied "akkam bultan barsiisa" meaning good morning class" they consider any guest who come to the class to be a teacher.

I told them to sit down; they replied again, "galatoma barsiisa." Meaning tank you teacher. Then the teacher told the children to take out their Mathematic exercise book (they have two types of Mathematic exercise book, one for homework and the other for class work. The teacher wrote: *HERREGA meaning mathematics (Lakkoofsa /Numbers)*: on the board, she introduced the lesson by making children sing a song of numbers from 1-10 and briefed the day's lesson by revising the previous lesson. The lesson was about reading and writing numbers from 51-to 55.

The teacher taught reading the number by reading the numbers using pointing sticks. The children roared after the teacher, and then the students turn by turn came to the blackboard in place of the teacher. The procedure was repeated for several times just like a parrot. When the teacher saw, children talk to each other or any distractive conditions (she thinks and believes) she nodded to them and say "Wa si argen jira (meaning I have seen you), behave like a student, sit properly". It was observed the teacher often mixes Afan Oromo, Amharic and English during the lesson and Afan Oromo letters with English letters. During this time, teacher, was asking the questions, like "(neembeeriin ma'a)" What are numbers?

The teacher stabilized the lesson making that students to write numbers from 51 to 55 on the blackboard and summarizing the lesson by using abacas' at the end of the lesson. Just after 30 minutes, the teacher finished the first lesson. The L.K.G teacher teaches all subject, (Afan Oromo, Science Math, English. except aesthetics,[music, art and Health and Physical Education) .The second period was for English, the teacher came, and asked the children to take out English exercise books in Afan Oromo. The teacher looked cheerful. She wrote English alphabet both Capital and Small letters (E, F, G, H) and small alphabets [e, f, g, h] on the board. She repeated the same procedure done in Mathematic period. The teacher mixed Afan Oromo with English, the children also repeated in the same way as well, no teaching aids used, but speaking and listening repeatedly. During this time three children requested for toilet, she refused to allow them. Toileting is possible only during break time; there was one more period for the break. The other child was weeping the whole period; the teacher did not give attention to the boy. After the class is over, I asked her about the child as we went off the class. The teacher said; "He always weeps every Monday morning" (the other child was also crying on Monday). I took the child out of the class and asked him why he was crying. He said "ayoon koo mana hinjirtu, isheen yaadeni" meaning "my mother is not at home I missed her". I talked with the teacher about the family of the child if she knows, but she told me that she does not.

The third period was Afan Oromo. The procedure of teaching this subject was the same except the content reading, repeating, At 10 AM, the bell rang for the break. The children ran towards toilet and queue in two rows (boys and girls). The caregiver was there to serve the children. There was no water, the toilet was dry latrine, and it smelt bad. The break time was for 30 minutes, it was time for toilet and play. Some of them play football, in the field with ball made of clothes, others play hide and seek, others slider, swing and free play. I observed girls play only with girls and boys with boys. At the far end of the field five girls were playing brides (when I approached and watched them playing, they immediately ran away being ashamed of in what they were doing. The 30-minute break time was a short for child of this age. The bell rang and children dispersed to class for additional two periods until lunch. Two children were running late to the class. They saw their teacher in the class and Yelled "barsisitun har'a nu ajefiti" meaning "the teacher will kill us today". The class ended at 11: 30 for lunch. Every child took their lunch box from lunch box room with the help of the caregiver (taker). Their move was quiet and in line. The caregiver poured some water to their hand. After washing their hands, took sit in the lunchroom, which was wide and accommodated all. They were told to open their lunchbox and to eat, but pray ceremony was not observed. Among 98 children (first day), seven children were eating pasta, macaroni and rice. The others were eating the usual meal injira with wat. This extends for 30 minutes. After lunch, the children were told to go to the toilet. At 12:30, every body was on his/her bench in his /her class for napping (nap). Every child was told to sleep, resting his/her heads on the bench. I asked some of them if it was voluntary or not. They told me that if someone is found not sleeping he would be beaten, as one of the children, for instance told me: *'Even if I do not sleep, I have to close my eyes and pretend sleeping'*. The nap was for about an hour, the next 30 minutes is for recreation in the compound. After- noon at 2:00 p.m. class starts, and ends at 3:00 p.m in the afternoon.

For the U.K.G, it was H.P.E and Music. Children were outside of the classroom. During the music period, they were singing different songs under the shade of the trees. As the weather was hot, this gave them the opportunity to cool themselves. As go-home-bell rang, children were running towards their point of departure which is in front of the U-shaped building after collecting their on this Lunch box. On this go home ceremony they usually sing, a song about HIV and one additional about their school. At 3:15 they started the home journey. A few of parents were waiting them, the rest were going without accompany of their parents. This is the daily practice of the school.

My observation in the class and outside the class had provided me with vivid images. Environment, teachers' and other personnel, and children were my focus of attention. The interaction of these characters with the curriculum in hand or in use, and the technology make the teaching -learning process, which is the focus of my case study .In addition to this, interview was conducted to collect data and to validate the data collected through observation. The following section describes the interviews I made.

4.7 Curriculum

Curriculum varies according to the value of the system, the culture of the society and others. Curriculum is a value-laden term to the extent that its definitions are closely tied to certain value system (Abebe Bekele, 1986:40). Hapkins, in Solomon (200:67) defined curriculum as all the experiences that contribute to the growth and development of the pupil. Bestlor in Solomon (2007:67) also defines Curriculum as all the subjects to be studied in the course .These show the Curriculum as two folds; Curriculum as product and as a process. Solomon (2007:10), furthermore he explained the two folds of curriculum as follows. If education is viewed and planned as product, then curriculum is a finished document to be executed to achieve predetermined objectives. If education is seen as process of understanding and thereby acquiring knowledge, then curriculum is guideline or a proposal that facilitates the process according to the needs of the learners to be

implemented under different context. Thus from my practice and above definition the syllabi, textbooks, teachers' guide and manuals are curriculum elements. The other definition of curriculum gives a more comprehensive meaning, a means and ways that facilitate children's learning such as guideline is a curriculum. The way of putting the guideline into action is curriculum implementation. Hence, I use curriculum as guideline and as a document in this study.

In teaching-learning process, the interaction of curriculum, teacher and pupil make learning. Hence the role curriculum plays in the process is a paramount, furthermore, educational planning, implementation and evaluation of the education is impossible without curriculum. Therefore, it is important to investigate the curriculum in use and its model.

In our country, the general framework of school curriculum (syllabus) is prepared by ICDR at national level, but the Regional Governments have the right to adapt according to their contexts. The Regional Governments use the syllabus prepared by ICDR to prepare curricula materials. However, early childhood curriculum (kindergarten education), is not yet prepared by ICDR but a general guideline was serving as a curriculum document issued in 1994 by MOE. The document suggests the entry year of the child to be (4-5) years, the duration to be for two years in which the whole development of the child is a central theme of the document. The contents listed in the document are academic and non-academic. The academic subjects are, English, mother language, Math's, Environment science, and aesthesis. This includes H.P.E, music, art, and play (MOE; 1995:4). In the following paragraphs, I will examine through observation and interview, the curriculum in use and its type in Abdibiyya kindergarten. This is for the reason that, the nature and implications of the curriculum under operation are also the concern of my study.

The kindergarten uses a curriculum not from the obvious policy, but the annual and daily lesson plan show the contents the children learn, the methods employed, teaching aids, objectives and evaluation) teachers of the

K.G told me about the curriculum in use but unable to trace its where from. The teacher explained how they prepare their lessons'

It is prepared in the same way we trained in the K.G training centre. It is very important in preparing children for grade.

(Tsehay)

Another teacher in the same KG also has similar view about the nature and source of the curriculum when he says:

We do not have any source of the curriculum but the school administration told us to copy the lesson plan from previously made plan, there are no books either.

(Meseret)

On the other hand the director of the KG has the following to say about lack of definitive curriculum lack of any guiding curriculum or curriculum document.

--- we are using the curriculum we have found from different school Addis Ababa and made some modification, such as the omission of Amharic and the inclusion of Afan Oromo, mostly we translate it in to Afan Oromo or use some commercial books from bookstores .

(Director)

The KG uses the curriculum used by the KGs as the director told, and its nature is behaviourist. It uses stimulus response as a motivating factor. However, developmentally appropriate curriculum (DAC) is the curriculum that able the educators (teachers, caregivers) to create the whole development of the child.

4.8 Teachers

One of the teachers in Abdibiyya KG has the following to tell by way of claiming to have love of the teaching profession:

I am proud of teaching children, they give me happiness, and this caused me to stay in the field."

(Tesehay)

Similarly, her colleague added the following about her commitment and love to her job:

Even though I don't have assistance, I like teaching, I treat children equally this gives me joy.

(Meseret)

The unit leader of the school who is responsible to coordinate and follow the activities in the school opposed, the assertion made by the K.G teachers when he said:

Children of the rich men are neat and look good, so they are attractive to be embraced, while the poor once are shabby. These teachers used to drink water from the bottle of children of the rich parent (highland) and check the meal of these children ignoring the poor ones."

(The unit leader)

The child of six years old supports the assertion of the unit leader as he told me during our chatting about his teacher during the lunchtime saying: 'Gaaftokkoo dabookoo fudhate nyate'.

U.K.G child of 6 year

Meaning one day the teacher took my bread and ate it. The child whom I talked is from the well to-do parent. When I asked why she took. He said, Ni beeloteeti ka" meaning, because she was hungry.

The assertion of teachers about the love of the profession and children need further study. The observation and the interviews show the inadequacies of their assertion. Early childhood teachers are supposed to help children in their cognitive, physical and socio-emotional development. However, as it is seen the development of "the whole" child is under question in the Abdibiyya kindergarten. The unit leader of the school expressed the work of the K.G on the three domains and the way the check the development. *We have a checklist about their development, through their homeroom teacher*

--- Unit leader

Contrary to this teachers consider early childhood education and the development of the 'whole child' as merely the academic progress of the child that help them to pursue their education in grade one. The homeroom teacher elaborated the "check list" mentioned by the unit leader as: *The*

children are booked (black listed) only when they misbehave Both K.G Homeroom teachers.

The practice observed both in the class and outside class show the traditional (talk- listen) way of teaching and learning. The teacher speaks, the children listen. The teacher read, the children repeat (loudly) several times. This was what often dominates in the KG. Children are considered like a parrot to repeat what the teacher says. The school director a veteran and teacher confirmed this when he says:

The teachers teach by using different teaching methods. Nevertheless, due to different reasons explanation and recitations are dominantly used. Children practice through repetitions and also some teaching aids are used, visual aids, only pictures of animals and plants are seen, abacas.

Director

The unit leader of the school supplemented to the directors' view and added his view on the need of more styles of teaching. He said:

I think we are employing the old methods. Today's children are more active and conscious than us (but he is young). They need new approach and new styles, which are more active in manipulating children's learning. Therefore, it is important to think of the better.

Unit leader

However, teachers of the Abdibiyya kindergarten are seemed to be comfortable with the method they are employing in teaching children. This was apparent when one of them, for instance, has the following to say:

--- I am proud of teaching. I prepare the lesson plan and briefly explain so that my children catch the lessons without difficulty. Some times I use story telling, hibbo, makmasa when they are tired.

Tsehay

4.9 Teachers' Attitude, Qualification and Love of Children

Virtually it is not a simple task to know one's attitude and towards something. However, the two phenomenons influence one other, exist together. Positive attitude can a rise love something or love someone .The converse is also true. People are more active and fruitful in what they believe and think positive. The actual practice is an indicator of the attitude and a love of some one (something). To describe and analysis the attitudes of teachers in Abdibiyya KG, I used my observation and interview made with two teachers.

The teachers trained as K.G teacher since they could not get a pass mark to pursue their higher education, or could not join other job. So it is hard to believe (imagine) that the love of children and the positive attitude the teachers claim is .I have seen, the way these teachers treat children in the class and outside the class. They never care for the children during my observation. For instance, Tsehay, the UKG teacher, has the following to say about the way she became a KG teacher as follows *'I was employed here when I couldn't able to get some other Job. Even though teaching children is a tiresome duty I like it and love children'*

The two teachers reported that they are trained and qualified to teach for this level, they both graduated from kindergarten teachers training institute in Nekemte town. Both teachers have the following to express about the education they obtained during their training. They told the experience and the education they obtained. One of them, for instance, has the following to say:

The institute trained us well and we teach as you see. There were different courses, teaching practice, and preparing teaching aids, caring children and other. It took for 10 months.

The other instance that verifies the above assertion is class observation in

which the child was crying (weeping) for the whole two periods; she did not care (Tsehay). There was no sign or expression of love such as smiling, embracing, caring, compassion etc. During my stay in the K.G I did not see, teacher kissing or embracing children. The attitude and love of teachers towards their children can be expressed in different ways, but one of the parents has to say about the practice of teachers and KG when he says the following:

The teachers beat children like the kes; I think they did not train in the modern ways of teaching children. Our children told us that the director's office is the place where children are beaten and interrogated.

(One of the parents)

Regarding these issues, Mesert has something to point out:

When a child is found guilty such as disturbing, beating others, repeatedly not doing homework or similar cases he/she will be taken to the director. The director takes a measure from corporal punishment up to suspension from the KG. I myself believe on the practice of corporal punishment of children.

Despite their claim the practice of the teachers shows what they are doing, but Meseret went saying: *'I love children very much and I am proud of teaching them'*.

It can therefore be summarized that the teachers of Abdibiyya kindergarten's attitude in apposition to enhance the whole development of the child. Their love towards the profession or to the children never observed nor manifested. This has a great impact on the process of teaching -learning of children or on the practice of early childhood education.

Their practice as seen in the class and outside the class is highly centralized, (teacher-centred). This domination is a strange phenomenon for children who came from their home for the first time. The transition from home-to school should be so smooth, and create a school as a resemblance to home and their teachers like parents, especially like a mother.

4.10 Factors Influencing Early Childhood Education

Different contexts have either an enhancing or a retarding influence. Some of the factors affecting the process as seen through observation are class size, in which the number of children in U.K.G and L.K.G are 53 and 49 respectively. Lack of assistance teachers in both levels (L.K.G and U.K.G), seating arrangement, (facing the blackboard only) and long benches, the management of the KG, lack of nap places, lack of drinking water, lack of water for sanitation the inadequacy of toilet and playing materials. Regarding these factors, one of the teachers, for instance, has the following to describe:

Even though I like teaching children, it is hard teaching 49 children without assistance. When, I teach some of them are engaged in different activities and talk. Therefore, I have to interrupt my lesson and do some advisory service.

(Tsehay)

The management of the KG, the director, is stretched between K.G, elementary school administration and colleges' financial and administrative activities. The unit leader has the following to describe:

The time the school management gives to the kindergarten education is negligible. They are engaged in the elementary and colleges work.

(Unit leader)

There is no potable water, so the children should bring from their home for the whole day. The school will supply water for washing their hands during lunchtime only. After lunch, children take nap on their benches under the supervision of their respective teacher. Taking nap is appreciated by the caregiver as follows:

The children take nap on the benches they are sitting after lunch; this might refresh them for the class after lunch.

(Caregiver)

One of the children I contacted, for instance, tells the following about the situation:

The teacher tells us to close our eyes and sleep on the bench we are sitting. If some body is found seeing, he will be beaten. So we will sleep or close our eyes without being slept.

- (A child of age 6)

From the above factors the nurturing and the care of children is minimal but learning deepens where there is care and nurture of the learner (Bruce, 2004: 29).

In Abdibiyya kindergarten, children are allowed to toilet only during the break time and lunchtime, three periods before break, and two periods after break. This has a physiological effect on children, as their organs are not well developed. Developmentally appropriate guidance (regulation) is not used. Hence, the above factors instead of inducing influence on the teaching-learning process, it might produce hate, dissatisfaction, lack of trust on their teachers and others.

The class size, which is 53 and 49 children in L.K.G and U.K.G, respectively is a burden for the teacher without assistant. The director on the other side opposes the necessity of assistance teacher. He argues, "The Number of children is manageable for one teacher, and the number of children in Governmental school is higher than this. They pay only 45 birr per month. It can be evidenced from this that, know how of the school director about early childhood education is poor. Caring and nurturing were not given due attention. The teachers blame the school for the inconvenient, but they are also doing worse, taking the school administration as scapegoat. The above data shows the influencing factors on teaching-learning process both from teachers and researchers perspectives.

Tina (1991: 142) explained teachers' children ratio; children under five need a maximum adult, child ratio of 1: 13. Teachers who work with 1: 30 ratio in a class of 4 years old cannot be blamed for achieving less observation of free play. Factors influencing the teaching learning process in the Abdibiyya KG are emanated from several roots. First, the background of the director, his experience as a teacher and as administrator. The knowledge he has about

early childhood education made him to neglect the caring and nurturing of children. He is committed to the academic achievement only and merely on administrative techniques. Second, in the classroom the seating arrangement does not enhance for activity-oriented teaching. Thirdly, although the large area of the K.G is seen as positive influencing factors while the playing materials are not adequate and are not appropriate to the developmental age of the children.

4.11 Pedagogy of Children's Learning

The modern theory of learning suggest that children learn more when they indulge in activities, interact with adults and other children, explore their environment, engage in a stimulating and interesting content, actively involved in learning, consider learning an enjoyable and a tool for further understanding etc. Temechegn (2001: 25-27), and Amare (2000:75-76). The means through which children learn actively is through play. The teacher is the primary agent to facilitate play-based learning.

In a Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) curriculum, play is an essential means for mental growth. DAP guidelines prepared by Bereckamp (1997) cited in White (2003: 277) stress that children develop, intellectually, socially, physically and emotionally through play. Child initiated, child-directed, and teacher supported play is a primary component of developmentally appropriate practice (Charles Worth, 1998, cited in White; (2000:278).

- ☞ To this end, the pedagogical model used in Abdibiyya Kindergarten is speaking-listening process. The teacher speaks the children to listen (forced to listen if not). The utilization of teaching aid is minimal. Other types of methodology are not used. The method used is highly controlled by the teacher. It is teacher-centred approaches. However, the modern era is dominated by student-centred approach (Amare; 2000: 8).

Teaching-Learning process in KGs should take the form of play. However, the director of the Abdibiyya kindergarten has an apposing view and practice

concerning the role of play in early childhood education. This is apparent when he says:

The time the children spend in playing in the kindergarten is small. Play distracts children from learning. Parents send their children to kindergarten not to play. Therefore, the school has a full responsibility in controlling and guiding children not to spend their time in playing. Knowledge can be obtained when children are engaged in knowing instead of play.

(Director)

The two teachers in the K.G also agree to the views of director. This is apparent, for instance, when one of them has the following to say:

Children want to play instead of learning. We advise those children who give most of their school time to play not to do so. Such children are weak in learning. We discuss the issues with their parents. If they pursue playing, the director takes appropriate measures (punishment, beating, snapping, hissing).

(Meseret)

Playing takes place during the break time. The playing materials in the K.G aren't adequate to give service; other types of playing materials are not available.

↳ The teaching-learning process does not enhance children for creativity, for problem-solving and critical thinking. Regarding the predisposition of the director, the teachers added to the culture of the society towards children education is some of the hindering factors. Neither the director or the unit leader, nor the teachers virtually seem to have had early childhood experience in kindergarten. These are of the factors that give momentum to keep the status quo.

Plato in his book *the republic (Viii)* indicated the way children should learn although he did not consider the psychological effect it has on children learning, he had the following advice to all:

For the free man there should be no element of slavery in learning. Enforced exercise does no harm to the body but enforced learning will not stay in the mind. So avoid compulsion, and let your children's lesson take the form of play.

Plato (the republic, V-viii) cited in Pratt, 1980

In addition, Froebel cited in Bennet, et al (2001: 171) gave the role of play and its value to the child as follows: *Play is the purest, most spiritual activity of the child and gives joy, freedom, contentment, inner rest, and peace in the world. It is the source of all what is good.*

4.12 Parent K.G. Interaction (Relationship)

Early childhood education starts at home at the age 0. At the age of 4, the education of children in-group setting starts in the institution called kindergarten (children world). The first person to the child is the mother or the caregiver. The second person is the father of the child. The third person is the teacher (Tina and Meggitt; 1996:154-155). Hence, the teacher has a role of mother and a teacher in school to induce the new environment. The first day of children in the kindergarten is one of the factors that influence their later stay in the kindergarten Wills and Setegeman (1951: 101) described the matter as follows:

...how they (children) are received into the school will greatly influence the ease of their later adjustments. They need to feel that kindergarten is a friendly place where wanted and welcome.

The relationship between home and kindergarten must be planned for overall development of the whole child (ibid; 1951: 73). The participation of parents in the early childhood education in the kindergarten helps to meet the needs of children, families and the kindergarten (Catron and Allen; 1993: 48). Therefore, kindergarten education has to be the continuation of the home process, in which the teachers (caretakers) replace the family for the duration in the kindergarten, even though their roles are not the same. The communication between the kindergarten and the parent should take place, in the way it enhances their relationship.

The kindergarten educator can do many things with parents; get information about their children from the parents. For the fact that parents are the child's first educator (Tina, 1996: 155), the school should promote partnership that increases parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional and academic, growth of children (White and Coleman, 2000: 65).

The involvement of parents in Abdibyya kindergarten was investigated in two ways, through observation and talk with parents and the through interview with school director and teachers. The director, for instance, has the following to describe concerning Parents-kindergarten relationship, which he observed and practiced:

Some of the parents send their children to educate, others send to be cared and play. The kindergarten has the objectives to educate children, in such away that, parents can see the exercise given, the lesson learned from the home work page given to the child. Parents are requested to put their signature on the homework page. In this regard partly, we are successful. We hear the parents' word at different instances; when we consult a parent about his child's failure (in academics) or his/her absentee from the school, and other issues. Some parents ask us to punish their children as they disturb them at home. The school management has the involvement of parents through their representative usually called PTA (Parent-teacher-association). We make a general meeting of parents once in a year. When there is a problem on the side of the child, we will call the parents, discuss the case, and seek solutions. Our teachers make a home visit when the child is absent from the school for about three or more days.

The director then went describing other practice as:

We give advisory service through our caregiver about children nutrition. The practice of feeding children in a scientific is less emphasized. The traditional way is in the progress. For example, in our town, fish is abundant; the price is very low when compared to beef. One kilogram cost 4 birr for fish and 24 birr for beef. The society does not feed fish himself and his children. On such issues through our caregiver, we give advisory services. The most things the parent wants to see is, his child finished the food he/she brought to the school.

Director

One of the two teachers in Abdibiyya K.G expressed the parent kindergarten relationship as a relationship solution seeking when she says:

If the child does not accomplish his/her class work or homework or if the problem is observed, such as disturbing in the class or weak in his/her learning, I will contact the parent, through telephone, sending letter or making a home-visit and discuss the issue with Parents.

(Tsehay)

I met one of the members of the PTA and discussed about the parental involvement in the K.G. and he pointed out the following:

The school nominated me as a member of PTA at the beginning of this year. They told us to do together, but we did not plan or had a meeting afterwards. After all we (the PTA) were not elected by the parents, we do not know what to do in the school, there is no job description given to us.

He further explained as follows:

Our involvement in the school is just to be seen in front of the meeting in parents day likewise I as a parent did not appear to discuss about my child's learning, and others don't do either. Only parents of children's with problem, especially disciplinary case visit the school when they are called.

(One of the parent and PTA members)

The partnership between the K.G and the parents as the interviewees explained is not a continuous process and an inclusive. Only parents of children, with problems or difficulties are invited for discussion or a home visit is made only when children are absent from the school. The PTA formed by the KG is nominal. Neither the school nor the parents benefited from it.

Generally, the kindergarten administration and the teachers have a weak relationship with the parents and the community. School and parents should work together for the whole development of the child. This is not seen in the K.G, The relationship between the school and the parents or the community should go beyond temporary solution seeking. They should understand the strategically importance of each other. As seen, the relationship is only expressed on the homework page, teachers' visit and invitation of parents of the less achievers and the one with disciplinary problems.

CHAPTER FIVE
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA
YENEGETESFA KINDERGARTEN

5.1 The Context

I labelled a pseudo name “*Yengetesfa*” to my second case, a kindergarten understudy in Bishoftu City, 45 km East of Addis Ababa. In this section I describe the context of the kindergarten vis-à-vis early childhood education. Direct observation, documentaries and administrator's interview were used to describe the context of the kindergarten. General description about the city is also presented to inform my audience the context of the city regarding early childhood education.

Bishoftu (former name of Debrezeit), is one of the first ranked cities in Oromia regional state under the administration of the regional government (Chafe). It is divided into 3 sub-cities and 9 Kebeles (the smallest administration unit). According to statistical data from the City Council, the population is about 136,000 (City Council 2000 E.C). The City is administered by a council of cabinet headed by the Mayer, appointed by Oromia Regional Government president. The education office head is a member of the cabinet of the city administration. The city is strategically important for investment such as horticulture, industry, agro- processing and tourism. There are different sectors owned by the Federal Government such as: Ethiopian Air force, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Defence Engineering, Bishoftu Research Institute, Ziquala Steel Rolling and others. In the education sector there are two governmental owned general secondary schools and one technical and the other preparatory school. The city has 45 years of experience in early childhood education. The first kindergarten in the city was among the pioneers kindergarten in the country and established in 1955 E.C.by the Ministry of Social Welfare (MOE and UNICEF 2007).In 1958 the second kindergarten established by the then military and civil workers of air force (Harer meda mesenado Yearbook 1960 E.C).The two

kindergartens are still functional under the Government. On the other hand there are three general secondary schools, 24 elementary schools and 34 kindergartens owned by the private sector. The population of children in the kindergartens, according to statistical data from the educational office (1999 E.C) of the city is 3490, of which 1905 are female and 1916 are male. Amharic language is used as medium of instruction in all kindergartens. Yenegetesfa kindergarten established in 1990 E.C, is one of the thirty four privately owned Kindergartens. The owner had been on the teaching profession for long period teaching in secondary schools in Ethiopia. Yenegatesfa has grown up to the second cycle of primary school .The elementary and kindergarten sections are in different compounds with different administration. Yenegetesfa kindergarten is a compound with an area of five hundred square meters, which has masonry fence and two blocks of teaching classes.

Each block has two classes relatively large and three classes relatively small. On the back of side one of the blocks, there are a two holes dry latrines. The classes have cemented floor, painted ceiling, plastered and painted wall. Classroom organization is in such way that three children share one desk made of metal and wood appropriate to there age. There are also benches made of metal used during lunch and break time outside the classroom. The blackboard is wide and placed at a distance of two meters from the first row. There is a tap water running all the time. The veranda of the blocks are used as staffroom to rest and to prepare their lessons and to correct exercises during there leisure time. The owner heads the primary section (grades 2-8) and an employed female heads kindergarten section that includes grade one. Yenegetesfa was established on 500 square meters area .The compound has two blocks. One block has two rooms while the other block has three classes. The dimensions of the classes vary. The smallest one is 20 square meters and the largest is 30 square meter, the others are between 20 and 30 square meters. In front of the two blocks, there is Miliya tree, which is used for shading by children; there is a tap water all the time. Dry latrine is at the back of the block, with two holes. The floor is cemented,

and the roof is ceiled and painted white. The seating arrangements are all the same for children of different age, facing blackboard (traditional row arrangement). Three children sit on one desk. The five rooms serve as class for nursery, lower kindergarten, upper kindergarten and grade one. There are two nursery sections, each with 57 children; one lower KG, one upper KG and one section for grade one.

At the gate, there is a guardroom but also service as the lunchbox station. There is no lunchroom or rest room either, one of the nursery room serve as napping, and the other as film watching room after lunch. In addition the Veranda of one of the blocks serves as the dinning area, and the shade of the tree as resting place ("holding place").

Regarding the management of the KG, the head teacher has been served the K.G for seven years, trained to K.G teacher and completed diploma program through in service program. There are six teachers, one assistant teacher, one caregiver, one cleaner and guard. The head teacher is accountable to the owner, who is the manager of the elementary section. The K.G is detached from the elementary in academic administration but the finance is run by the administration of the elementary school. All academic issues are handled by the K.G itself. Logistics and financial issues are run by the owner. Furthermore some external relations are dealt by the owner such as contact with the educational office.

The play materials exhibited are slider and Merry Go Round, but out of use. There are dolls and locally made teaching aids displayed in the nursery section. The following Section is about data description, interpretation and analysis. It is organized under the following themes: the teaching-learning process, the interaction between teachers' children and teachers' parents, and finally factors affecting the education of early childhood education.

5.2 Teaching-learning Process

A teaching- learning system involves inputs, process and outputs. Amare (2000: 77) described the systematic nature of teaching and learning as given in the below box.

Inputs	Process	Output
Curriculum, teachers students technology	Interaction of Curriculum, teachers, students and technology	Knowledge, skills attitude

Now a day's educators believe that learning depends much on the Learners' Investment of Mental Effort (AIME, Amare: 77). Hence, the teacher is the facilitator of student's learning. Each components of the process are essential to make the process functional. In the process each components has role to the play. In early childhood education the curriculum must be the one that promotes the development of the child. The curriculum has to consider the context, the content and the child (1991: 8). The role of the teacher is a facilitator of learning. Their commitment, attitude and love of the profession are important for teaching-learning process in order to have the whole development of the child. The teaching technology has to match the developmental stages of the child. In the following section before describing the teaching -learning process, the components are described.

5.3 Curriculum and its Implementation

Ministry of Education (MOE; 1993: 1), described curriculum as a planned body of learning experiences, organized by grades and levels, presented as syllabus, teachers' guide, pupils' text, teaching aids and other educational inputs. Temechegn (on his teaching material prepared for graduate studies) defined curriculum design as an academic curriculum design, in which its focus is on a body of knowledge stratified into subject matters (Temechegn; 2005: 27). In this theme, I will describe the content of the curriculum; the

methods used and profile of the teachers, the preparation of the curriculum (the textbooks or any other curricular materials), and the implementation of early childhood program in Yenegetesfa Kindergarten.

The K.G has a full day program, starts at 8: 30 a.m morning and ends at 3: P.M after noon. There are seven periods, five mornings and two afternoons in a day. The length of one period is 40 minutes. The contents are divided into 7 subjects: these are Amharic, English, Mathematics, Environmental science, Health and Physical Education, Music, and Arts. The subjects are all offered to the different levels of the K.G (Nursery, L.K.G and U.K.G), and taught by different teachers (the class is not self-contained). However, special attention is given to English, Mathematics and Environmental Science.

English and Mathematics have five periods per week, that a maximum period, and Aesthetics (H.P.E, Music and art) have the least, that is six period in a week. Beside this, mathematics and science are given both in Amharic and English, calling it math's in Amharic, and Math's in English and Science in Amharic and Science in English. The curriculum in use (the syllabus the textbooks) are reported to be adapted from abroad and organized in the school by the school teachers, The head teacher explained the situations as follows:

Kindergarten teachers prepare the curricula materials every year. A group of five teachers is organized during summer and organizes the teaching material for the three levels of the K.G. from the annual plan.

(Head teacher)

As I have observed, the teaching materials are used as both a book and exercise book. The children do their class-work and homework from this book on the exercise book as mentioned by the head teacher. The school (the K.G) does not have a syllabus. It uses the annual plan for the preparation of the curriculum materials. The head teacher told that the annual plans are copied from the previous years. The syllabus prepared by MOE in 1995 is not in use either. The K.G has no idea about the syllabus at all. Hence, the

curriculum in use is prepared in the K.G by the K.G teachers, and it is highly dominated by teachers-activities and a behaviourist model. Thus, it is an academic design only. It enriches only the cognitive development of the child; where as the whole development of the child is not considered in the curriculum. The curriculum contents given in Yenegetesfa kindergarten is dominated by academics subjects (Amharic, English, Mathematics and Environmental Science)and little attention is given for aesthetics (Music Art and H.P.E), moral education and play) appendix. The following shows the period allotment of the subjects in a week

Subject	Period allotment
Amharic and Science each	4
English, and mathematics each	5
Aesthetics	6
Moral	1
Play	1
Math's in English	5
Science in English	4
TOTAL	35

The educational expert of the city, whom I talked, supports the above idea about the curriculum in use of the KGs when he tells:

There is no curriculum prepared for the KGs; we do not know what the kindergartens are doing .We work only on the physical settings and on its organizations. We are concerned on the standard of the KGs, which focuses on the materials and physical setting. The Woreda educational office is authorized to give accreditation for K.G and elementary sectors. The Regional Educational Bureau gives the standard. It requires the profile of teachers, classroom size, resting room, playing materials, indoor and outdoor playing field a suitable environment free from hazards, noises etc, Based on this we give accreditation for the qualified one. Most of the KGs teaching-learning process proceeds according to their program. Most of them prefer English as medium of instruction to Amharic. Mathematics, in English and science in English are given in addition to mathematics in

Amharic and Science in Amharic. The owners of KGs say, "we are using the foreign curriculum" and they are proud of it. We do not supervise the teaching learning process at all.

(Educational expert)

From the observation and above data it can be concluded that the education office does not supervise the curriculum exercised in the KG. They count only on the hardware (physical and human context) of the system. True but, the soft ware of the system (curriculum) is as important as the hardware. Hence, the provision of curriculum development and supervision of implementation are left for the kindergartens.

On the other hand the Ministry of Education has issued a curriculum Guide set in 1995. In the document contents, period allotment and materials necessary for the programs were listed and mentioned. In contrast to the curriculum used in the K.G, the documents give emphasis on different children's activities, such as free play, socially and privately useful work, physical exercise, art and music. The total period given for these is eighteen out of twenty-five. The academics are Language, Environmental Science and Mathematics and seven periods are allotted. In addition the length of one period is twenty five minutes. Different materials mentioned in the document are: building blocks, toys, family corner, healthy corner, shop corner, science corner and others.

5.4 Teachers Profile, Commitment and Love of Children

In Yenegetesfa kindergarten there are seven teachers and one assistance teacher. All of them are about the same age and qualified as a K.G teacher from kindergarten training institution. The head teacher had a further training in the education field in diploma. All of them had no early childhood experience in the K.G. The teaching experience they had varies from two years to seven years. As observed and interpreted they did not attend any capacity building training during their teaching years. The assistance teacher and the caregiver are pursuing kindergarten training in the evening program.

Their commitment to the field of teaching children is explained by the teachers themselves. The assistant teacher tells that it developed just after her employment s a KG. The assistant teacher-explained her change of behaviour as follows:

Before my employment, I didn't consider educating children as impressive as this. I learned a lot from them, I enjoy when I am with them, so I decided to be children's educator for the rest of my life.

(Assistant teacher: Firealem)

During my study period in the K.G,I have observed the collaborative work the teachers exercise in the absence of the owner, which may indicate their commitment for the job.. The affection these teachers have to their children has been expressed during our interview. Even though they claim that they love children, some of them treat children unfairly, beating, hissing, pinching, and insulting.

5.5 Teaching Aids

The teaching aids I have seen in the school are Alphabetical tables, pictures of human body, animals and others mounted on the classroom walls, two toys in the nursery class, abacas and television (not for aids but for entertainment after lunch). These are the only materials to develop innovation, creativity, to learn social-values and different activities. Most of the time, teachers present their lessons orally. Tigist, a teacher with a four years experience in the K.G, briefed her reasons why she does not use teaching aids, as follows: *'Using teaching aids kill my lessons' time; I do not prefer using it most of the time'*.

The teacher prefers lecture method than others because it saves time and able to cover more contents but it makes them passive. The use of teaching aids involves more than one sense that enables children to learn actively. As observed, the K.G is ill stuffed with teaching aids and teachers are accustomed to teach in talk and listen way.

5.6 The Process of Teaching –Learning, in Yenegetesfa

The process of teaching and learning is the interaction of the developed curriculum, the teachers in the program, the technology and the children involved in the program. I describe the process (implementation) going in the Yenegetesfa Kindergarten on the bases of my interviewees, and observation. The head teacher, for instance, described the process of teaching and learning in the KG as follows:

Our kindergarten runs classes from Monday to Thursday. On Friday, there is a test for all children in the K.G, according to the lesson plan. Like other kindergartens ours is not a self-contained class. The teachers use textbooks prepared, available teaching aids. Every day we give homework (This has to be checked by parents). In general most of our lessons are presented in the talk-listen way. The teacher talks elaborate and explains. The children listen and recite what they have 'learned '. We are teaching in the way we were taught, we use the possible means including force to make the children remember the lessons, rarely we use teaching aids.

(Head teacher)

Science and Amharic teachers of L.K.G and U.K.G explained the teaching-learning process in the K.G in such way that they have the following to tell:

Every thing is complete, the compound is not wide, it is comfortable, the children could not be hurt, when I teach science for example about flowers, I tell them to bring flowers from home, and teach them the different parts of the flower.

- Sinke

The other teacher also explained the teaching-learning process in the following way referring to her experience:

We prefer picture instead of real object as a teaching aids. This is to save time, and not to disturb situation. I use play method that makes learning enjoyable, and have a good interaction with children.

- Tigist

The data generated through classroom observation and interview revealed that the dominant teaching method used is lecture or presentation and that of. The Science teacher (Sinke) considered the narrowness of the compound

(500 square meters) comfortable. In the annual and weekly plan prepared there is no suggestion of the use of real or a substitute teaching aids, but Tigist claimed herself as the user of teaching aids and play method of teaching. I observed her class three times in different levels including grade one. I found her class stiff and frozen one. She did not allow an interaction between children during her classes, uses force to manage the class. No smile was seen on her face during the class. Tigist has the following by way of justifying her position:

I do not smile, if I laugh with them they will not learn and consider learning playing, sometimes I even use corporal punishment, which is important for children's learning.

She further briefed the importance of corporal punishment in such way:

Children fear corporal punishment more than any thing else, so that they comply with what we tell them to do.

Teachers use corporal punishment in different settings to keep class discipline and to enforce the desired behaviour as observed during the observation. The head teacher confirmed the exercise of corporal punishment in the K.G. I have seen teachers, caregiver and guard beating children. Even though it is not to hurt them, children do not understand in the same way. I quote the words of six years UKG child against corporal punishment. "I do not want to be a teacher to beat children".

There is no activity oriented learning in the class as I observed. The head teacher also supports my observation when she says:

The knowledge we have about early childhood education is limited. Our teachers do not use activity-oriented instruction, or they do not use play-method or different teaching styles as a means to implement kindergarten program, which are appropriate to their age. The practice of corporal punishment is seen as the means to endorse the program and to maintain class discipline.

(Head teacher)

What I have observed and what some of the teachers tell is contradictory, but in general the teaching-learning process in the K.G is a teacher-centred and the implementation is made in such way that it does not enhance the development of the whole child. The love they have for children is not as they expressed. It doesn't indicate motherhood relation.

5.7 Teachers-children Interaction

The interaction observed during the teaching- learning process in the K.G can safely label as teacher- centred approach. The teacher asks questions, the children raise their hands for the response or the teacher assign the child to read or write. The interaction is not free as reported by teachers. The head teacher described the interaction between the children and teachers as follows:

Children love their teachers and care givers but afraid and don't tell us their needs and their problems this make the interaction weak. The teacher is considered as the figure to be feared. The parents use (abuse) teachers' name to frighten children at home. The parents say" if you do this I will tell to your teacher". This makes children to afraid us. We also punish children when they disturb, beat others and unapt to answer questions. These are some of the hindrances for teacher-children interaction.

(Head teacher)

A nursery teacher Fetench, believes in corporal punishment, which limit their interaction with the children, she explained her idea in the following way:

The learning of children can be successful if children are disciplined. To make them disciplined there must be a person to be feared. This person must be a teacher, who teaches children, otherwise they do not learn, they want to play. The parents send their children to school to learn not to play.

Fetenech, a nursery teacher

The teaching method used does not promote children-teacher interaction. The talk-and listen makes children passive, the teacher read the children repeat. The children's seating is not suitable, there is no mat on the floor, in which the children exercise group work or activity or other. There is no

emphasis on the playing method of learning in which children can freely interact with their teachers and others children. Children are not encouraged to express themselves. These hamper teachers' children interaction. I was chatting with children of UKG seating under the shade of the Maliya tree. I asked them what they want to be in the future. Some of them said a doctor, the other a pilot, an engineer and so, but none of them said a teacher. I again posed question, saying don't you want to be a teacher; a child of age six in the UKG said "I don't want to be a teacher to beat children". For the child the teacher is a legitimated person to beat children. The children are not free to interact with their teachers; this has a negative impact on the development of the child. It is observed that there is a gap between teachers and children (creating hate on the teachers).

5.8 Teachers-teachers Interaction

There are seven teachers, one-assistance teachers, one caregiver, one cleaner and one guard in Yenegetesfa kindergarten. The administration of the KG is lead by the head teacher, who teaches two subjects. The head teacher has the following to describe about the existing interaction among teachers:

Every Friday afternoon we discuss about our work. We discuss issues that need attention and solution about children with difficulty in learning and others (toileting, feeding). Every teacher gives his/her view and participates in the discussion, which is a means to solve problems. When a teacher is found committing error, we discuss on the cases immediately and give solution. The relation among teachers is smooth. We consider each other like a family. The owner does not bother to see us since the work goes smoothly.

The K.G administration seems to practice collective leadership, every body knows what to do, either they teach, or they correct children's exercise, if they do not have class. The relationship among them is smooth. The K.G does not have staff-room, they used to sit under the shade of the tree, and on the veranda during their free period keep doing.

5.9 Children- children Interaction

Interaction among children can be described in the class and outside the class. In the classroom, in the presence of the teacher, any sort of the interaction among children is forbidden for the reason it could make noise. Group work or activity oriented teaching is the one that enhances interaction, but at different levels such type of learning was not seen and the teachers are tied to the old method of teaching. They consider play method of teaching as a time wasting and hard to discipline the child. The assistant nursery teacher indicated that the reasons for restricting children from playing are: *For precautions we don't let children to play-freely* Children learn from each other when they interact each other. The socio-emotional domain is strengthening. Outside the class, there is children-children interaction during the break time and after lunch. Their teacher supervises these. There are no playing materials in the K.G; even there is no ball, or different playing materials such as shop corner, family corner, health corner, science corner, music corner and art corner. In the absence of these playing materials the child-child interaction is limited only to story-telling process among themselves.

5.10 Parent-school Relationship

Relationship between kindergarten and parents is an important aspect in the children's educational development. The kindergarten needs the involvement of parents to know and understand and to investigate the missing domains in the development regarding the bilateral relation; I discussed the issue with a parent of a three years old child. She described the relation she has with the K.G as follows:

When I bring my child to the K.G, he had a problem in eating his meal. Now he eats what he brings to school. He started identifying letters, so I like the K.G. I ask the teachers about my child, they tell what I have to do to help the child progress.

(A parent)

The K.G, parent relation is not formal. There is no means for the involvement of parents in the management. There is no a PTA (Parent-Teacher-Association) through which parents can have a say. There is a meeting once a year during the end of academic year, the closing ceremony. The K.G head teacher mentioned the relation between the Parents and the teachers of the KG as follows:

We have a good relationship with parents, especially with those whose child stayed for two or more years in the K.G. They invite us on their children's birth day, we pay our condolence in the case of the death of the family. Generally we have a good social-relationship. The communication we have is dealt by using letters, home page, notice and communication during arrival time and departure time. When a child becomes beyond the control of the K.G, such as beating others, not doing homework, weak in academic performance, and other we write a letter to their Parents. We seek solution with the parents. Most of the parents (80%) want their children to have academic subject, hence we discuss only on the issues of academic performance and the behaviour of the child.

(The head teacher)

The other teacher also substantiated what the head teacher has said when she says:

Our relation is mostly with the parents of weak students. When we find the child in performing his academic lesson weak we write a letter to the parent. The parents discuss with the teacher and sign for the practicality of the agreement.

(Tigist)

K.G- parent interaction in Ynegetesfa as observed is not benefiting from each other. There is no a plat forum arranged for the parent to participate. There is no Parent- Teacher- Association organized in the K.G. The K.G accepts children at the beginning of the year, and educates them with academics (3R reading, writing and arithmetic). The role of the Parents is specified only to the academics area. One of the parents said the following:

I ask my child's teacher about his progress, she told me his progress during the arrival or departure, on the gate.

She further explained;

I am satisfied at his progress. He finishes his meal; he identifies alphabets and started to communicate.

The child whose mother explained her relation with the teacher was two and half years when he was admitted to K.G as nursery student. The teacher of the specified child had the following to say about their affairs:

It took two months to make the child familiar to the K.G; he did not play and interact with children but only attached to me. This child uses to call me 'mami ', I do have a great affection for him .The mother of this child communicate with me to know the progress of her child.

(Nursery assistant)

The nursery children in the K.G are of age (3-4). These children need a special care and guidance. The environment should be conducive in order to facilitate cognitive, physical and socio-emotional development or integrated development for them (Tina; 1996: 30-31). But the K.G does not fit to nurse these children.

5.11 Factors Affecting Early Childhood Education

The development of the "whole child" and the implementation of early childhood education are influenced by different factors. In this section I describe some of the factors that affected the education of children in the kindergarten under study. The following are some of the factors as observed and witnessed by the interviewees:

The learning environment:

The area of the compound of Yenegetesfa kindergarten is about 500 square meters. There is no playing field for children, to run and play which is important for their physical development. Adequate space is prime importance, to develop children's small muscle activities such as jumping, running, climbing, rolling, swinging etc (Widmor; 1970: 24). Because of this children are not allowed to play (run) and make their own choice of play even at break time in the compound. The head teacher explained her anxiety about the education of the K.G in such way:

The situations are not favourable for children learning, the compound is small to accommodate all, the classrooms are not arranged in the way it enhances activity-oriented learning. There are no playing materials; the compound is full of dust. Even we don't have a single ball.

Head teacher

The situations in Yenegetesfa kindergarten is not conducive for children learning .There are no adequate playing materials ,there is no enough space to play and to make physical movement, there is no adequate toilets. It is difficult to obtain the whole development of the child. The kindergarten must be the place where children enjoy and learn, but the kindergarten in the study is seen only the place where children learn academic. This is taken as a good practice by parents and the owner.

Napping and dinning place

There is no napping and dinning room. Children take nap in the class where they learn on their desk, they eat in their classes. The caregiver of the K.G briefed the situation in the following way:

After lunch children sit under the shade of the tree. Some, who wants to sleep, make rest on their desk. And the other will watch a film in another room.

I saw also children sleeping on their desk with teachers' supervision. Children of about hundred were crowded in one class to watch a film after lunch. The caregiver also explained where and how children are dinning as follows:

They eat their lunch in their respective class and on the veranda of the class. Their meal is quite good. Most of the time, all most all children bring spaghetti, macaroni, rice, and a few of them bring "injera" with "wat". All of the K.G teachers engage in helping children finishes their meal, the patents are happy when they see their children finished their meals.

The caregiver

Concerning the meal of her child, one parent gave her appreciation and due respect to teachers of her child in such way:

My child was two and half years old when he was admitted. before coming to the K.G he was reluctant to eat, but after he started schooling, he empties his lunch box. This is the effort of teachers. I am happy to see my child's lunch box empty after school.

(A mother of 3 year's old child)

Regarding the napping and dinning place of children in the K.G, the parents do not have any notion about the K.G. It is not open for supervision of parents. Every parent or guardian has to be behind the gate. The caregiver and other teacher were observed in feeding children during the go home time. This was the very important task to be accomplished as they told. The parents' attitude towards the K.G depends on the effectiveness of their child eating. It had been a good practice if these were substantiate with care and nurturing.

The class size and classroom arrangement: -

According to MOE (1995) guideline the maximum number of children in one class shouldn't exceed 40 in a class of 63 square meters (MOE; 1995:9) and child space ratio 1: 1.5. In Yenegetesfa the child space (class) ratio is 1:0.64. Hence it is below the standard by 50%. This shows how much the class is crowded especially for nursery. The class arrangement such as tables and desk seating arrangements, arrangements of teaching aids, the type of board used etc are not adequate. Effective classroom arrangement strategy results in positive change in behavioural, communicative, cognitive, social and emotional aspects of kindergarten children (Ziropli, 1995:1). Therefore, the classroom size which is below standard and the small area of the compound do not facilitate early childhood education.

Lack of assistant teacher:

In the document, standard for kindergarten program and primary education by MOE (1995; 9-14), clearly show that in a class of 40 children, there should be one teacher and one assistant teacher. In Yenegetesfa kindergarten there is only one-assistant teacher for 114 children in the nursery class. And the other classes don't have an assistant teacher at all.

Tina (1996: 343) put the ratio of teacher to children in the K.G as 1:13 respectively. To care and nurture 114 children by one teacher is virtually impossible. Hence the implementation of early childhood education in the K.G is not anticipated.

The K.G teachers of Yenegetesfa have had a burden but didn't mention large class size as the problem to implement the program.

Lack of substantial knowledge of early childhood education:

Community the teachers of Yenegetesfa claimed to have the knowledge about early childhood education. But during the implementation, it was observed that they were using the traditional one. They use fear and frustration to execute the program. The two teachers suggested they didn't have early childhood education, instead had a professional courses in their training institute, how to teach children, which is the same with what they had experienced during their schooling in the high school.

Early enrollment of children:

Kindergarten education is an education of children of age 4-6years (MOE; 195: 1-4). Nursery is an institute for caring and nurturing. This is to release mothers and ease them for work. For the children age of (0-4) early childhood education is undertake by the parents and the family at home or in the institution which substitutes home under special care. The caregivers are given the name baby sitters. This is experienced in countries where industrialization is materialized and need human power. It was observed children less than four years were admitted in the KG, where the environment was not conducive for children rearing and nurturing .The head teacher described the case in this way:

At the beginning of the year we are busy in inducing the K.G to the newly enrolled children. It took two or three months to accustom to the environment. Until they familiarized we don't beat and treat in our usual way, not to loss the business (if they go-home). Children of age 2 ½ and above are accepted in our K.G.

(Head teacher)

But the K.G doesn't render the service required for nursery children, and the caregiver is not trained for this. The caregiver in the K.G is a 10th grade complete without training in children rearing or nursing.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

The objective of this study is to investigate the process of early childhood education in the two kindergartens in Oromia, regional state and then to answer the research questions rose in an introduction chapter. Hence in the following section I conclude the study by sighting the answer for the research questions and listing the findings that comes out as a result of the analysis.

The nature of early childhood curriculum in the two kindergartens in Oromia Region

In the curriculum and implementation sections in chapter 4 and 5, the data gathered and interpret indicate (show) the curriculum in use and the process of curriculum development and its type in the two K.Gs. Regardless of their contextual difference and accumulated experience, the two kindergartens exercise the same type of curriculum in their respective K.Gs. The design is an academic one (academic subject), the head teacher of the Yenegetesfa mentioned how they develop the curricular materials as follows:

At the end of the academic year a group of five teachers is given a task of preparing or reviewing or revising the book that is used as an exercise book and text book by the children from different books.

(The head teacher)

The academic subject materials are prepared by the Yenegetesfa K.G and printed in the manual form. The typed, duplicated and bided copies are sold to children's of L.K.G and U.K.G. The bases for the development of the curricula materials as the head teacher made annual plan in the school. The same is true in Abdibiyya kindergarten. The school director explains as follows.

We use the curriculum from unknown source, and we modify it according to our context, and we use annual plans to prepare the lessons and the daily lesson plan.

(Abdibiyya K.G director)

The annual plans of both K.Gs are prepared in such a way that they show the objectives of the lessons, the contents, methods, and time allotment for suggested contents and lessons. In both K.Gs the academic design (academic subjects) are given priority. Aesthetics is given two periods each and there are no prepared plan or curriculum materials for it. It was apparent to find children's book enriched with different pictures and stories in the two kindergartens (*see contents offered in the K.Gs in the appendences*). Therefore, the nature of the curriculum in the two kindergartens is the behaviourist model, focused on the on the memorization of facts and rules. It is not prepared in the way it enables the child to explore, to appreciate and develop creativity and critical thinking. Aesthetic is given a total period of six in a week. Hence, it can be concluded and asserted, at this stage, that:

Therefore I can claim at this stage my research question number 1 is answered. The followings are the findings as the consequence of the interpretation:

- The two kindergartens give more emphasis on academic subjects. Most of children's time is occupied in learning (language, math's, science)
- There is no guiding document or syllabus used by the teachers in the two kindergartens.
- In Yenegetesfa Kindergarten, science in English and maths in English are taught in addition to maths in Amharic and Science in Amharic.
- Early childhood education is taken as the academic education of 3R in the two kindergartens.
- The curriculum in use, in the K.Gs is behaviourist model, dominated by teachers' activity
- Parents of the two kindergartens are in favour of the academic dominated curriculum.

- The two kindergartens are more concerned on the development of the memory skills of the child.
- The curriculum in use is aimed only to prepared children for formal schooling (for grade 1)
- In Yenegetesfa Kindergarten, Science in English and Mathematics in English are taught in addition to maths in Amharic and Science in Amharic.

The contexts of implementation in the two kindergartens in Oromia Region

As the two kindergartens are located at different positions of the region, it is natural to think about the different context of the K.Gs. Nevertheless the context that makes the K.G similar dominates over the differences.

The culture of the people, the knowledge of early childhood education conceived by different bodies, the economic status of the people, the support provided by the government, the physical and organizational setup, the status of the implementers and K.G and parental partnership are some of the contexts that have an implication on early childhood curriculum implementation.

The physical settings (organization) of the K.Gs are different. Abdibiyya, kindergarten is located on wide area, free from hazard such as noise bad smells, and has attractive view. The classes are built for the purpose of schooling, and class is organized with local made benches in the Abdibiyya. While Yenegetesfa Kindergarten is located on a small area of compound of 500 square-meter., and classes are not built for schooling purpose and poorly arranged. The children to space ration in Yenegetesfa is: 1:2.1, and children class ratio is about 1:1.5. This negatively affects the implementation of early childhood curriculum.

The culture of the society and its knowledge about early childhood education is almost similar in the two cases. The society has developed a culture of educating their child, but more practiced in cities than in rural towns. For

instance there are about 34 kindergartens in Bishoftu city, while only one kindergarten exists in the town where the other case is, with only 102 children. In the two instances the people believe in the dominance of teachers /grown-ups over children, on corporal punishment of children for correction and believe that children should be passive listeners, than active participants. This implies the knowledge of the people about early childhood education is yet of traditional type. There are more Governmental and non-Governmental employees with better income exist in Bishoftu than in the rural town understudy, these are the context of the two kindergartens, which favours and affect implementation of early childhood education. The context of the K-Gs concerning the support given by the government is all the same. The education sector (office) has no guideline or there are no directives in implementing early childhood education

Following this, the findings are:

- There is a positive attitude of people towards early childhood education even though; there are some cultural practices against its practice.
- The physical condition of Yenegetesfa is below standard. Early childhood education is practiced without any playing materials
- The collegiality of teachers of Yenegetesfa is seen as the contest enhancing the implementation, but there is an indication of problems in Administration in Abdibiyaa that affect implementation.
- The compound of the Abdibiyaa kindergarten is the context that enhance early childhood education
- The class-size of the two K-Gs are large that it affects the implementation negatively.
- The work habit of the Yenegetesfa is seen as positive contributor to the implementation of the program.
- Early enrolment is observed in Yenegetesfa kindergarten. A two and half years old were registered last year.
- Parents are eager to enrol their children in early years in both towns.

The practice of communication in the two kindergartens vis-à-vis the implementation of the program

Interaction and communication are basic ways of learning. These help to learn different domains of development through interaction social and emotion competencies are learned, thinking, reasoning skills and positive decision making ability develop attitude toward self image increase and different skills learned skills develop. (Douglas. H. Clements, 1993: 388-340) communication enhances the learning process. It is a means through which learning occurs. The media we use determine the quality of communication. In a case of two-way communication the source and the receiver become alternative source and receivers, one depends on the other

The interactions between teachers and children are manifested in different ways. As seen in the previous chapters of the kindergartens, the mode of teaching, classroom management of teachers, cultural influence and lack of skills in teaching activity oriented and others are some of the factors for the limitation of interaction between teachers and children. There is only a one-way communication in the class. The children are passive recipient. Teachers centred are predetermined dominant. It is like passing an order just to lowers. Hence the communication is the one-way communication.

The communication between K-Gs and parents is not based on the beneficiary strategy of the partners. The K-Gs are not using different means to increase the participation of parents in educating their children. In both cases parents are communicated when there is a problem on the side of the child. Even this communication is not a planed, one it is usually made on the gate for short period of time during arrival and departure in Yenegetesfa. The best communication experience of Abdibiyaa is an encouraging. The teachers make visit when the child is absent for two or three days. The home-page is used as the means of communication by both kindergartens.

The communication between the K-G and the educational authority in the two K-Gs is the same, in that they communicate for statically data only. The education experts explained that the K-G education is a forgotten sector by the government.

The interactions among children are minimal especially in Yenegetesfa. The restrictive environment of the K-G discourages exploration, doesn't provide opportunities for children to learn through play and express themselves freely and creatively, and develop aesthetic interests, skills and values. Two hundred-thirty seven children are stuffed in the compound of five hundred square meters. Free play of children enhances the interaction among children, but it is forbidden to avoid danger that can occur during play. In Abdibiyya K-G the interaction among children was seen as good exercise, especially during break. Children play football, slider, swing and created play by themselves.

From this the following findings are made

- The interaction between teachers and children are a rule governed
- The one-way communication is dominant in both K-Gs
- The education of children in the K-GS is practiced without responsible authority; there is no communication at all.
- The inadequacy of playing materials in Yenegetesfa kindergarten provides a restrictive environment t for children interaction.
- There is no plan and strategy to increase the parents' involvement. It is like putting the fire off. The parents are communicated when there is a problem only.

The practices of implementing early childhood education programs in the two kindergartens in Oromia Region? And why are these practices practiced the way they were practices

The practices of early childhood education in the two K.Gs, is mostly dominated by cognitive domains. Within the cognitive domain it stresses on the development of memory skills. The academic subjects, language, maths and science are given priority. Form the observation and from the document

(time table). The time given for academic subjects in a week in Yenegetesfa kindergarten are 15 out of 26 periods for nursery, 25 out of 35 periods for LKG and 8 out of 35 periods for UKG. The same practices were seen in Abdibiyya. Out of 40 periods 28 periods were given for academics for both LKG and UKG. In Yenegetesfa, beside the known academic subjects, general knowledge and science in English is given as a subject for UKG instead of sport and drawing.

The teachers of the K.G are dominating students' activities. The teachers talk, the children listen, the teachers write, the children copy and so on. In either of the class in both K.G there were no activities that make children active in the learning process. The class was dominated by established ground rules. The children were passive listeners and dominated by the teachers. The class management was facilitated by the use of power over the children. The practice of corporal punishment is one of the means to keep the implementation effective. The background of the implementers, including the parents was dominated in academics. Teachers of the two KGs are in favour of the above method. It was the dominant method used in the training institution and in schools. They never consider playing as learning. One of the teachers in Yenegetesfa said.

"I don't allow playing it kills my lessons time". The other reasons as observed and interpreted from their practice and interview are, lack of knowledge of the early childhood education and its methods of implementation. Some of them mentioned the deficiency of the methodological aspects in the training centres. The other is participants' early childhood education experiences that of the kessbet (as they told). The last but not least is the attitude of society towards academic subjects and their belief in hard discipline in educating children. I can say the above justification has answered my fourth research questions. The followings are the findings:

- The practices of academic subjects were given priority that of non-academics. Hence it doesn't focus on the development of the "whole child"

- The cognitive development of children is taken as granted to the development of the child. Within the cognitive domain the development of the memory skills of the child is emphasized.
- The children are made to comply to the rules without reasoning. Teachers-centred practice is employed.
- English is most preferred by the teachers and the family. Knowing English is considered as knowing everything.
- Teaching aids are not available in the two kindergartens.
- Pencil and paper examinations are used to evaluate the implementation of early childhood education in the two kindergartens.
- Play method of learning and playing are seen as time wasting and the activities of poor achievers.

The challenges of the two kindergartens in the process of implementing their program

In the study there are different challenges in the two kindergartens in the process of implementing early childhood program. The data show as indicated in the two cases, the use of inappropriate curriculum that doesn't promote the development of the whole child, lack of knowledge of early childhood education and its methods of teaching, cultural impact the inadequacy of teaching materials and playing materials, the inadequacy of classes, chairs, tables and the class size of the K.G are the challenges in the case of Yenegetesfa. Lack of developmentally appropriate curriculum and method of teaching are the challenges mostly exhibited in the K.Gs. There are no well established curricula materials available for children. The high-class size and lack of assistant teachers are the other challenges. In developed countries teacher student ratio is 1:13, but in Yenegetesfa in the nursery section one teacher for 38 children and in Abdibiyya one teacher for 50 children on the average. The Lack of assistance teacher is a big challenge in Yenegetesfa. Small area of a compound and lack of playing materials are one of the challenges that restrict children's free movement and interaction. Body movement, running, Jumping and others, are very important for

physical development of children. The followings are the findings:

- There is no responsible body that controls or guides the curriculum used by the K.G and its implementation process.
- The small compound of the Yenegetesfa kindergarten is taken as a good condition for avoiding children's collisions and it is a holding place' or children's ghetto.
- Classroom discipline is maintained by using force.

The major factors affecting and/or facilitating the implementation of early childhood education in the two kindergartens

The data collected from the K.Gs, education offices and parents of the K.G show the prevalence of some factors affecting or facilitating the teaching learning of kindergarten education. In the description and interpretation of the data it is indicated that there are some school related and out of school reach factors. To answer my six research question, I classified as within K.G and out of K.G factors.

Within K.G:

The space and location of the Abdibgiyya kindergarten and the concern of the school administration has a positive impact. Even though there are a lot of things to make the K.G up to standard, the starting is seen as a good indication. In Yenegetesfa, the collegiality of the teachers, working discipline, good understanding with the administration of the K.G and good habit of solving problems are the influencing factors. In addition, their preparation teaching materials have a great contribution to the teaching-learning even though its contents are not analysed.

The inadequacy of toilets, rigid seating arrangement, the absence of napping area, large class size, the absence of assistant teacher, lack of knowledge of early childhood education, lack of appropriate curriculum that matches the development of children, lack of teaching skill in teaching children, lack of handling and caring, children and lack of children's reading books are some of internal factors. Regarding Yenegetesfa kindergarten, the compound and classrooms are not suitable for the teaching of children. In addition the

nursery classes are stuffed with children of different age, from 2 1/2 years up to 4 years. But the caring provided by the K.G to these kids is insufficient. They are forced to sit all the day on the desk for the duration of 40 minutes. In addition to these, the absences of playing materials are among the factors. The use of the Milia tree as a holding place" affects the physical development of children.

Out of school factors:

The absence of responsible body in preparing developmentally appropriate curriculum in evaluating the implementation and giving the necessary feedback and measure, cultural influences on the teaching-learning of children, Weak parental involvement in their children's education due to different cases, the ill support and supervision of the education offices are the factors that affect teaching learning of children.

The provision of early childhood education is the bases for later learning. Therefore, the kindergartens should provide should provide the necessary materials and fulfils the important conditions. The above limitations affect the teaching-learning process of the K.Gs directly or indirectly. Most of the listed limitations restrict the free and natural involvement of children in learning. It hinders the activity of children, make them passive. It gives emphasis on the cognitive development it enhances the use of corporal punishment, makes the K.Gs to perform the way it prefers and the role of parents in filling the gap is missed and others.

The way their factors affect the teaching-learning is describing under the research questions. But let me describe one instance in which the above factors affect the teaching-learning. The education office expert of Bishoftu city told me the following, concerning his role towards kindergarten education.

I am assigned on the primary education others are also a located to different positions. There is no kindergarten education section. Attention is not given to this section. The private sectors, who want to open K.G, come to us for accreditation. We see the internal settings to give accreditation only. The teaching-learning process of the K.Gs is never supervised.

(Education expert)

This indicates that the educational office doesn't know what is going on in the kindergartens; the second instance is the one I saw in the Yenegetesfa kindergarten. Children make cue in front of the north-facing block every school day. The gathering is not for a flag ceremony but for praying and for passing some information. One day I saw an event that reminds me, my episode. The head teacher came to in front of the children, and said I have an announcement. She started, announcing. "Yesterday a U.K.G student, protested against her parents not to go to school unless they buy biscuit or her, our computer installed, told us her activity, for this reason, in front of she will be whipped five times on her land." The child was beaten as passed. After the punishment I asked the head teacher how she heard. She told me her parents told me, and they asked the K.G to punish the practice of corporal punishment is taken both by parents and teachers as a means to cultivate children. These are cultural influences that affect the practice of early childhood education. This briefing and explanation certainly answered the last research questions.

Implications

The practice of forming 'zero' grade in rural area is one the fascinating that others must practice even though the context is adverse, the teachers of the mentioned schools in chapters are an exemplar for others. Hence the experience of the schools should be replicated in the rural areas where, the context is not favourable for early childhood education. Kindergartens are working under different circumstances. The education office is the responsible body for the education provided. A planned supervision should be conducted in order to keep the standards maintained and the teaching-learning process functioning. The education office rather than keeping the statistical data of the kindergartens, it is better to employ its experts for the over whelming of the field in general and for the development of children in particular.

Curriculum as the input of the process of the teaching learning of children

Curriculum of early childhood program as Meccarthy (1980: 223) described holds if and only if the curriculum is prepared to address the needs and interests of children and context based also carried out with collaboration of parents and community to facilitate the development of children. Never the less, the program of kindergarten must be flexible and should offer a variety of opportunity and experience. It should be planned continuously rather than reconstructing it periodically. This is because of the dynamisms of the curriculum, which changes with time and conditions. To carry out this task the Government should take the initiative to capacitate the kindergartens to prepare their curriculum according to their context and children's interest. The curriculum should be developmentally appropriate to much the developmental stages of children. The working curriculum in the kindergarten should be re-visited and follow the modern way of learning.

The implementation of the program constantly and consistently must be followed and the Government has a responsibility to guide and develop curriculum. Thus the responsible body has a responsibility to follow the education of children in their childhood for the better further.

The process of early childhood education in the kindergarten

In the two kindergartens teaching-learning process is similar to the elementary and secondary. It concentrates on facts and memory rather than on reasoning and critical thinking. The process lacks the necessary inputs such as appropriate curriculum, teaching technology, teachers endowed with love and skilful in facilitating the teaching and caring of children. The pedagogy is teacher-centred. The teachers are the dominant figure in the process, the children are passive recipient. Play method is considered as time consuming and wasting. The process while is exhibited using force. Corporal punishment is largely exercised, even though it forbidden in the constitution. The interaction and communication between teachers and

children is weak and that of the oppressed and the oppressor. The children fear their teachers than loving them. Even children consider teacher as the legitimate body to punish children the child of 6 year said "I don't want to be a teacher to beat children" this is an alarm warning for those in the field and to the field as well. The use of corporal punishment is against the law and it should be stopped

On the corporal punishment

A massive, long-term study in Ontario shows that spanking of children often causes those problems in adulthood, including anxiety, major depression, drug addiction and alcohol addiction (Fathman, 2006. Dec 15) school corporal punishment

Therefore the kindergartens better develop a mechanism through which it manages children's discipline. Parents who visit schools in which their children learn have a good opportunity to understand children, teachers, and the entire activity of the school. Parent-KG relationship has significance to strength their self-concept of kindergarten and their educational activity and helps kindergartens to intensity their task so as to prepare children for further responsibility. Hence parent-K.G partnership enhances the contact between teachers and parents help both parents and teachers and parents help both parents and teachers to exercise a decisive influence (Wall :121).

The K.G has a weak parental involvement in their children education. The type of communication observed is home visit, consultation when there is a problem on side of the child, home page communication, usually it is formal and parents day or certification day. The parents or the teachers don't have a necessary feed about the child.

In order to ensure the beneficiary of both smooth relationships should be planned and different activities must be given to the parents and teachers to strength the bond. If so the ultimate aim of early childhood education will be-achieved.

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INTERVIEW GUIDES

teachers

How do you describe the teaching-learning process going on in your kindergarten?

How much are you familiarized about early childhood education and the development of the “whole child”?

3. Do you have a special training to teach in a K.G?
 - a. If so to what extent do you believe that your training in the training center helped you to teach in the kindergarten?
4. Would you please tell me about the nature and ways of communications you often have with children, staff, and parents?
5. How do you perceive and judge the quality of the curriculum in use in your K.G vis-à-vis children’s learning and achieving the development of the “whole child”?
6. What do you think are the problems affecting children’s learning in this kindergarten?
7. How do you describe the parent-school, teacher-teacher, and director-teacher reaction and communication in your K.G?
8. Do you have any other point to say regarding educating children in the K.G?

INTERVIEW GUIDES

For director

1. How is teaching-learning process going on in your kindergarten?
2. How do you judge or describe the curriculum in use vis-a-vis its contribution to education children and achieve the development of the “whole child”?
3. How much are your teachers capable and effective in teaching and rearing the children?
4. Would you please tell me about the nature and ways of communication or links your kindergarten has with the community or links your kindergarten has with the community or links your kindergarten has with the community in general and parents in particular? How about communication with the staff?
5. How is your K.G relation or communication with the local/ regional educational authorities?
6. Are there any other factors affecting the teaching and learning process in your kindergarten? If there are, would you mention them.