

**THE ROLE OF NGOs IN PROMOTING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO PRIMARY
EDUCATION IN SNNRP**

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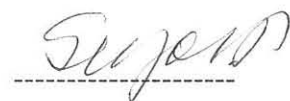
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DEDICATION

In memory of my dear mom, Wogayehu Gessese Wondim, whose impressions of lasting love, care, and commitment of those magnificent old days encourage me to be a kind of son whose mother had aspired to have.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of SDP and WVE in responding to the need for learning opportunities for those school age children in SNNPR. Due to the unfortunate coincidence of the time for data collection and the public violence against the policy on language of instruction in Wolayta, details concerning interventions by WVE were not thoroughly assessed.

Questionnaire, interviews, focus group discussion, review of documents, and observation of activities were used for data collection from 120 community members, 48 NFPE teachers, 24 political leaders, and 16 education officials at district and zonal levels. The data were analyzed by employing various statistical techniques including percentages, chi-square test, mean of two independent samples, and qualitative approach to analysis.

The results have suggested that the NFPE project was rural focused. Its targets were females, poor children, and minority groups who live in rural areas and those who had no opportunity to learn and/or forced to drop out school for the reason beyond their control. With this intention of the project the public seemed to have no objection. On the other hand, community participation in the affairs of NFPE project was limited only to labor and material support. It was also observed that there was no clear assurance for sustainability of NFPE activities beyond the specified project period or even before, if something went wrong between the donor and the recipient for almost all of its cost used to come from foreign source. Furthermore, limited involvement of community, lack of conducive learning environment, absence of text books, lack of continuity in admission of new students on a yearly basis, and lack of clear organizational structure to manage activities of the NFPE project have contributed to keep the user system suspicious of its future.

Lastly, searching for alternative domestic source of finance, promoting community participation to its full-fledged level, creating at least modestly furnished learning places, looking for the shortest path to supply text books, establishing clear and measurable evaluation mechanisms, and paying more attention for factors contributing towards higher drop out rate were among the major recommendations forwarded so as to keep the NFPE activities alive and more effective.

from the school whereby nearly half the number of children who enroll in grade one do not continue to grade 2. Comparatively seen, this drop out rate becomes sharp with rural children than the urban ones location-wise; and higher with girls than boys in terms of sex.

As one of the regional states of Ethiopia, SNNPR shares the same shortcomings with regard to low enrolment, high drop out and also high repetition rates. For instance, the regional GPER in the academic year 1998/99 was 49.2 percent with significant zonal variations, where Debu Omo and Konso had 20.1 and 27 percentages respectively when compared with 59.6 in Sidama and 56.9 in Bench Maji. In this same year from among children enrolled in grade one only those accounting for 49.95 percent were promoted to grade two. The remaining 35.85 percent were drop outs and other children that have been constituted over 14 percent were repeaters (REB, 1998/99).

It is this problem that calls for collaboration between NGOs and other partners to address such difficulties in more creative and appropriate fashion than what has been done in the past.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was adopted in 1948 declared that “ Following this declaration Universal Primary Education (UPE) has become a worldwide priority”. In 1990 the convention on the Rights of the Child again reaffirmed this intention. In that same year(1990), delegates from-155 governments at the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) acknowledged the responsibility of their governments to provide access to basic education for all citizens. Though several declarations were issued and protocols signed on expansion of access to education in general and primary education in particular, the reality seems to be highly unbearable for many of the developing countries. Thus, a large proportion of children and adults in the low-income countries have been denied access to compulsory primary education, (Prather, 1993:3). Such a mismatch between the universalization attempts and results

obtained in the past years may urge us to look into our policies in a more critical way and seek alternative solutions. This is basically because “legislating for access and entitlement in primary education ... will not of itself ensure equality of educational opportunity for all children”, Barbara (1996:270).

Lockheed and Verspoor (1991:145) also confirm that many countries were not able to universalize primary education despite the impressive increases in enrollment during the last three decades. These authors observe that in 1985, “between 114 million and 145 million school age children ... many from deprived groups of society, were out of school in low-income nations”. The World Bank (1990:13) also shares the same view saying that “in half of low-income countries, fewer than half of school-age children were enrolled, and 68 percent of developing countries have not attained their goal of universal primary enrollment. The majority of those not in school are girls, rural children, and children of the poor.”

Contrary to the existing insignificant primary school participation rate in developing countries, the need for universal primary education tends to be a pre-requisite for economic growth. As noted by the World Bank (1990:11) today the capacity to acquire, adapt, and advance knowledge becomes mandatory to a country’s development prospects than ever before. The situation in the newly industrialized economies - - like Hong Kong, Israel, Japan, Korea, and Singapore - - also has affirmed that their rapid economic growth was not achieved before attaining universal or nearly universal primary enrollment.

Ethiopia as one of the developing countries shares a bitter experience in this respect. For instance, in 1961, following the Addis Ababa conference of African States on Development of Education, the country proposed to raise its gross primary enrollment rate (GPER) from the then 40 percent to 100 percent until 1981 (Fassil, 1990:57). This was a very ambitious plan for a country like Ethiopia characterized by lack of resources and politics in flux. Surprising enough, despite the universalization attempt the

participation rate in primary education has been deteriorating from time to time to the extent that it has been reported to be 19.7 percent in 1992/93 (MOE, 1996).

Unlike the past years, recent statistical reports show some improvement in GPER. For example, it was 23, 29, and 34.7 percent in 1993/94, 1994/95, and 1997/98 respectively, (MOE,1998). But still 65.3 percent of school age children were out of school. With this primary school participation profile, Ethiopia stands nearly the last even when compared with some African countries, such as Mali 37.3, Tanzania 66.4, Morocco 83, Mauritania 83.47, Egypt 100, Algeria 107, Tunisia 116 and Togo 132.7 percent, (Tegegn in Mulugeta (1998:87); World Bank, 1998:8).

In addition, Brown in Amare *et al.* (1998:13) underscored that “Ethiopia has a long and tough road to travel to achieve its goal of the enrollment of over two-third of its primary school-age children.” This long journey should not be left to be accomplished by the government alone for such practices have not been successful in the past. Rather the task ahead needs team-perseverance and enthusiasm towards universal primary education. Thus a part being played by NGOs in expanding educational access and equity may have significant contribution to bring about positive outcome.

1.3 Basic Questions

As noted earlier, the primary school participation rate in Ethiopia is below the level that many African countries have achieved. Hence, the expansion of access to primary education remains among top priority areas in educational endeavors of the country. This effort also requires an integrated action of all concerned in the field. NGOs are one of the potential partners in increasing access to primary education. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the part being played by NGOs to effect equitable access to primary education in one of the regional states of Ethiopia, that is, SNNPR.

Accordingly, this study was conducted in order to answer the following basic questions.

1. What contributions have NGOs made towards promoting equitable access to primary education in creating balance of opportunity between:
 - 1.1 Rural and urban children?
 - 1.2 Female and male children?
 - 1.3 The poor and better-off families?
 - 1.4 Minorities and majorities?
2. What strategies do NGOs follow to promote equitable access to primary education as appraised against:
 - 2.1 Complementing with felt needs of the community?
 - 2.2 Promoting community participation in decision making?
 - 2.3 Ensuring sustainability of their operations?
 - 2.4 Establishing necessary evaluation mechanisms to check on the impact of their operations?
3. Have the alternative strategies that are introduced by NGOs retained students in the system when compared to the conventional one?

1.4 Significance of the Study

Formerly the value attached to NGOs was closely associated with relief operations. Nowadays the mission statement of most NGOs tends to be 'working with community to effect an integrated development'. Eventually some NGOs like SDP and World Vision Ethiopia have been engaged in expansion of educational opportunity for the disadvantaged segments of society.

Thus this study was considered to be significant for the following reasons.

1. The outcome of the study perhaps serves as a feed-back on the role of NGOs for concerned bodies.
2. It may provide suggestion as to how efforts should be integrated to bring about sustainable effect specially in promoting equitable access to primary education.

3. It may enable information exchange and experience sharing between NGOs engaged in the same activity in different socio-cultural, economic, and geographical settings.
4. It may add to the literature so as to contribute to further investigation regarding the role of NGOs in promoting equitable access to primary education.

In general, this study is expected to be useful to donors, NGOs, the government, and researchers in the field by providing first-hand information about the role of SDP and WVE in promoting equitable access to primary education in SNNPR.

1.5 Delimitation of the study

This study was conducted by focusing on two zones of SNNPR. The two zonal administrations were Sidama and North Omo. The ultimate reason for considering these zones was that NGOs have paid greater attention and have been engaged in Sidama and North Omo in expanding educational opportunities for those denied access to schooling more than in any other part of the region.

Furthermore, creating access to primary education is emphasised due to the following rationales. First, about 60 percent of school age children were out of school in the region (MOE, 1998:7). Secondly, there was an alarming drop out rate that accounts for 28.18 percent (REB, 1999:5) in the region as a result of which a good many of such children soon lapse into illiteracy. Thirdly, primary education is the level where children develop their basic attitudes and approaches to learning.

The study has focused on NGOs mainly because activities related to searching for alternative strategies to primary education seem solely left to nongovernmental agencies in the region.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

Initially this study was designed to examine the involvement of the two major NGOs in Sidama and North Omo Zones on a comparative basis to assess their contributions in increasing equitable access to primary education. Unfortunately, the coincidence of the time for data collection and the situation resulting from the public disapproval of the policy on language of instruction in Wolayta set a significant limit on data collection and on the quality of data to be collected as well.

Particularly in Sodo Zuria and Humbo districts of Wolayta area, where nearly all of the World Vision's educational operations were confined to, some important documents were either lost or misplaced so that the newly assigned office holders did not know the whereabouts of such information sources and were unable to make them available for the research purpose. Schools were disrupted from their regular duties too.

Other than this, it was hardly possible to discuss with members of the community down at a village level about the merits and demerits of that NGO initiative for the state of affairs was not stable. Consequently, data obtained from Wolayta area were almost limited to the number of primary schools renovated and/or upgraded by WVE, number of class-rooms and sections together with student population in each of these schools. Hence, the meagre data available was not adequate to reach sound conclusion. So the findings of this study may or may not apply to all NGO educational operations in the region at large except the NFPE program in Sidama that has been thoroughly investigated from different perspectives using variety of respondents.

1.7 The Research Design and Methodology

As it has been discussed earlier this study was aimed at looking into the contributions of NGOs in creating equitable access to primary education in SNNPR. The descriptive survey method was employed in order to achieve the purpose. Various techniques of

sampling, different instruments and procedures of data gathering, as well as a number of data analysis methods were put into use to this effect.

1.7.1 Sampling technique and sample population: The universe of the study was the NGO catchment areas in promoting equitable access to primary education in both Sidama and North Omo Zones of SNNPR. In the case of North Omo the two districts namely, Sodo Zuria and Humbo were selected for more than 95 percent of NGO interventions in education were found in these two locations. After selection of districts was made, 50 percent of the total 26 school renovation and/or upgrading projects (9 from Humbo and 4 from Sodo Zuria) were planned to be considered by using random sampling.

In the case of Sidama zone, 3 districts, that is, Hageresalam, Dale and Awassa, which constitute over 33 percent of the total number of administrative districts in the zone, were selected on purposive sampling basis. Here, purposive sampling was employed on an assumption that Hageresalam represents the Dega (highland) areas like Arbegona and Aroresa; Dale represents coffee growing Woinadega (middle altitude) areas like Aleta, Dara and Bensa; and Awassa represents Kolla (low land) area like Shebedino.

After selection of sample districts was settled, quota sampling was used to identify the representative centres of nonformal primary education. The quota was assigned on the basis of recommendations made from woreda education officials. Thus three strong, three weak and two moderately functioning centres particularly in terms of their retention power of students, were included. In so doing, over 23 percent of NFPE centres and exactly the same proportion of NFPE teachers in the sample districts were considered in the study.

Moreover, 120 randomly selected community members also took part in an attempt to incorporate the beneficiaries' viewpoints in the study. The heads (chiefs) of educational programs, heads of supervisory services, coordinators of adult and nonformal education of each district education office and heads of relevant units in the zonal education department were also included both by virtue of their position and relevance to the study.

leaders, and 18 education officials. Out of which 88 or 97.8 percent of them were filled out and returned.

- 1.7.2.2 **Interview:** Two different interview items were prepared and interviews were held with two different groups. The first one was with NFPE teachers to check whether they face any difficulty in their work or not. The second one which was held with the head of Sidama Zone Adult and Nonformal Education section to know whether his office appreciates or disregards the prevalence of some constraints regarding the NFPE program.
- 1.7.2.3 **Focus group discussion (FGD):** Discussions were held with 120 community members in different sessions to elicit their views, opinions, on the problems, advantages, and expectations related to the NFPE program. The central theme of this discussion was on benefits of the program, their role in support of the program, problems they faced (if any), and their overall attitude towards the program.
- 1.7.2.4 **Review of documents:** All available important documents have been examined closely. Many very helpful information sources, including Guidelines for NFPE, Action plan for NFPE, Budget Breakdown for NFPE, have been consulted so far.
- 1.7.2.5 **Field observation:** Observations were carried out to strengthen and in some cases to challenge the nature of data obtained through other means. For example, by paying visits to some 24 NFPE centers it was detected that there were inconsistencies on reported number of students and those attending; the instructional time fixed and the actual period spent for teaching-learning; the prescribed method of instruction (student centered approach) and the actual way of handling the classroom teaching (highly teacher centered) and more others.
- 1.7.2.6 **Pilot administration of the questionnaire:** Prior to its actual distribution the questionnaire was tried out using 10 NFPE teachers, 8 political leaders and 4 education officials in Aleta Wondo district. Based upon their responses, cronbach alpha was calculated and the obtained

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 The Role of Primary Education in Development

The primary output of the education system is a skilled and educated manpower. These skilled and educated people are supposed to enhance productivity and contribute to overall socio-economic development of society, such development is reflected in or closely associated with the improvement of general quality of life of a given society. Hence, development, improved way of living, and education may be seen as interdependent entities.

The interconnection between education, development, and improved standard of living can easily be identified by looking into the relationship among them. For instance, Rahman and Hossain (1992) cited in Prather (1993:12) underline that literacy and numeracy promote worker's productivity as a result of which one's earnings will be improved so that the quality of life that an individual might enjoy would improve. Furthermore, by emphasizing the necessity of education for development, these writers argue that "... the poor are the ones without effective access to ... schooling".

Others also underscore the role of primary education in bringing about development in many different ways. For Magnen (1993:25-26) "... the relationship between education and development in the world has emphasized the essential role of primary education in increasing productivity and its high social rate of return". That is why, as noted by same author, most multilateral banks and funds have given priority to the expansion and qualitative improvement of primary education particularly in the countries where larger proportion of school - age children has no access to it.

By focusing on the economic and social returns to investment in primary schooling, Carnoy *et al.* (1982:34) add that “investment in primary schooling may well be the single most effective means of improving the incomes and social outcomes of the poor over the medium to long term” than both other levels of education and other sectors.

The World Bank (1997:1,1998:5) also emphasizes that primary education contributes to slower population growth and raises workers’ productivity and earnings by helping them take advantage of technological changes. Besides, educated parents are more likely to send their children to school so that the benefit from primary education might perpetuate from generation to generation as a heritage that bears lasting effect in the live of posterity. This perception of education as a cornerstone of development seems to be most shared among authorities in the field who believe that education is a foundation up on which much of the economic and social well-being is built. In addition to fostering economic productivity and social cohesiveness, education is also taken as an instrument that increases value and efficiency of the workers’ labor, intellectual flexibility of the labour force, contributes to nation-building and interpersonal tolerance, and reduces poverty.

In fact, this interdependence between development and education may not show us the exact cause- effect relationship. Regarding this, Knight and Sabot (1990:3) question that:

A positive correlation between school enrolment ratios and per capita output has been observed in different countries and within the same country over time. But (this) correlation does not establish causation. Is education primarily an investment good that increases labor productivity and contributes to economic growth? Or is it a consumer good that increasingly demanded as incomes rise?

However, such a debate may lead to the question of ‘the hen or the egg’. But under no condition it justifies the uselessness of neither of the two. Rather the World Bank (1990:11) argued that:

A country's development prospects today hinge much more than even a generation ago on the capacity to acquire, adapt, and advance knowledge. Higher education and training need to rest on a solid foundation, which is essentially the product of the primary education system. In the newly industrialised economies - such as Hong Kong, Israel, Japan, Korea, and Singapore- universal or nearly universal primary enrolment was achieved just before rapid economic growth.

Lochkeed and Verspoor (1991:1-5) have also confirmed that the role of education in general and that of the primary level in particular has gained a greater prominence in contributing to the twofold development aspects of a given society. They noted that "education is a corner stone of economic and social development; primary education is its foundation". Furthermore, the way as to how primary education contributes for economic and social development is discussed as follows.

2.1.1 Contributions to Economic Development

A quest for economic advancement is the primary interest of nations in the world. One of the basic inputs for economic development is the human resource. Especially the human capital which is able to fulfil its responsibility in an efficient and effective way plays a very decisive role to effect advancement.

Moreover, efficiency and effectiveness require acquisition of the necessary skills, knowledge and attitude that obtained through education. Thus education remains a pre-requisite to development. Writers such as (Peaslee, 1965,1969; Benavolt, 1985, Lau, Jamison, and Lovat, 1991) cited in Lockheed and Verspoor (Ibid) also uphold this idea. According to them, in the study conducted for thirty-four of the richest countries for over 110 year period (1850-1960), none of them had achieved significant economic growth before attaining universal primary education. A study done for the period 1930-1980 also found consistent in that primary education had a significant effect on the economic growth of 110 developed and developing countries.

Research findings that has been disclosed by the World Bank (1990: 10) also hold the same view as the investments in primary education have economic pay-off that is typically well above the opportunity cost of capital. The report showed that “ 4 years of education increased small farm productivity by 7 percent across thirteen developing countries and by 10 percent in countries where new agricultural techniques were being introduced.”

2.1.2 Contributions to Social Development

Hand in hand with its purpose to produce a literate and numerate members of society and lay the groundwork for further learning, primary education contributes to social development. For Lockheed and Verspoor (Ibid) and World Bank (1990:10), primary education encourages social development by helping people in showing the way as to how they solve their difficulties and develop their awareness.

One can cite several examples in connection to positive social effects of education in developing countries. The above sources, for instance, identify that literate mother with more than four years education has a 30 percent reduced fertility rate than her illiterate counterpart. Literate mothers have only half of child mortality rates when compared to those women with no education. Besides concentrating on child health and nutrition, children from educated parents have more access to schooling and retention than children from uneducated parents. It is also believed that education brings about attitudinal change, which in turn will positively influence social development.

In general, it is imperative to say that education contributes both for economic and social development. It enhances economic development by increasing earnings and raising workers' productivity. Social development is also achieved by behavioral change emanating from learning.

rationale, social equity rationale, nation-building rationale, improving quality of schooling rationale, and improving efficiency of schooling rationale. Each of these rationales is elaborated in some details in the following way.

2.2.1 Manpower Development Rationale

Manpower development rationale for educational expenditure refers to the outcome expected from schooling in relation to producing a skilled and knowledgeable human resource. Such a resource in turn will be held responsible to increase the country's possession of general skills relevant to development and to the modern sector. Provision of appropriate knowledge and skills for agricultural, industrial, scientific and technological advancement are said to be the major components of such strategy of manpower development.

2.2.2 Social Equity Rationale

Social equity rationale for funding education is closely associated with creating equal opportunity for citizens in order to narrow inequalities of various forms. Income inequality is the one that needs to be tackled through improving the level of per capita income. This rationale is meant for trying to equalize educational opportunities and reduce disparities in access to education between the male and female; the poor and well-to-do; the urban and rural population. Furthermore, this rationale remains to be useful to reduce occupational difference most prevalent in the religious minorities, ethnic minorities, and culturally disadvantaged segments of the society by providing the right to learn and work together to the best of a country's development interest.

2.2.3 Nation-Building Rationale

The nation-building rationale mostly emphasizes on fostering national identity, promoting self-sufficiency and self-reliance, and reduce (eliminate if possible) all forms

of external dependency. Therefore, resources allocated to education may come up with localizing expatriate manpower, promulgating a national language as well as national ideology, and strengthening local institutions to attain the level of self-sufficiency and self-reliance.

2.2.4 Improving Quality of Schooling Rationale

Improving quality of schooling rationale deals with aspects of effective way of carrying out the teaching-learning process. This improvement may be achieved through raising quality of curriculum development, improving teacher training and opportunities for in-service professional development, improving resource availability for teachers to be utilized in the classrooms, enhancing competent planning and research capabilities. This is done with a view that quality education results in quality of a skilled labour that will ultimately influence the way towards the attainment of the development goal.

2.2.5 Improving Efficiency of Schooling Rationale

This rationale concentrates on how the system continues to be efficient in its operations. This state is achieved by paying greater attention for both the external and internal efficiency. The external efficiency is mostly related to the employment opportunity of a given school's output. In other words, if the system produces graduates whose knowledge and skills are no more desired by the existing external environment, it lacks the quality of being efficient to serve the purpose of meeting the interest of its potential consumers. Internal efficiency, on the other hand, reflects on the ability of the school system to attract and retain its clients. This is manifested through increased enrollment, reduced dropouts, reduced repetition rate and a reduced opportunity cost.

All these founding principles are formulated and attempted to be adhered to in a view that education generally and primary level particularly is worth investing in for at least three major reasons. One, its return has positive impact in improving individual and community lives. Two, it helps as an instrument to accelerate social and economic

development of countries. Three, there is a worldwide consensus on primary education as it is one of the pillars of basic human rights.

2.3 Challenges to Universalize Primary Education

The concept of universalization of primary education means making educational opportunities available to all children. Nearly during the past four decades, all developing countries have placed a significant effort to this end. Unfortunately, many of them have not still succeeded in attaining this difficult goal of making primary education available to all.

Garrido (1986:205-206) World Bank (1990:13); Lockheed and Verspoor (1991:145) agree on that, impressive increases in enrolments were recorded during the past three decades even though the battle to universalize primary education seems to be far from won for most low-income countries. And between 114 and 145 million school age children many from the disadvantaged segments of society such as the poor, rural child, and the female, were out of school in 1985.

Of course, several factors may contribute to this failure to universalize primary education in developing countries. However, the most salient obstacles can be grouped into five: task complexity, economic determinants, socio-cultural determinants, demographic and geographic determinants, and school inefficiency.

2.3.1 Task Complexity

The concept of universalization is not a single dimensional task. Its meaning is not also synonymous with or equated to simply creating access to education. Rather, according to UNESCO (1984:5-6), universalization comprises of three dimensions, namely, access, retention/completion, and achievement.

Access. Refers to provision of educational opportunities for those deprived groups. These disadvantaged segments of society include children living in the areas without schools or any alternative learning facilities, children living in the areas where there are schools but can't be able to join them due to certain difficulties, children living in the areas where schools do not possess adequate number of facilities, teachers, and other basic amenities. One may create access to schooling for these children. But the enrolment by itself does not mean anything. The enrolled child is required to be in that school until he/she completes a certain standard grade level to be literate.

Retention/Completion. This refers to the holding power of the school system. After having access to educational opportunities a student required to achieve the standards set for the first level of education. Unless a child stays in the school and completes a certain level to be named as literate, numerate and acquire some social skills, we can not talk of universalization. Universalization, therefore, includes universal enrolment and completion of all grades of the first level of education or any alternative learning system. Even after completion comes the question of achievement which qualifies a learner's ability to meet the standards.

Achievement. This deals exclusively with the qualitative side of the universalization attempts. It is the achievement that ensures whether the acceptable standards are acquired. It also ensures if the level of universal enrolment is reached and schools may become ideal settings for retention and completion. Nothing is worth talking about universalization of educational opportunities except a child's achievement meeting the minimum standards set for completion of a given level of primary education.

Therefore, this complexity of the nature of universalization of primary education or the quantity-quality dilemma of the process seems to be one of the stumbling blocks for developing countries to move ahead. In any case, quantity should not be attained at the expense of quality. As noted by Garrido (1986:204) "A primary school that fails to achieve certain, minimum, and useful objectives, that fails to meet the people's needs, that fails to interest either the children or their parents, will inevitably end up by losing".

These are lack of resources such as teachers, materials, etc.; lack of reinforcement for schooling, language problems where national (usually urban) languages which are less familiar in rural areas are used for instruction; competition between the school schedule and need for children's labor; and schools with incomplete grades of official primary school grades that offer up to only three or four grade levels.

Drop out rate is also worse in rural areas than urban. For example, (Lourie, 1982; Psacharopoulos and Arriagada, 1987) cited in Lockheed and Verspoor (Ibid) observe that there is a sharp difference of enrollment and drop out rates between urban and rural schools of Guatemala and Brazil. In urban Guatemala 56 percent of seven year-old enter school and only 8 percent dropped out. Whereas in rural areas out of 25 percent enrollment the drop out rate has accounted for 19 percent. In Brazil the extent of dropping out of school was about three times greater in rural than in urban settings .

Thus, in terms of less enrollment and higher dropping out rates, rural children are by far disadvantaged than their age-mates in urban environment.

2.4.2 Females

It is true that gross primary enrolment rates have increased since 1960. But even today, after forty-years, countries like Niger(93), Burkina Faso(91), Nepal (86), Sierra Leone (82), Guinea (78), Mali, Mozambique and Senegal(77each), Pakistan and Yemen (76 each), and Ethiopia (75), have an average of 84 percent illiterate females of the ages 15 and above. Again when we look into gender disparities in enrolments, there is a significant gap between boys and girls. For example, the gender gap in primary enrolment has accounted for 58 percent in Pakistan, 42 in Yemen,41 in Nepal, Togo and Chad, 40 in Benin, and 30 in Guinea (World Bank, 1999).

Negative stereotypes such as text books portrayal of women in passive and powerless roles and teachers discrimination of females as incompetent; lack of schools for girls in

sex- segregated systems; reluctance among female teachers to work in remote areas; the primary school curriculum that does not meet the work interest for employment possibilities; need for the girls household labour; and restrictions related to physical mobility, possible happening of pregnancy and/or preparation for marriage are considered as profound constraints of girls education, (World Bank, 1990:34; Lockheed and Verspoor, 1991:148-150).

The case seems paradoxical. In principle, one may not debate on the importance of females' education for it bears advantages peculiar to literate women. Some of these advantages are minimizing maternal and infant mortality; reducing fertility rates; and promoting health, well-being, and educational prospects of the generation to come. And yet, females' education is still lagging behind that of the other half has reached.

2.4.3 Poor Children

Perhaps, poverty is held responsible for many social evils and injustices. Such economic inequality can occur in several forms. One is a type of poverty that happens among individuals at any one time. The second form of poverty is that prevails in the lifetime income of individual. Thirdly, there is a type of poverty which perpetuates inequality from one generation to another, (Knight and Sabot, 1990:193). Whatever its forms might be, the negative impact of poverty on equitable access to education is very significant.

Studies have confirmed that in all countries poor children are less apt to enroll and more apt to drop out when compared to children from a well-to-do families. Experiences from India and Nepal has been showed that school enrolment in the richest families has surpassed that of the poorest by 50 to 100 percent. This is primarily due to the inability of poor parents to incur direct costs of education (such as school fees, uniforms, supplies, transportation) and the demand for the indirect cost of the children's labour for survival of the household. Furthermore, family income level is found to be one of the three major determinants of school attendance together with the parents' educational attainment and

the parental attitude towards schooling, (Brenner, 1982; Jamison and Lockheed, 1987; King, 1981, Smith and Cheung, 1981 ; cited in Lockheed and Verspoor, 1991:151-152; World Bank 1990:35).

Hence, being from a poor parent would heighten the likelihood of a child not to be enrolled and/ or dropping out the school.

2.4.4 Minorities

In the context where learning objectives have concentrated largely on the religion or language or ethnic group of the majorities the minority groups may be marginalized in terms of provision for educational opportunity.

Special needs children such as children with physical , psychological or behavioral problems are also said to be minorities that seek special attention while planning education for all (Garrido, Ibid: 220; Lockheed and Verspoor, Ibid: 153-154).

In summary, unless schools are able to accommodate the learning needs of all school age children regardless of their sex, economic background, residential location, and any minority group belonging to them, it will remain to be too difficult to attain universalization.

2.5 Alternative Strategies to Promote Equitable Access

The foregoing discussion was about those groups of society that are classified as educationally disadvantaged. In one way or another this classification points at the weaknesses of the formal system of education that is not able to respond to the needs of these segments of society. Though universal primary education is taken as a constitutional obligation of all countries, scarcity of resources, lack of infrastructure, inadequate school places, both qualitative and quantitative shortage of teachers together with rapid increase in population are some of the frequently mentioned obstacles for both

inability of universalization and unequal opportunity between different groups, (Carnoy, et al. 1982; World Bank, 1990; Lockheed and Verspoor, 1991; Tietjen, 1991).

When we glance at the Ethiopian situation in light of the aforementioned problems, we can understand how serious the case is. The country has two-third of its primary school-age children out of school (Brown, 1998:13). Besides, there is a sharp disparity on school participation rate among regions ranging from 80.31 percent in Addis Ababa to 8.4 percent in Afar. The three leading regions in a relatively higher primary school participation rate were Addis Ababa 80.31, Harari 66.3, and Gambella 65.6 percentages. The three regions that have the least participation rate have constituted Afar 8.4, Somali 11.6, and Amhara 28 percentages, (MOE, 1998:7).

This profile of gross primary enrolment rate, indeed, uncovers that the inability of the conventional system of primary education to meet the quest for expansion of educational opportunities for all school age children. This, on the other hand, calls for policy options to reach the unreached. Thus comes the need for alternative strategy to alleviate problems of universalization of primary education. Otherwise, as pointed out by Elvin cited in Bishop (1989:56) "... although we now have more schools than ever before, we have not got enough and we can not hope to see universal primary education" in the years ahead.

It was since 1960s that the universalization attempt has become among the top education priority agendas of governments all over the world. The purpose of focusing on primary education came out of its perceived importance as: a basic component of human rights, a sine qua non for economic advancement, a means of better earnings, a source of skilled man-power, a way of attitudinal modernity and democratic culture, (Bishop, 1989:12). Irrespective of these attractive values attached to it, many developing countries have not achieved the level of universal primary education, even after 40 years, to date.

This situation, on the other hand, may reflect the growing obsolescence of the existing conventional way of educational delivery, to cater for the needs of all school age children (Coombs, 1985:20).

When we talk of alternatives we may find a wide range of spectrum to deal with. The routes vary from improving the in-take capacity of the existing school systems to introducing set of innovations to complete abolition of the conventional way of schooling like that of Ivan Illich's "De-Schooling".

To begin with, Bishop (1989:70-80) discusses a series of alternatives for the conventional approaches in order to expand learning opportunity. Reduction of the length of schooling is the one. In this connection Bishop cites the Nepal's experience of squeezing of primary cycle to three years, Indonesia's reduction of duration of primary education from six to five years. Cuba's "special acceleration class" that has been designed in a way that brainy students complete two grade levels in a year, and so on. Increasing class size with a reasonable number and minimum facilities, as another option, was recommended by Bishop to increase enrollment. Use of double or multi-shift system is also taken as another alternative. Emphases on all year utilization of the existing educational facilities including holidays and vacations; and adoption of low capital costs to act against capital intensiveness of school plant construction by using locally available materials are also among the forwarded solutions.

Nonformal approach to education in general and that of primary level in particular is also considered to be a break through in fighting problems arising from incapability of the formal schooling. In this respect, UNICEF (1993:4-5) strongly recommends the strengthening of traditional indigenous education institutions (such as church and mosque schools) and indispensability of introducing nonformal primary education in developing countries so as to win the race of universalizing primary education.

Concepts of “open learning, distance learning, and directed private study” (all denoting the concept of pursuing education on not-face-to-face basis) are also devised as an alternatives to the time and place restricted traditional way of learning.

On the other hand, there are people who consider schools as a “prison”. These people, like Ivan Illich, John Holt, Paul Goodman and Charles Silberman, believe that “most people learn most of the time when they do what ever they enjoy”. According to these thinkers, people need to engage themselves in the revolution for a de-schooling society, (Illich cited in Lakshmi, 1992: 151-155).

Whatever they may emphasize on one or the other way, these educators share one basic characteristic in common. With the exception of the Illich’s de-schooling approach, all pay much of their attention on increasing supply. But in reality today’s problems of creating equitable access to education can’t be solved by merely focusing on the supply side. The demand side too and equalizing treatment need to be considered.

Moreover, commenting on how to overcome shortcomings relating to equity and access (World Bank, 1990:34-38; Lockheed and Verspoor, 1991:154-167), discuss three major categories namely increasing supply, increasing demand and equalizing the learning process, each of which is dealt with some details hereunder.

2.5.1 Supply Side Interventions

Supply side intervention refers to creating more school places and widening a chance to learning especially for those who lack the opportunity. The supply side improvement may be achieved by employing different mechanisms such as school construction and provision for more facilities, teacher recruitment and deployment, encouraging private investment in education, using multiple shifts, introducing multigrade classes, providing for single-sex schools, promoting nontraditional schooling, and biennial intakes of school.

Increasing School Places and Facilities. In a process of increasing school places and supplying them with necessary facilities. If schools are situated within children's walking distance, their likelihood of being attended by the nearby children will be higher. As experience from Egypt has demonstrated that the enrollment of girls who lived 2 Kilometers from school was 8 percent lower than that of who lived within a kilometer distance from school; the enrollment of boys who came from a distant is also found to be lower by 4 percent.

Teacher Recruitment and Deployment. Teacher shortage both in qualitative and quantitative aspects is a critical drawback many education systems share. The shortage becomes more severe in rural and isolated areas where social services are extremely limited (Garrido, 1986: 217). In this case, the World Bank (1990); and Lockheed and Verspoor (Ibid) believe that paying remuneration, providing boarding facilities, and offering additional training, encourage teachers to work in remote areas so that the critical problem of teacher shortage and high rate of attrition in rural settings will be minimized.

Private Schools. Encouraging the private sector's involvement in education is also perceived as another alternative. It contributes to lessening systems overload that government schools are overburdened with especially in urban settings. It also enables to redirect government resources to less advantaged areas. Therefore, governments are advised to promote fertile policy grounds for private investments in education in order to tackle the problem of shortage in school places.

Multiple Shifts. This refers to two or three times utilization of the existing school plant and facilities for different groups of students as is in most of Ethiopian urban schools. In this case a single school can serve same purpose for morning, afternoon, and evening students. By so doing, it is possible to obtain the advantage of increasing enrolment and reducing per-student cost.

Multigrade Classes. This arrangement is made on the basis of a single teacher held responsible to teach several grades. Multigrade class is believed to increase access in rural communities where the size of the class is uneconomically small and there are incomplete schools with grade levels below the official standard of primary education. This approach, combined with appropriately designed teaching materials and teacher training has proven to have yielded a positive outcome in Colombia and Indonesia.

Single-Sex Schools. The need for these types of schools arises when schooling becomes sex-segregated. However, this is not necessarily meant for building another school to each sex group. It is possible to use same schools for boys and girls in different times, holding single-sex classes in coeducational schools, and use separate buildings for boys and girls.

Nontraditional Schooling. This scheme is preferably to be employed in the areas where formal schooling is not adequately spread for several reasons. Nonformal schooling helps the educationally disadvantaged children to acquire basic literacy, numeracy, and social skills. But such educational delivery for children requires to ensure equivalency with formal primary schools so as to avoid the risk of being rejected by the user system lest they be considered as inferiors.

2.5.2 Demand Side Interventions

Winning the battle of increasing equitable access to primary education involves both the question of increasing supply as well as demand. In other words, maximum supply with little or no demand worth nothing. The World Bank (1990), as well as Lockheed and Verspoor (Ibid) suggest that improving primary schools, reducing direct costs, reducing indirect costs, and mobilizing community support are essentials of alleviating the demand side problems.

Improving Primary Schools. This is a matter of convincing parents that education is valuable by emphasizing on school effectiveness. Unless a parent sees any positive

values for his child to acquire from schooling, he may question the use of education. This might bring reluctance to send his children to school. That is why primary schools need to be effective in their operations to attract their client's attention. To that end, well informed school management system, the curriculum that responds to the real needs of a given society, adequate supply of learning materials and equipment, proper allocation of instructional time, and teacher quality are major inputs of effective schools.

Reducing Direct Costs. It is observed that in some countries the direct costs for primary schooling can reach to 20 percent of family's income. In an effort not to discourage parents from sending their children to schools, governments employ various cost stabilizing mechanisms.

Reduction or elimination of school fees, creating access to subsidized purchase of materials and uniforms, free or subsidized schools transportation, school meal programs, and scholarships for the disadvantaged are some areas of government intervention in reducing direct costs.

Reducing Indirect Costs. Indirect costs are associated with a child's labour contribution to the household purposes. In developing countries where the demand for a child's labour highly competes with the need for schooling, reducing indirect cost becomes as important as reducing the direct cost. The school calendar that complements seasonal demands for child labour, provision of child care services for younger siblings like establishing preschools close to primary schools (particularly to increase girls attendance) and instituting labour-saving technologies found to be very helpful in minimizing the indirect costs of schooling.

Mobilizing Community Support. This calls upon parents to take active part in the schools affairs. However, it is thoroughly discussed in the forthcoming section that deals with the call for community involvement in improving access under section 'community involvement in education'.

Biennial Intakes. This alternative approach refers to admission of students every other year instead of every year. The scheme is prescribed for rural areas where classes are uneconomically small. It allows communities to own schools without instituting multigrade classes. There is also a disadvantage attached to this alternative. Usually there is a higher dropout rate between rural children than that of the urban. Since biennial intake is recommended for rural children, there is a fear that the dropout rates may increase when a child is obliged to wait for one extra year before starting school. It also reduces a child's time in the school and perhaps resulting in a decrease in educational participation.

2.5.3 Equalizing the Learning Process

Equalizing the learning process addresses the problem of discriminatory (unequal) treatment and the way as to how corrective measures could be taken. For example, urban biased resource allocation negatively discriminates between urban and rural schools. Unequal proportion of budgetary allocation for girls' and boys' schools (where there are) sets a considerable limitation on the effectiveness of schools that receive the least share. Schools established for able children place a significant problem upon the enrolment, retention, and achievements of the mentally and physically disabled child.

The negative portrayal of texts, certain population groups such as females or minorities; language of instruction that may not belong to one's mother tongue or less familiar in a child's daily life experience; teachers attitude that differentiates among students on the basis of gender, religion, or family income (as has been discussed earliest under 'challenges to universalize primary education'); have a damaging effect on increasing access and equalizing opportunities to learning. Failure to eliminate these negatively discriminating treatments inhibit the forward move of any beautiful plans to achieve universal primary education.

In summary, promoting access and equity to primary education needs to emphasize on creating school places that are designed to meet the needs of the user system (clientele)

and those that do not negatively discriminate between their learners in whatever ways it might be.

2.6 Community Involvement in Education

Education is a public enterprise that requires active participation and inputs from all segments of society. Governments and NGOs labour to enhance education on their part. The role of communities is also of par amount importance in promoting it. Especially in today's world where developing countries are challenged by severe inability to provide universal primary education for their children, what is expected of communities remain more crucial than ever before. Unless all these efforts are integrated to effect significant improvement in our educational delivery, the goal of universalization may not go beyond a wishful thought as it has been observed from the past four decades.

Had it been possible, for instance, to attain universalization of primary education by government policy issuance and launching of various programs, it would have been some 18 years ago that Ethiopia had to attain its target (Fassil, 1990:52). But the reality is quite different from what has been planned and the country's primary participation rate is 34.7 to date (MOE,1998:5). This inability may be attributed to lack of resources, population increase, lack of stable policy and politics in flux, and similar other thwarting factors. Lack of community involvement in educational affairs also seemed as important limitation as the rest of all.

Thus this section deals with issues and strategies related to community participation in schooling. Benefits of community participation, possible intervention areas of community involvement and an over view of parental attitude regarding schooling are aspects to be dealt with in some details.

2.6.1 Benefits of Community Involvement in Education

Any failure or success in education has a direct and first hand bearing on the community. This is mainly because, first, it is the community's children who are sent to school and expected to exhibit positive changes in behavior. Secondly, the community by itself believes that education serves as a vehicle to economic and social development in order to improve the state of being less fortunate in life.

Therefore, schools need not try to be successful in their operations as isolated entities without giving due regard for those contributions to be made by their clientele. Giving rooms for community participation in school affairs has a twofold advantages for schools to alleviate problems related to school management, wastage, lack of resources, and planning school activities. Mary and Tracy (1994:77) acclaim that "parents and other community members are important stakeholders in the vision and desired results of a school" as in no less important way than as "the commitment and the follow-through of the staff".

In a detailed argument on the benefits of school community interaction, Mary (1992:28-29) emphasizes that it enhances education in many ways. Primarily, it helps in increasing the likelihood of a child to come to school. Secondly, it increases the probability of a child to retain in school. Thirdly, it promotes the achievement of a child in the school. These three qualities, in short, refer to increasing access to schooling, reducing the dropout rates, and minimizing the repetition rates whose negative impacts hinder the systems' efficiency and keep as many children as one half of school age population away from schools in developing countries. To get out of or at least to relieve the pain of being unsuccessful, it is high time for schools to strengthen their relationship with communities. In other words, if the school win community commitment, the likelihood of parental interest in and support for their children's education may increase.

Another package of benefits of community involvement in education refers to parental support to schools so that they become successful in their mission. In this respect, Hallak

and Poisson (1997), believe that effective partnership between schools and the community helps schooling in two major aspects. By enhancing community involvement, among other advantages, the schools can secure resources for their operations. In so doing, contributions should not necessarily be made in cash. Rather, as Mary (Ibid) went on to say, rural poor communities which may not be able to pay direct costs of schooling can make in-kind grants; contribute labour for school construction and maintenance, as well as harvesting of school gardens.

Thus schools need to place a significant emphasis on their relationships and revitalize parental roles that in turn increase school effectiveness and keep their relevance to the community at present and in the future.

2.6.2 Suggested Areas of Community Participation

Traditional school systems usually perceive that parents' involvement in the school activities as troublesome or time consuming. Conversely, experiences, particularly from areas hard-to-reach, affirm the positive correlation between community participation and its resultant success of schools (Mary, 1992:28).

The fundamental area of such collaboration begins at the stage of policy setting. Unless consensus is established during this stage and attempts are endorsed by the user system, the likelihood of futility begins from the outset. As for (Prather, 1993:93; Cummings, 1998) planning, management, and decision making, together with mobilizing locally available resources and the joint operation with communities has contributed for success of exemplary NGO operations such as BRAC in Bangladesh, Escuela Nueva in Colombia and Pamong in Indonesia.

Effective community participation, according to UNICEF (1992:45-48), is generally characterized by four underlined features: giving credits and support for communities, interest to improve education; solicit support of community leaders; promote community

participation in planning, contribution in management decision making, and teacher recruitment from the local community.

Giving Credits and Support for Community Interests. Education is required to respond to the needs of society. Therefore, planning to expand educational opportunities should be designed in a way that addresses the interest of that community. A considerable input from the community may be incorporated through needs assessment before planning and when a need arises to update the existing manner of carrying out the task. There are also times when a quest for some sort of education came from the community itself. In Somalia, for example, UNICEF did supplied teaching materials for self initiated request that has been made by community leaders for resumption of schooling to be conducted using volunteer teachers during the days of civil war in the country.

Solicit Support of Community Leaders. The role of community leaders, influential community members, and religious leaders is of a paramount contribution to enhance education. These people can mobilize people and encourage parents to take part in school matters than others do. Therefore, it seems to be wise and essential to sensitize and interest community leaders for the kind of education to be offered.

Promote Community Participation. The sphere of community participation includes planning, decision making, and monitoring and evaluation. Especially, community participation in management areas of schools increases the commitment of participants to discharge their duties in a greater sense of responsibility than those did not take part. Therefore, community involvement in different phases of school management bears a positive impact on how well schools function.

Teacher Recruitment. Recruiting teachers from local communities is said to be of several advantages. It alleviates problem of housing for teachers. It reduces the reluctance of teachers to work in remote areas. In the case of girls education, it provides positive role models for the young. Thus, community members can play a meaningful role in making recommendations on who is going to be selected for teaching.

2.6.3 Enhancing Parental Attitude to Involve in the School Affairs

Despite its importance it is not an easy task for schools to influence parents' attitude to work together. Some parents may complain for lack of enough time for additional responsibilities given from schools. Some also consider that school affairs are none of their business other than being sole responsibilities of teachers and head teachers.

The way Vandegrift and Greene (1992:57) have observed that problems contributing to limited parental involvement in school affair seems to be more of psychological by nature. These writers underscore that every parent has his/her own story to tell about what he/she feels while thinking of school. Schools may bring back memories of these parents' own failure, uncomfortable feelings, embarrassment, guilty, inadequacy, shyness or resentment, longing or fear, etc. For these and similar other reasons improving the degree of parental involvement in schooling could not be taken as a simple task.

Any how, as pointed out by Lovelady (1992:55-56), there is no parent who does not care for his offspring and school matters should not also be seen detached from the well-being of a child. Thus, unless they do not know as to how to get involved, parents want to participate in their children's education.

Writing on strategies as to how to approach parents and increase their involvement, Mary and Tracy (1994:78) suggest the use of newsletters, parent meetings, fliers sent home with students, before school letters to parents, area newspaper articles, parent seminars on specific aspects of the vision, and discussions lead by parent group representatives.

Generally, by giving due regard to parental positive contributions for their effectiveness, schools need to work hard in collaboration with parents.

2.7 The Role of NGOs in the Development Efforts of Developing Countries

Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) are organizations that came into being by people who have common goals to fulfil and operate on voluntary basis to achieve their common objectives. In so doing, these organizations do not belong to or considered as part of governmental structure. They are independent in setting their goals and priorities as well as managing their operations. However, this independence does not mean that NGOs do not assist government plans and operate on no consultative activities and devoid of consensus basis with governments, (Ballar, 1991:20; Moser, 1993:191).

NGOs are of various natures. Their role also varies with the purpose they meant for. They are also praised for some strengths which they possess and seriously criticized for certain weaknesses. The following discussion focuses on the issues related to the nature and role, strengths and weaknesses of the NGOs and their involvement in education.

2.7.1 Nature of NGOs and Their Growing Role in Development Activities

By nature, NGOs can be arranged on the continua that range from strong to weak, international to local, very large and federated to small and isolated, long lasting to ephemeral in their duration. Despite such specific nature of their own, social development is the largest common interest area that NGOs are established for (Cernea, 1988:3). In his further description of NGOs Cernea goes on saying that these organizations can be classified into economic NGOs and non-economic ones. Economic NGOs may include such non-governmental institutions formed for the purpose of rendering services for minimum margin of profit. Organizations such as farmer's cooperatives, marketing cooperatives, credit cooperatives, and others of alike nature are said to be economic NGOs. The non-economic or not-for-profit non-governmental organizations consist of development, environmental, philanthropic, vocational training, research, advocacy, or emergency aid activities carried out by voluntary groups. It is the latter type that is given due attention to deal with as far as our interest on NGOs is concerned.

The purpose of these not-for-profit NGOs mainly concentrates on pursuing activities to relieve suffering, promoting the interests of the less-fortunate groups of people, protecting environment providing for basic services or undertaking initiatives that effect community development in its broader perspectives. These types of NGOs pay greater emphasis to organize people for the intention to build the capacity of that society to make better use of its own local resource and create new ones, alleviate poverty and influence government plans and actions to that same direction . In principle, the far-reaching goal to be achieved by NGOs is, therefore, to ensure self-reliance and self-development through mobilizing people into organized expression of such voluntarism, (Cernea, 1988:7-8; Malena 1995:13).

To this end the role of the NGOs is still growing and kept on growing in the economies of developing countries during the last three decades. In 1970 the share of NGOs in low-income economies was 0.9 billion. Only after five years the share has been risen up to \$1.4 billion. And in 1985 NGOs have contributed \$4 billion, (Cernea, 1988:5). The World Bank also seems highly attracted to work with NGOs for they demonstrate a growing efficiency and effectiveness in their operations. For example, the NGO involvement in the bank-financed projects was only about six percent between 1973 and 1988. The share grew to one third of all approved projects in 1993 and it became one half in 1994. Also over \$7.6 billion development aid has been channeled through NGOs to developing countries, (Malena, 1995:13,17). In the countries like India, Kenya, Egypt, and Ghana the extent of NGO's contribution reaches 5 percent of the GNP (Cummings, 1998:2).

With this increasing involvement in the activities designed to bring about positive impact in the lives of people terribly suffering from social and economic inequalities, the reality itself explains that how NGOs have become growingly influential in the development efforts of the developing countries.

2.7.2 NGOs Involvement in Education

Universalization of primary education , as it has been discussed earlier, has become a highly challenging task in the developing countries. Many of these countries are now far away from the goal of providing primary education for their eligible children.

Evidently, in the African countries like Niger, Ethiopia, Mali, and Burkina Faso the GPER is reported 29,34,37 and 39 percentages respectively (Brown, Ibid; World Bank, 1999). These figures by far show that less than one half of the school age children are enrolled and the remaining majority are denied access to schooling in these countries.

The problems of access and equity are serious impediments to universal primary education particularly in low-income countries. Diverse, complex and demanding nature of educational needs is also found to be the other side of the problem of universalization. Therefore, as proposed by UNICEF (1990:29) and as it may sound good for the rest of us, expansion of educational opportunities shouldn't be left to governments only. Building alliances among government, private sector, nongovernmental organizations, and the user system in general is the call of the day. Given their strength is maintained, NGOs are likely to be committed in creating equitable access to the desperately poorest segments of societies who are highly marginalized in terms of provision of social services such as education. In this respect (Bishop,1989, Anderson, 1992; Prather,1993; Cummings, 1998; Rugh and Bossert, 1998), emphasize on some NGO initiated basic education projects that have been yielded worth mentioning achievements in Bangladesh, Philippines, Indonesia, Colombia, and Sri Lanka. Summary of these projects is presented as follows:

Bangladesh's BRAC. This alternative strategy for primary education is run by an NGO called Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC). The project was primarily designed to narrow the big gender gap created as a result of Islamic culture that makes it difficult, if not impossible, for girls to attend public schools especially distant from homes. Another objective of the project was to alleviate shortage of female teachers in rural areas to teach girls.

The approach used to tackle this situation was mainly emphasized on seeking out interested communities, looking for competent women who were willing to teach, providing them with intensive starter training to teaching, and keeping them more apt to teaching through continuous and strong supervision from skilled supervisors. With this package, BRAC's programs used to start with a group of about 30 first graders and carry them through to 4th grade. This program has been started in the year 1985 in 22 rural village BRAC schools. By late 1991 the program had expanded to 6003 schools and over 8000 schools were reported operational in 1992. Also BRAC has had a plan to expand the number of its schools to 50,000 by the year 1995.

Philippines Impact. This project was primarily designed to combat the problem of teacher shortage due to rapid population growth. In this case Impact has been devised as an approach that hold fewer teachers responsible to teach larger number of learners assisted by new instructional technology of modular learning materials. Fulfillment of the objectives of Impact was largely dependent upon the participation of family ideals and older students (older brothers and sisters) who usually serve as tutors to help the teacher in instruction of grades 1-3.

For advanced grades, the students learn with self-instructional modules. Radio for English used to teach pronunciation of English and Filipino. This practice enables increasing student -teacher ratio to over 80:1.

Indonesia's Pamong. This initiative was intended to reach rural areas where the population is widely dispersed. It focuses on building small school that may only be able to bring together 50 children of different ages to teach in multigrade classrooms. Modules and tutors (some come from adults) used to convey support to the program.

As for its perceived importance, Pamong School becomes recognized as one of the several official types of primary schools. Teacher education institutions now have special courses to help teachers prepared for this situation.

Colombia's Escuela Nueva. This innovation was initiated with an intention to turning to the community for resources due to the weakness of the public sector to meet all types of needs for education. Escuela Nueva (the new school) stresses on a family approach with children taking much responsibility for school management and resource allocation.

Escuela Nueva uses multigrade classrooms and special materials (including self-instructional modules). Currently, the practice became operational in 10,000 schools of in Colombia.

Sri Lanka's Cluster of Community Schools. This creative approach was devised to lessen the problems of isolated schools that did not receive supervision from district offices nor entitled to full financing. Here, the key intervention is the creation of school cluster, so that isolated schools can learn from each other. In this case principals meet to share management experiences and teachers meet to review teaching practices. Common resources such as maps and tape recorders are kept in the core schools situated at about manageable distance for member schools of the cluster.

These clusters of community schools focus on school community relations and supervision. As a result of this practice a significant academic performance improvement has been exhibited in the member schools.

Finally, while discussing upon the respective contributions of BRAC, Impact, Pamong, Escuela Nveva, and Cluster of Community Schools, from among many of fellow NGOs initiated education endeavors, we can be informed that how nongovernmental organizations are potential partners in enhancing education. This again underscores the importance of taking further steps with enthusiastic, committed, trustworthy, development oriented, and transparently operating NGOs.

2.7.3 Strengths and Weaknesses of NGOs

Examination of the role of NGOs as a development partners within the poor countries reveals that a sizable amount of contribution in terms of education, health, agriculture, and other related social sector operations is demonstrated.

However, experience proves that some NGOs fall short of achieving their predetermined goals while others become successful in their way. In fact, failure to reach at one's goal may not be as threatening as a death to all good opportunities to come again. But a failure that could be attributed to one's own weakness and inability to fulfill one's commitment may not sound as the former one. In more general terms, strengths and weaknesses of an NGO may depend on the nature and quality of that individual NGO.

In further discussion about NGOs, it was learnt that they are characterized by some strengths and weaknesses. Some of the strengths of NGOs are their capacity to promote local participation, cost effectiveness, and ability to innovate and adapt. On the other hand, limited replicability, limited financial and technical capacity, and narrower programming context were identified as common weaknesses of nongovernmental organizations (Cernea, 1988:17-19; Clark cited in Malena, 1995:15; Cummings, 1998:2).

2.7.3.1 Strengths of NGOs

Capacity to Reach the Rural Poor in Remote Areas. NGOs operate both in the rural and urban areas where there is a need to meet according to their objectives to attain. But in most cases these organizations tend to focus on poorer communities that have faced problems even to meet their basic needs and often who were located in hardly accessible areas. Such areas usually characterized by either limited existence, absence, or ineffectiveness of government programs.

Capacity to Promote Local Participation. In this context NGOs have strong grassroots links that contribute to incorporate and integrate local inputs into their efforts. In some

cases there is a possibility of NGOs themselves to be a part of that community in which they operate. In others, they may come as outsiders to that society. Whether they have emerged out of that community or came from afar, local self-help initiatives, employing participatory approaches and local control of programs are essential features of strong NGOs.

Cost Effectiveness. Eventhough some NGOs are accused for their uneconomical utilization of resources and hiring expatriates for jobs that can be easily handled by nationals with reasonable payments, which in most cases by far less than those foreigners lavishly paid for, (Fantahun, 1994:111), cost effectiveness and efficiency are the most important qualities of strong NGOs. This effectiveness is believed to emanate from their commitment to use low cost technologies and streamlined services, and low staff cost which enables them to function efficiently on low budgets.

Ability to Innovate and Adapt. Provided that NGOs are more flexible than government service, they may have greater conducive environment for innovation to respond more creatively to the local needs. They have also more access to transfer technologies developed elsewhere and adapt them to local conditions.

2.7.3.2 Weaknesses of NGOs

The major weaknesses identified in NGOs activities are:

Limited Replicability. This refers to the problem related to scaling up the results of NGO sponsored projects. This problem has two dimensions. First, projects that have been started on small scale and localized basis without thorough analysis of the broader social and economic context may become unable to have regional or national impact. Secondly, most NGOs activities depend on a highly motivated and culturally sensitive staff for their success. This implies that where staff intensity and motivation can not be replicated, the higher will be the risk of non-replicability of the activities themselves.

Low Level of Self Sustainability. This refers to the continuity of the project activities after once it is phased out. Most NGO sponsored projects lack quality of being designed in a way to keep themselves operational with little or no outside support to the beneficiaries. As a result, some of these projects start dying while the completion of their term approaches.

Limited Technical and Financial Capacity. Insufficient technical feasibility analysis and weak data bases upon which most NGO projects have been initiated lead them to a critical difficulty of achieving their purposes. Therefore, NGOs are advised not to embark on operations before they make sure that they have reliable source of human (managerial and other staff), financial and material resources.

Narrower Programming Context. Most NGOs used to prepare their plans in light of their interest and for specific group of communities that they thought to benefit from. This discreteness in planning and implementing result in lack of coordination of efforts within a sector and among sectors. It does not also allow for information exchange between NGOs themselves and hinders the formulation of countrywide and/or region- wide programs.

Furthermore, quite paradoxical as it may sound, there are saddening reports against NGOs. It is well understood that NGOs mainly depend on charitable donations (Malena, Ibid:14) whether for financing of their advocacy, research, development , emergency, or any other operations. Thus they used to raise funds mostly contingent upon the prevalence of devastating disaster that need quick emergency responses. One of such a horrifying news to the world was the famine in Ethiopia in 1984/85. There were several fund-raising programs across the world for this purpose. Truly speaking, compassionate brothers and sisters from all over the planet had played a significant role to circumvent the situation.

Writing about one of the fund-raising campaign's in North America, quoting American official, Hancock in Fantahun (Ibid) noted that "The telephones have been ringing constantly...Many are in tears when they call...contributions were averaging \$ 40 per person...A lot of people who call do not know where Ethiopia is ...They don't know how to spell it. But they're horrified by the tragedy".

Yes, the famine was horrifying. The fund-raising was all right. But the most humiliating event was that followed the fund-raising. Hancock (1989:16) called it "the means has become an end in itself".

Moreover, according to (SCF/UK Annual Report, 1984/85:24; RRC Report 1984/85; News Week, Aug.26, 1985; cited in Fantahun, 1994:111-112; and Hancock 1989:4,6-7) out of such huge amount of fund raised from people in tears, it was a very insignificant proportion that has been utilized for the ultimate purpose of that fund-raising.

For instance, from the total amount of \$ 18 million collected by US based NGO called International Christian Aid, nothing has been sent to Ethiopia. Most of the British top 21 NGOs have been accused for making available only 10 percent of what they have collected in the name of hunger stricken people. During 1984/85 again, SCF/UK has raised over 42 million pounds but this NGO's total expenditure here in Ethiopia was only Birr 6,379,928. In 1985 Oxfam/UK had also reported that it has secured the total amount of 51.1 million pounds out of which an estimate of Birr 3,255,999 only has been made available for the noble purpose of saving lives. A church based NGO called Catholic Relief Service (CRS) was also blamed for breaking its vow to send 100 percent of the fund raised for millions on the verge of death. During that specified time CRS has managed to raise the total amount of \$ 52 million. Out of this 52 million what was sent to Ethiopia amounted only to \$ 9 million .

Therefore, to be more reliable partners of development initiatives of community, NGOs required to operate on a transparency basis and should also bridge such fidelity gaps.

2.8 Contributions of NGOs to Primary Education Sub-Sector in Ethiopia

Primary education in Ethiopia is characterized by several shortcomings. The country's gross enrollment rate is one of the lowest in the world that shows an average of 34.7 percent in 1998. This low enrollment in primary education is less than half of the Sub-Saharan average of 72 percent. Only about 2.1 million out of 12.3 million children of age 7-14 years are at school; another 1 million children enrolled are over the age of 14.

Disparities are also distinct. Wide regional disparities are exhibited to the extent that gross primary enrollment in Afar is 8.4 percent when compared with 53 and nearly 90 in Tigray and Addis Ababa respectively. There is also marked gender disparity. Only about 24 percent of girls are at primary school when compared to about 33 percent of boys.

Lack of school places is another problem of the system. There are 10,503 primary schools serving only 38 percent of the 27,000 villages in the country. Villages are too far from each other for primary school child to travel. In most cases it is slightly less than 7 Kilometers between home and school where primary school children walk less than 3 Kilometers in many other countries.

Internal efficiency of primary education system is low. Many of the enrolled children used to leave schools early to the degree that half the number of them who enroll in grade one do not continue to grade two in some cases. In general, the dropout rate between grades 1 and 3 is 22 percent and which is accompanied by 11 percent repetition rate for all primary grades. Coupled with many socio-cultural determinants, the prevalence of these problems place a hurdle on the way of increasing school age children with particular reference to girls participation in primary education. Some of such socio-cultural difficulties that make girls the most educationally disadvantaged are demand for girls' labour which may be calculated at the expense of their schooling, fear of abduction which is common in rural areas, perception of less economic pay off from

teaching girls who will marry and leave the household, and lack of positive gender role models to motivate girls enrollment, retention, and achievements level.

Lack of primary school equipment and facilities, inadequacy of teaching and learning materials, and lack of trained teachers are also considered among the major obstacles of the system, (PHRD,1998 :xviii-xix; Penrose, 1997:137-142; Hassan and Verwimp, 1997:188; MOE, 1998:7;World Bank,1999;FDRE,1999: 17-18).

With this profile, primary education in Ethiopia is likely to be a high interest area for NGOs interventions to address felt needs of the out-of-school population of school age children. Therefore, the following discussion focuses on NGO's contribution in this regard.

2.8.1 Financing Primary Education

Universalization of primary education has become both very important and most challenging commitment for most low-income countries since 1960s. This endeavor, inspite of creating many school places and bringing about a relative increase in enrollment has stretched the scarce resources of these countries beyond the limits of being effective in attaining the goal of universalization. As it has been pointed out earlier, Ethiopia is one of those countries whose primary school participation rate is very low.

This inability to satisfy the growing needs of more school places, more teachers, more equipment and facilities as well as more learning and teaching materials only from domestic sources of resources force officials to look desperately for any alternative at least not to let situations get worse.

These alternative sources are external by nature and classified as foreign loan and foreign aid by type.

Foreign Loan. The loan for the education sector usually comes from three international agencies, namely, IDA, ADB, and OPEC. Among these agencies, IDA plays the most important part. Six out of the eight loan agreements have been concluded with this agency with a total of US \$300 million. The seventh loan from this organization amounting to US\$140 million was signed in June 1998 and it is scheduled to be utilized for the first phase implementation of the ESDP (1991-94 EC) focusing mainly on efforts of universalization of primary education.

The second major loan agency is the ADB. Ethiopia has two loan agreements with this Bank of which the first amounted to Birr 37 million and the second; US\$21 million. A third loan amounting to US\$41 million is secured from ADB to be used in the implementation of the ESDP again between 1991-1994 EC.

The third major agency is OPEC from which a loan amounting to US\$4 million has been secured for the purpose of constructing primary schools in government initiated settlement villages /Sefera-in Amharic/ in Metekel, Assosa and Gambella. Currently, the loan from ADB is also secured for the construction of primary schools whose project plans has got the Bank's approval (Tsfaye,1998: 5).

Foreign Aid. Aid also has a role to play in financing education in general and the primary level in particular. SIDA, UNICEF, UNDP and EEC (the present EU) are among the leading aid agencies in the education sector of Ethiopia. These agencies support the construction of educational institution, provision of school facilities, and manpower training with particular focus on primary education. USAID, FINNIDA, GTZ, and others also represent another cohort of aid agencies in the order of the volume of their aid. However, the latter undertake projects by their own offices and the money does not go to the accounts of the educational institutions (Tsfaye,Ibid).

Foreign aid negotiations, as Tsfaye complains, are made by the government officials who know little, if not nothing, about how the system operates and what it really needs. In any case, concerning aid to education, negotiations are made on the basis of 10 percent

of the total cost is to be covered by the government while the rest 90 percent comes from donors.

Further, ESDP which is designed to achieve five basic objectives: raising national average gross primary enrollment ratio from 34.7 to 50 percent; introducing new curriculum; increasing school efficiency from 60 to 80 percent; improving access to primary education at least by 25 percent in underserved regions; and promoting public expenditure on education to 4.5 percent of GDP to enable the construction of additional 5 percent schools; requires 12.2 billion Birr for five years budget. Out of this sum the lion's share is planned to be utilized for the primary education. The government discloses that its share constitutes for Birr 8.85 billion (72.5percent). The balance of birr 3.35 billion (27.5percent) is expected from other sources, (Dereje, 1998:8).

It is noted, here that a huge gap is expected to be filled by sources other than the government it self, and that how nongovernmental agencies are expected to play an important role in the sub- sector.

2.8.2 Initiation for Alternative Strategies in SNNPR

This part is mainly interested in investigating the alternative routes to the formal schooling that is initiated by NGOs. The fact that this area does not deserve the scholars' reputation for study and/or is a newly introduced one here in the country, depicts a serious lack of literature for reference. Nevertheless, activities which have been implemented by the financial and/or technical assistance of ACTION AID-Ethiopia, SDP and WVE are found to be relevant for the case in point.

2.8.2.1 ACCESS/ACTION AID

ACCESS is an updated form of NFPE program which is initiated by ACTION AID Ethiopia, UK based NGO which has been started operating in Ethiopia since 1988. The concept of ACCESS, an acronym that stands for "Appropriate, Cost-effective Centers for

Education within the School System” was conceived in July 1996 to correct some shortcomings associated with the NFPE program that was already introduced in the years 1991-96 by this same NGO.

The NFPE program prior to ACCESS was criticized for preventing NFPE completers from enrolling into formal schools, creating a notion of NFPE as sole undertaking of NGOs and has nothing to do with the formal system, and giving way to parental suspicion to recognize NFPE program as equally important as that of the formal one, (Ahmed, 1997:2).

In general, ACCESS has the following objectives:

- a. To provide basic education equivalent to grade four for out of school children with an intention to serve as bases for further learning or improve lives;
- b. To promote girls’ access to basic education;
- c. To strengthen the formal system (through increased enrollment and reduced dropout rate); (Ahmed, Ibid:4-5; PHRD, 1998:16-17).

In order for ACCESS to achieve its objectives, it has formulated guiding principles to adhere to while carrying out its missions. These principles refer to community participation, cost-effectiveness, adaptability, sustainability, linkage and integration with formal schools, program integration with development work, flexibility, accessibility, integrated curriculum, learner-centred approach, focus on local resources, and gender equity, (Ahmed, Ibid; PHRD 1998:Ibid).

In further analysis, educational operations that are being carried out by SDP and WVE in the region are dealt as major concern of this study in the following chapters.

In summary, even though there exist various problems to be addressed more creatively and call for more innovativeness to find an alternative route to the formal primary system, a search for such alternatives seems to be quite in its infancy stage in the region as is in the country.

CHAPTER THREE

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

3.1 The NFPE Project in Sidama

As it has been pointed out in the earlier part of this study, the NFPE project was initiated by the NGO called SDP. Its purpose has been to provide basic education to children who have not been reached through government efforts. As an alternative strategy to formal primary education, the program was launched in February 1998 in eight pilot implementation centers in Sidama zone. Abruptly enough, with no time to assess the performances in the trial period, the program was scaled up into 257 NFPE centers and 20,560 students across Sidama in May of the same year, 1998.

The NFPE project has been targeted to benefit poor children living away from schools, school age children who for one reason or another have been forced to drop out of school, while ensuring that 60 to 70 percent of classroom seats are reserved for girls. NFPE teachers have been usually selected from the respective catchment areas where the centers have been planned to be opened. Ten years of schooling was minimum requirement to be hired as a teacher. The training scheme seems to be very short and brief one. The NFPE teachers are expected to gain working knowledge of pedagogy, subject area methods, child psychology, lesson plan preparation and timetable making, production and utilization of teaching aids, practice teaching, and more others within an initial training period of half-a-month.

The program, at least in principle, was characterized by high degree of gender sensitivity. As mentioned above, 60 to 70 percent of the NFPE student population were to be females. Ninety percent of the teaching post is also required to be filled by females. In contrast to the intention, however, women constituted only 25 percent of the teaching force in the 24 centers visited.

The program follows the same curriculum, but different academic calendar, with that of formal primary schools. However, a sort of accelerated promotion was planned to be put into practice in order to cover in three years the four-year study of lower primary, by introducing a combined syllabus for children of age 11-14 so that they may qualify to join grade 5 in the upper primary. The instruction usually took place for five working days a week. The length of the periods of instruction for children of age 8-10 is 40 and 45 minutes for the age group 11-14 years. Subject offering includes the vernacular (Sidamigna in this case), Mathematics, English, Environmental Science, and Amharic.

The academic year extends from May 1 to the end of February with about 200 days of schooling. Daily three hours of instruction was given to the younger children and almost three and half hours to the older with 20 minutes of recess time for both. The months of March and April were vacation time.

With this information as a backdrop about the NFPE project, the following discussion deals with presentation and analysis of data in line with the research questions addressed by the study.

3.1.1 Contributions of SDP in Promoting Equitable Access

The problems of access and equity are found to be major challenges to the universalization of primary education throughout the education systems of almost all developing countries. Victims of such inequity are rural children compared to their urban counter-parts in terms of location, females than boys gender-wise, and the poor when seen in contrast to the better-offs in economic terms. Therefore, whenever the issue of equity is raised, it is safe to say that efforts need to be geared towards bridging the gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged segments of society. Creating balance in opportunities between the fortunate and less-fortunate members of communities may also serve as a yardstick to measure strengths of a given educational operation.

The following discussion presents how the NFPE project contributes towards increasing equitable access for those denied of opportunity to learn. As a final analysis on the benefits of the project chi-square tests of independence and uniformity were applied in the following way.

3.1.1.1 Opportunity for Rural Children

Table 1a

Percentages of Respondents from Each Stakeholders Who Very Strongly Agree that NFPE Project Benefits the Respective Groups.

Beneficiaries	Stakeholders					
	NFPE Teachers		Political Leaders		Education Officials	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Rural Children	21	45	18	75	4	25
Females	22	47	20	83	5	31
The Poor	26	54	19	79	1	6
Minorities	18	37	20	83	3	18

Based on the above data tests of independence and homogeneity were employed as follows.

Table 1b

Association of responses on the Benefits of NFPE for the Rural Child

Responses	Stakeholders			Total
	NFPE Teachers	Political Leaders	Education Officials	
Very strongly	21	18	4	43
Others	27	6	12	45
	n=48	n=24	n=16	88

As for the result obtained from the chi-square of association of responses with the status of different groups of respondents there exists strong dependence. That means the calculated X^2 result 51.4 is found greater than the tabulated value $X^2_{0.05(2)}=5.99$.

One of the most important purposes of the NFPE project is to increase access to basic education for rural children particularly for those who reside in areas that were hard to reach. In a country where 46 percent of boys and only 20.8 percent of girls are provided with access to primary education in rural areas (FDRE, 1999:18), it is imperative to start any educational intervention from those who lack the opportunity to learn. Thus, all services of the NFPE project are confined to rural settings. For example, out of 257 NFPE centers there was no center that is situated in an urban area. All the beneficiaries were also from rural parts of the zonal administration.

Thus, one can understand that the NFPE project was designed in a way that it could serve the rural community which is more disadvantaged than the urban one as far as the issue of educational equity is concerned.

3.1.1.2 Opportunity for Female

Table 1c
Association of Responses on the Benefits of NFPE for Females

Responses	Stakeholders			Total
	NFPE Teachers	Political Leaders	Education Officials	
Very strongly	23	20	5	48
Others	25	4	11	40
	n=48	n=24	n=16	88

As observed from the computation result of the above table the calculated X^2 value is found greater than the tabulated $X^2_{0.05(2)}=5.99$. This, in other words, shows that the prevalence of strong association between respondents' background and their responses.

In the three sample districts, a comparison was made to see the proportion of female students to boys in urban and rural schools. According to the result obtained in urban formal primary schools there were 10 female students for 16 male students. But, in rural

formal primary schools there were 26 male students for 10 female learners at the beginning of the 1999/2000 academic year. While the male to female ratio calculated for the NFPE centers showed an average of 64 male students for 100 female students.

This positive discriminatory approach to promote participation of girls in education under the scheme of encouraging female children to occupy 60 to 70 percent of classroom seats obviously shows the possibility of expanding opportunity for girls to learn.

3.1.1.3 Opportunity for the Poor

Table 1d
Association of Responses on the Benefits of NFPE for the Poor

Responses	Stakeholders			Total
	NFPE Teachers	Political Leaders	Education Officials	
Very strongly	26	19	1	46
Others	22	5	15	42
	n=48	n=24	n=16	88

While the association between respondents and their responses on the benefits of NFPE for the poor, the computed X^2 value 109.7 is found by far greater than the tabulated $X^2_{0.05}(2)=5.99$. Therefore, the result reveals that the existence of strong dependence of responses on the status of different stakeholders.

Eventhough it seems difficult to identify between the poor and the better-offs among community members whose earnings are highly dependent on subsistence agriculture, candidates to the NFPE program have been selected on the basis of recommendations by local community leaders that based their selections on comparative poverty levels.

During group discussions held with community members, they also acknowledged that the enrolled children were children of the poor. In addition to this, participants of the

group discussions have discovered some unforeseen negative consequences of this affirmative action for the poor. The problem is two-fold. First, unnecessary stratification has started to grow resulting in the NFPE centers being labeled as places where destitutes get help. Second, the “haves” have desisted from volunteering to help the NFPE centers because of the lack of places for their children. However, unless the adverse effects of these types of unpredicted challenges place a significant impact on the operations of the NFPE centers, it is the poor who are provided with access to basic education by the project.

3.1.1.4 Opportunity for the Minority

Table 1e

Association of Responses on the Benefits of NFPE for the Minority Groups

Responses	Stakeholders			Total
	NFPE Teachers	Political Leaders	Education Officials	
Very strongly	18	20	3	41
Others	30	4	13	47
	n=48	n=24	n=16	88

Regarding benefits of the NFPE project for the minority groups the chi-square test result shows that the existence of strong dependence of responses on the background of the respondents. To this effect the X^2 value 90.2 is much greater than that of the tabulated one which accounts only 5.99.

Minorities can be classified into different categories. There are religious minorities where one type of faith dominates the other. Ethnic minorities are characterized by the situation whereby the larger ethnic group puts pressure on a relatively smaller group of inhabitants of a given region or geographic location. At times the concept of minority involves special needs of members of society that require special consideration especially while planning education.

In this regard, the NFPE project has not entertained needs of children with physical, psychological, or behavioral problems. But all students have been admitted to the program irrespective of their religious background or otherwise.

Generally seen, the frequency of responses at an average reveals that 80, 45.25, and 18.4 percent of political leaders, NFPE teachers, and education officials respectively have perceived that the project has benefited its target groups 'very strongly'. In this case higher degree of reservation was observed on the side of education officials not to say 'very strongly'. The same attitude of the education officials has been also shared among the larger proportion of the NFPE teachers. This reservation on the side of the management and the implementers may be attributed to lack of necessary inputs such as text books, teacher guides, self instructional materials, and other facilities to carry out the program effectively.

The second test that has been employed was test of uniformity (homogeneity). Its result was calculated as follows:

Table 1f
Homogeneity test of responses on the degree of benefits of the NFPE projects for its target groups

Responses	Stakeholders			Total
	NFPE Teachers	Political Leaders	Education Officials	
Very strongly	22	19	3	44
Others	26	5	13	44
	n=48	n=24	n=16	88

Four questions, with five similar alternatives for each, were presented to the three different groups of respondents (NFPE teachers, political leaders and education officials). This was done with the intention of securing the respondents' attitudes regarding the benefits of the NFPE project to the rural child, the female, the poor, and minorities, the

most deprived segments of society in relation to opportunities to education (Garrido, 1986; World Bank, 1990; Lockheed and Verspoor, 1991).

The test has revealed that the computed $X^2 = 72$ by and large exceeds the tabulated $X^2_{0.05}^{(2)} = 5.99$. Accordingly, what was learnt from this was that there was no homogeneity between responses of the three different groups.

However, this lack of homogeneity in responses has not been necessarily associated with the degree to which the project is useful or otherwise. Rather it has confirmed the benefits of the project as perceived by different groups of stakeholders. In this regard all the responses given were found concentrated on either the first alternative, 'very strongly,' or the second, 'strongly'. Hence, the respondents from the three groups have perceived that benefits of the project to the targeted groups were significant.

3.1.2 Strategies SDP Follows

Several issues were treated independently under this major research question. The issues included: how the project compliments with felt needs of that given community, involving participatory approach, ensuring sustainability, and the monitoring and evaluation schemes. The following part deals with each of these concerns in some detail.

3.1.2.1 Does the project complement with felt needs?

Eventhough Sidama has achieved 59.6 percent, a relatively higher GPER in 1998 (REB, 1998) when compared to the remaining thirteen zones and special woredas in the region, it does not mean that all school age children have received the opportunity to learn. Again, when seen from another perspective, the commencement of NFPE project in the area does not necessarily guarantee that the project activities meet the real needs of that particular community too. Thus a set of questions were prepared to test whether the project activities complement with felt needs of that particular community.

When seen from another perspective, the configuration of data by itself indicates that 100, 87.5, and 77 percent of the NFPE teachers, political leaders, and education officials, respectively, accept the need for the project ‘very strongly’ as perceived by different groups, except for some reservations on the side of education officials. The reservation has reached to its peak when education officials rated their own attitude about the need for the NFPE project. In sharp contrast to their ratings of others’ perceptions, all, or 100 percent of them resorted to indifference leaving out the other alternatives provided.

This indifference about the need for the NFPE project on the side of education officials may be attributed to at least two major conditions. First, it could be due to lack of consensus between officials and donor agency on the large scale implementation prior to examining effects of the trial period because they commented that the scaling up scheme was a donor-driven one. Secondly, it could also be a subtle way of shifting one’s accountability on to others and to be on the safe side in case of any flaws that may happen to the project activities since it was initiated by the NGO itself.

To examine the need for the NFPE project a Chi-square test of homogeneity was also employed and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Homogeneity test of responses on the need for the NFPE project.

Responses	Stakeholders			Total
	NFPE Teachers	Political Leader	Education Officials	
Very strongly	14	18	6	38
Others	34	6	10	50
	n=48	n=24	n=16	88

According to the result obtained from the homogeneity test of responses on the need for the project, the computed $X^2 = 48$ has been found to be by far greater than the tabulated value of $X^2_{0.05}^{(2)} = 5.99$. Therefore, the responses were not uniform (homogeneous) at

alpha = 0.05 significance level among the three different groups of respondents. Evidently, the majority of political leaders that account for over 72 percent have said that the need for the project was 'very strong' as opposed to responses by education officials out of which slightly over 28 percent were 'indifferent' about.

This variation in responses may be due to variety of reasons. For instance, the attitude of political leaders that tried to affirm strength of need for the project may emanate from the interest to keep themselves in harmony with the prescribed objectives of the project carried out in localities under their jurisdiction.

Anyhow, even if responses on the need for the project were not uniform, over 88 percent of respondents from the three groups agreed that the need was either 'very strong' or 'strong'. This coupled with positive attitude of the community towards the project may serve as an evidence that the need for the NFPE program was high eventhough inputs from all concerned partners were not secured and joint planning was not exercised before its implementation.

3.1.2.2 Does the project promote community participation?

Community participation in the activities of education projects is taken as of high importance in achieving success of stated objectives. Provided that all things are constant, the degree to which community involvement is encouraged in the affairs of education makes a difference on how the intended plans are effectively executed. This could perhaps be associated with the ultimate purpose of education, which is to serve society; and society always tries to keep an eye on school matters because it is the child of that community who loses or gains in bad or good situations in the schools.

It is for this reason that Mary and Tracy (1994:77) underscore that "parents and other community members are important stakeholders in the vision and desired results" of education in no less important way than "the commitment and the follow-through of the

staff". In line with this understanding about community involvement in educational operations, trends in the NFPE project have been assessed.

Areas of community participation and frequency of responses together with result of homogeneity test are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Homogeneity test on responses about community participation in the NFPE

Responses	Stakeholders			Total
	NFPE Teachers	Political Leader	Education Officials	
Material & other support	32	18	10	60
Others	16	6	6	28
	n=48	n=24	n=16	88

In table 3 the pattern of responses among the three different groups has been displayed. The purpose was to see how homogeneous the responses were. Actually, the question that deals with the how of community involvement in the project activities was designed with seven possible alternative responses that range from 'taking part in all major phases' to 'not involved at all'. But all respondents have limited their responses to the three options, namely 'involved in material support only' or 'involved in labour support only' or 'involved both in material and labour support.

Based on responses provided, the chi-square test of uniformity was employed in order to see whether responses from the three groups had homogeneous nature or not.

In effect of the test, the computed $\chi^2 = 9.9$ has been found to be a bit greater than the tabulated $\chi^2_{0.05}(2)=9.49$. Thus, even if the difference is not a significant one, we do not accept the homogeneity of responses between the three different groups at alpha 0.05 level of significance.

On the other hand, even if the responses from the different groups are thought to be uniform, based up on data presented in Table 3, this could not stand as an evidence of commitment from the project management side to win the all-rounded community support. Practically seen, only material and labour support may not ensure joining of hands with community to the best of that educational endeavour. At times, there might be a feeling of boredom in supplying for the needs of imposed interests of others, which is not endorsed by the supplier himself.

Furthermore, the dimensions of community participation in educational affairs are not limited to the kind of contributions made only when necessary. Rather community members are expected to involve in planning, managing, and decision making together with responding to shortcomings related to lack of resources (Prather, 1993:93; Cummings, 1998).

It was also learnt from sessions of focus group discussion with community members in NFPE project catchment areas that most of the participants complained about lack of co-ordination by the concerned body to unite their efforts to keep NFPE centres clean and proper places for children to learn. The fact that more than three-fourth of the NFPE centres visited were functioning or so to say at the expense of the health and comfort of children who come to learn, the complaint that came from parents holds true.

Had it not been the problem of organising community members into task forces and delegation of responsibility to take part in decision making, the NFPE students would not have continued to pursue their basic education in dusty and messy kitchen-like rooms, with totally unplasterd walls, and leaking roofs, spending 3:00-3:20 hours a day sitting on pieces of stone, in some cases where there was no latrine in the premises.

In any case, community involvement in the operations of the NFPE project seems to be not encouraging and not as full-fledged as has been beautifully stated in the guidelines for implementation of the program.

3.1.2.3 Does the project ensure sustainability of its operation?

In an understanding that the more a project relies on domestic resource base for its operation, the higher will be its sustainability than the one that is highly dependent on foreign assistance, investigation was made to locate sources of resources for the NFPE activities. The table below summarizes responses for each question by the three different groups.

Table 4a
Source of resources for the NFPE project

Resource type	Responses by the three groups												Sum	%
	NFPE Teachers				Political Leaders				Education Officials					
	100% External		100% Internal		100% External		100% Internal		100% External		100% Internal			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Human	-	-	48	100	-	-	24	100	-	-	16	100	88	100
Financial	48	100	-	-	24	100	-	-	16	100	-	-	88	100
Capital Equipment	-	-	48	10	-	-	24	100	-	-	16	100	88	100
Recurrent finance	48	100	-	-	24	100	-	-	16	100	-	-	88	100
Recurrent materials	-	-	48	100	-	-	24	100	-	-	16	100	88	100

As clearly seen from the table above, 100 percent of human resource, capital equipment, and recurrent materials required for the project are obtained from within, and yet, the money used for purchase of goods and services totally come from external sources. Practices have proven that this type of support could not persist for various reasons. Among the major ones internal and external barriers can be mentioned.

Internal barriers that limit the near total reliance on the support from foreign sources are highly associated with political stability of a country. Especially in today's politics in flux it is not easy to predict which government stays in power for how long. As a result of which some good policies introduced by someone in power may be dumped by the

next one that assumes power. Likewise, any inconvenience in the donor country's economy or change in strategic alliance or any misconception or conflict of interest from the donor side obliges such bilateral activities in the recipient country to experience unexpected shock that may lead them to their end even as early as at their onset.

Another question was also posed next to inquiry about the source of resources. This was about what would happen to the NFPE activities after the project completes its cycle. The following table deals with responses to the question.

Table 4b
Homogeneity test on responses about sustainability of the NFPE project

Responses	Stakeholders			Total
	NFPE Teachers	Political Leader	Education Officials	
Will operate with minimum difficulty	27	24	16	67
Others	21	0	0	21
	n=48	n=24	n=16	88

The purpose of this test was to check whether there exists any uniformity between responses of the three different groups of respondents about the fate of the project activities after the project completes its period. To this end, some five alternatives such as 'will operate smoothly', 'will operate with minimum difficulty', 'will stop until any alternative means of funding is found', 'will cease to exist', and 'I do not know' were recorded to choose between.

In spite of the other possible options, 100 percent of respondents have restricted themselves to the second and third alternatives as has been indicated in table 4b above.

Results from the test of homogeneity again revealed that the computed $X^2=23.02$ is greater than tabulated value of $x^2_{0.05(2)}$ which equals 5.99. Hence, the data affirms that there has not been uniformity between responses given by different groups on sustainability of the project activities. However, there is a relatively high degree of optimism on the side of political leaders and education officials who felt that the project activities would remain operational with minimum difficulty when compared to that of the NFPE teachers' moderate pessimism that disclosed the view that the project activities would be interrupted until an alternative funding means is found.

In practical terms, the NFPE teachers' concern about the project's future seems to be more reasonable than that of others for various compelling facts.

The first major challenge is the ability to finance the project. Currently the project's annual cost estimate reaches Birr 962,000. In other words, the three-year total could be about Birr 2,886,000. Had this not been granted by Irish Aid agency, it would have been unbearable for the government to endorse this amount of money into its budget at once for a single sub-sector in education and for an activity initiated in a single zone. But even while disbursements are currently made by the NGO itself, the cost of the project does not seem to be thoroughly analysed or rather seems under-estimated.

Absence of text books for the NFPE students' use could be taken as an example in this regard.

Rightly at about the eleventh hour of the commencement of the project a decision was made to supply students with text books on the basis of one-to-one ratio of a child to text book. Based on this ratio, the number of books for 20,560 students and 514 NFPE teachers was estimated to be about 84,500. The budget allocation for text book production at the time was only Birr 100,000. But the minimum cost presented by publishers for delivery of the required number of text books was over Birr 800,000. Due to this unrealistic allocation, children in NFPE centres have been obliged only to hear and repeat (no matter whether the transmitted information is correct or wrong) what is

stated by their less-qualified paraprofessional teachers until the end of the second year of the project.

In further analysis, let alone the project's fund which sought to come from sources overseas, the quality of the all in all internally supplied human resource situation seems another threat to the sustainability of the project activities.

The NFPE teachers, who were provided with a brainstorming kind of initial training for only 15 days, lack strong and well suited supervisory assistance to overcome their difficulties in handling both the self-contained set up of their classrooms and any setbacks associated with the subject matter they are assigned to teach. Secondly, there was no person who is exclusively in charge of directing the project activities. From zonal level down to districts, work is done by proxies usually using adult education unit coordinators who mainly thought that matters related to the NFPE project should not be of their prime concern, unlike their prescribed jobs.

3.1.2.4 Does the project employ monitoring and evaluation mechanisms?

Evaluation, as an essential process of looking into effects of activities, helps to correct past failure, to adjust oneself to the present, and to plan the future. Thus it became one of the major concerns of this study. The concept 'evaluation' in this context refers to two paradigms: evaluation of project activities (non-academic) and evaluation of student performance (academic), each of which is dealt with as follows.

3.1.2.4.1 Evaluation of the NFPE activities

The first question about the evaluation was a general one on whether any evaluation schemes have been devised in the project. Accordingly, all of the respondents have agreed on the availability of the schemes.

They were also asked who would be responsible for affairs related to evaluation, and in this case, all education officials have shared the same view that 'all staff members are responsible for evaluation'. Unlike the officials, NFPE teachers and political leaders responded similarly that 'they did not know' as to whose sole responsibility it was to evaluate the project activities. Furthermore, the latter groups remarked that they could not tell who was responsible for evaluation because various groups of people came to the centres seeking information about the project.

Next, a list of possible mechanisms through which evaluation could be carried out was presented to all of them. The purpose was to know the period in which a specific mechanism was employed. Data are presented in table 5a below.

Table 5a
Mechanisms and periods of evaluation

Mechanisms of evaluation	Periods of evaluation															Total	
	Beginning			End			Beginning & End			Periodically			Continuously				
	NFPET %	P. L. %	E.O %	NFPET %	P. L. %	E.O %	NFPET %	P. L. %	E. O %	NFPET %	P. L. %	E.O %	NFP ET %	P. L. %	E.O %		
Progress reports (038)					100						100		100				300
Special meetings (039)		100									100		100				300
Follow up studies (040)										100	100	100					300
Experimental & control group (041)				70.8	45.83	100	29.2	54.17									300
Questionnaire (042)				66.7	45.83	100	33.3	54.17									
Review of documents (043)										100	100	100					300
Interview (044)										100	20.83	56.25		79.17	43.75		300
Observations (045)										100	100	100					300
Written reports (046)												100	100	100			300
Oral reports (047)											50	100	100	50			300
Open discussions (048)										87.5	66.67	100	12.5	33.33			300
Sum		100		137.5	191.66	200	62.5	108.34		687.5	437.5	856.25	212.5	262.5	43.75		3300

N.B - Cells left with no value represent unattempted alternatives

- NFPET stands for NFPE teacher(s)
- P.L stands for political leader(s)
- E.O stands for education official (s)

Based on the above data two tests of fitness were conducted in order to verify aspects of independence and homogeneity of responses. Test results are presented in tables 5b and 5c respectively.

Table 5b
Association between responses and the period of evaluation and the stakeholders' background

Responses	Stakeholders			Total
	NFPE Teachers	Political Leader	Education Officials	
End	10	4	4	18
Periodically	27	9	11	47
Others	11	11	1	23
	n=48	n=24	n=16	88

In table 5b the occupational status of the respondents and percentages of the most frequently replied responses were taken to examine whether there was association between occupational status of respondents and their corresponding answers on evaluation periods. Finally, the calculated X^2 value which equals 10.8 has been found to be a bit greater than the tabulated $X^2_{0.05(4)} = 9.49$. This uncovered that there was a considerable degree of dependence between status of the respondents and their responses. Moreover, test of homogeneity was also done to decide whether responses from different groups of respondents had uniformity or not.

As a result of test of homogeneity on responses from the three different groups, the calculated $X^2 = 59.6$ has been found to be greater than the tabulated value of $X^2_{0.05(4)} = 15.5$. Accordingly, the original null hypothesis that contends “there is uniformity between responses on period of evaluation” has been rejected. Rather, responses from the three groups were not homogeneous with high level of significance even if the majority of respondents agreed upon that most evaluation activities took place periodically.

3.1.2.4.2 Evaluation of student performance

Evaluation of student achievement has been another component of evaluation concern which exclusively dealt with academic aspects. Unlike evaluation of the project activities, this part does not involve quantitative analysis. Sources of information about the case in point have been documents of various type (NFPE continuous assessment folders, rosters, guideline for the program and the like) and discussions that has been held with officials.

According to these sources a child enrolled in an NFPE program is required to take a test which accounts for 10 points at the end of each month. This needs to be practiced continuously until the end of the tenth month, that marks completion of one academic year. In other words, a child who has started schooling in May (the first month in the NFPE academic calendar) ends up with 10 tests of 100 points for each subject at the end of February (the last month immediately before two months of vacation).

Minimum pass mark is 50. A learner who is not able to score an average of 50 will be required to undergo additional study session during the vacation so that he may improve his performance and be able to pass to the next level. But the manner of conduct of this vacation tutorial scheme is not clearly stated specifically as to who would take over the task since the NFPE teachers are not paid for two months vacation period. And in practice, no child was reported to have been subjected to such tutorial for the transition from year one to year two.

As to the final procedure of certification of these children, it has been learnt that there is a plan to design and administer a kind of “ standard test” to ascertain their eligibility for admission to grades 4 and 5 of formal primary schools. Those children who were expected to enter into grade 4 are children from the age 8-10 at admission and assumed to complete courses of grades one through three in three years. Another cohort constitutes those older group of children (11-14 at admission) who are required to study

the reported combined syllabi of subjects designed for grades one through four during their three years stay in the program.

Eventually, the fact that the said combined syllabi materials have not been yet produced till the end of second year of the project, it is an indicative of the difficulty of achieving the aspired success in this respect.

3.1.3 Retention of Students in the NFPE Project

Problems related to inequity in opportunities to learn are not only bound to lack of school places and other necessary inputs to serve the needs of all school age children. But also the constraint refers to lack of holding power of the school system. Thus, the extent to which the project retained students was examined.

In this regard, available data is first presented in graphs in a way that it would help to make immediate comparison between number of enrolled and dropped out students in the sample NFPE centers.

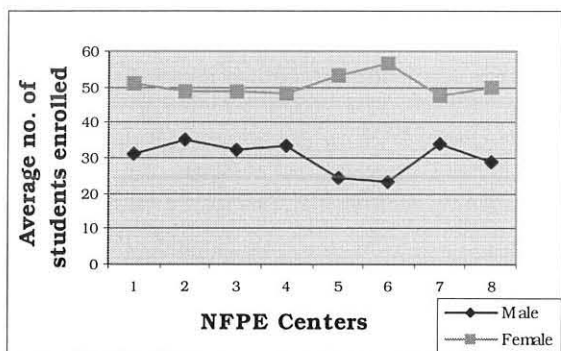


Fig. 1a: Average number of students enrolled.

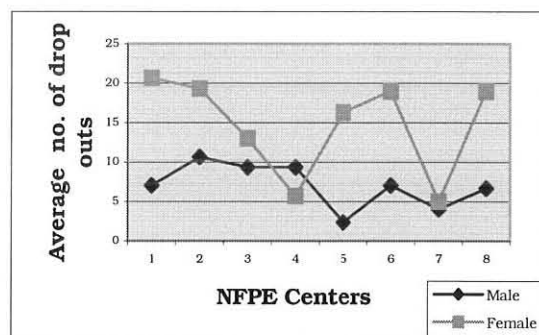


Fig. 1b: Average number of students dropped out.

According to information from the above graphs, number of students enrolled into the NFPE project at the beginning had been 676,640, and 640 for 24 sample centers in Hagereselam, Dale and Awassa, respectively. The number of students who dropped out the system after nearly two years of operation has been 187,160 and 176 for samples in the respective districts. In other words, this indicates that 23.2 percent of boys and 29.3

percent of girls had left the NFPE centers in the selected sample sites during the last two years.

Eventhough it was encouraging to see greater number of females at enrollment, the higher drop out rate of females has been discouraging. For instance, the average drop out rate in the sample centers that accounted for 26.27 seems no better than the regional average primary school drop out rate of 1998 which was reported to be 28.17 (REB, 1999:5). Rather it is an awakening alarm to act against factors contributing to high rate of dropping out of school for planners of NFPE.

3.2 Educational Operations by WVE in North Omo

As has been pointed out under “ limitation of the study,” it became impossible to make a detailed investigation into contributions of WVE in creating equitable access to primary education for the reason beyond the investigator’s control. However, some general facts that were available are concisely presented in the following way.

To begin with, World Vision Ethiopia, as one of the popular philanthropic NGOs in the country, carries out variety of activities ranging from supply of emergency aid to efforts that aim at bringing about sustainable development in different parts of the country. Among other areas that are entitled to receive support of WVE in SNNPR, Sodo Zuria and Humbo districts of North Omo zone seem more favored areas for educational interventions since the inception of area development program by this NGO in 1991.

WVE has been carrying out its operation from 1984/85, of course, following that horrifying famine in the country. In the beginning years the role of this NGO was limited to providing for immediate and life sustaining needs of the hunger stricken people in the above mentioned districts and others.

The major WVE activities in Sodo Zuria and Humbo areas are classified into three phases, namely, phase of relief and rehabilitation intervention, phase of Area Development Program I and II.

The first phase which was mainly focused on responding to relief and rehabilitation needs was operational from 1984/85-1990. During this five-year period, as it was learnt from documents, some 700,000 people had received relief and reinstatement assistance in the two districts.

Another development in the operations of WVE in these districts; that resulted from the impact evaluation of its preceding period, is area development program. The area development program that has been framed into phases I & II (the former was functional from 1991-1997 and the latter from 1998 to the present) concentrate on bringing about sustainable community development through purposeful interventions in agricultural, health care, educational and similar other strategic areas that have been found essential to improve the lives of the rural community.

Apparent as it is education is a vehicle to development and improved way of living. Seemingly, it is for this fundamental connection between development endeavors and education that WVE became interested in school matters in its respective catchment areas generally and specially focusing on Sodo Zuria and Humbo. Evidently, the NGO has reported that it has accomplished a task of renovation, up-grading and/or constructing some 26 primary schools (7 in Sodo Zuria and 19 in Humbo).

These primary schools have created or provided opportunity of learning to 16,988 students, out of which 7359 were girls and 9629 were boys as at the beginning of September 1999. Similar to the NFPE project in Sidama, all of these primary schools are located in rural settings. Table -7 presents some details about the schools.

Table - 6
Primary schools renovated/upgraded/constructed by WVE
(the first 7 in Sodo Zuria & the remaining in Humbo districts)

Ser. No.	School Name	#Class Rooms	#Sections	#Teachers	Students as at Sept.1999			#Students/Section	* T-P Ratio
					M	F	T		
1	Kokate	7	14	27	407	345	752	53.71	1:27.85
2	Zala Shasha	8	16	26	711	477	1188	74.25	1:45.69
3	Gilo Bisare	5	10	10	506	413	919	91.9	1:91.9
4	Kote Genet	7	13	18	465	400	865	66.53	1:48.05
5	Ofa Sire	7	12	20	448	297	745	62.08	1:37.25
6	Ofa Gandalaba	6	12	13	487	440	927	72.27	1:71.3
7	Humbo Larena	7	12	16	394	359	753	62.75	1:53.78
8	Shocroa Godama	8	7	10	183	127	310	44.3	1:31
9	Ambe Shoya	4	8	10	239	180	419	52.4	1:41.9
10	Upper Humbo	8	12	14	570	450	1020	85	1:72.86
11	Aballa Faracho	14	14	18	579	386	965	68.93	1:53.6
12	Ella Kabala	9	10	14	227	192	419	41.9	1:29.9
13	Abballa Mara'ka	6	6	3	79	76	155	25.85	1:51.67
14	Aballa Shoya	6	11	7	381	335	696	63.3	1:99.4
15	Aballa Kareta	4	4	3	69	59	128	32	1:42.67
16	Aballa Siba	8	6	6	125	111	236	39.3	1:39.3
17	Aballa Gafta	5	5	3	65	40	105	21	1:35
18	Aballa Kollshobo	8	7	4	290	210	500	71.4	1:125
19	Hobicha Bongota	7	12	7	534	341	875	72.9	1:125
20	Hobicha Baada	14	18	19	986	633	1619	89.9	1:85.2
21	Hobicha Borkshe	9	9	9	419	330	749	83.2	1:83.2
22	Bossa Wanche	7	10	12	414	283	697	69.7	1:59.08
23	Bolla Wanche	4	4	2	222	173	395	98.75	1:179.5
24	Ampo Koysa	9	8	13	237	248	485	60.6	1:37.3
25	Gututo Larena	9	8	13	213	195	408	51	1:37.3
26	Shochora Golla	8	9	8	399	259	658	73.1	1:82.25
	Sum	194	269	291	9699	7359	16988		

*T-P refers to Teacher- Pupils ratio in that particular school

Eventhough the situation does not allow a critical analysis, one may forward some comments based up on data in table -7. One of the suggestions could be about ratio of male-to-female students. Roughly seen, male-female ratio is 1.25:1 in Sodo Zuria and 1.34:1 in Humbo WVE catchment areas. A simple comparison with the situation in the sample districts from Sidama, where gender disparity reaches to 2.05:1 in Dale, 2.32:1 in Awassa, and 3.5:1 in Hagereselam rural formal primary schools, indicates that female participation appears to be higher in Wolayta.

Conversely, we may observe a seeming under-utilization of buildings and other school facilities. For example, in schools, such as Shochora Godama, Aballa Siba, Aballa Kolshobo, Ampo Koysa, and Gututo Larena the number of classrooms have exceeded the number of sections unlike places where they were utilized twice a day as usually done in Kokate , Zala Shasha and others. But unluckily enough, factors behind this under-utilization have not been well examined as to whether they were results of a mismatch between demand and supply or not, for the reason mentioned earlier.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Summary

This study was aimed at examining the role of NGOs in promoting equitable access to primary education in SNNPR. Two NGOs (SDP and WVE) were selected on the basis of their relatively larger sphere of influence in education in the region. As it was repeatedly noted in the preceding discussions the role of WVE has not been dealt with thoroughly because of the restricting local situation that was not conducive for complete data gathering. Thus, almost all of the detailed analysis in the study has been limited to the SDP activities related to the NFPE project.

In order to come up with certain understanding about contributions made by SDP, different approaches of data collection were used. Questionnaire, interview, observation, focus group discussion, and review of documents were the major ones. Data acquired via these methods were analyzed using two statistical tools, i.e., chi-square test of fitness and mean test of two independent samples as well as qualitative approach to analysis.

Basic questions to be addressed by the study were designed under three broad categories. The first set of questions focused on contributions of SDP in creating balance of opportunity for rural versus urban children, female versus male students, the poor versus better-offs, and minority versus majority.

Main focus of questions under the second category did emphasize what strategies have been put in action by SDP in an attempt to promote equitable access to primary education. Parameters included were complementing with felt needs of community, promoting community participation, ensuring sustainability of operations, and establishing necessary monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Finally, holding power of the NFPE centers was tested. Following the analysis it was learnt that some features of contributions made by SDP in promoting equal opportunity

to the disadvantaged groups did come to the surface. Some of them are summarized as follows.

1. NFPE project was exclusively rural focused. None of the 257 centers were operational in urban setting. This indicated that the project targeted for rural children than the urban.
2. NFPE project focused on females than males. Even while focusing on rural children the project used to reserve 60 to 70 percent of school places for girls. In other words, the project did encourage girls' participation than that of boys'.
3. NFPE project has served the poor. Even if there existed the overwhelming number of children from poor families when compared to the limited hosting capacity of each NFPE center, the participants of focus group discussion have confirmed that a child from the poor family was given priority to admission.
4. NFPE program did not discriminate between minorities and majorities in terms of ethnic or language or religious groups since it was designed for a particular group of society that has one and same linguistic, ethnic and cultural origin. But this does not mean that there were special considerations to cater for special needs children such as the blind, the deaf, and so on.
5. NFPE project has met the felt needs of the community. In fact, this seem to happen not in accordance with commitments that had been demonstrated in needs assessment and quality of responding to the prioritized need from the side of the NGO. Rather it happened by virtue of education being among one of the most important needs in the rural society.
6. NFPE project did equate community participation to material and labor support only. This lack of full-fledged community involvement may set significant constraints in the life of the project for such activities can't be successful with out substantial inputs from their respective community.

7. NFPE project seemed that its sustainability is in question. First and foremost, almost all of its cost, except a limited labor and material support from the community, came from foreign source. Secondly, the project has not won community trust towards continuity of its operation since there was no yearly admission of students to the program. Thirdly, the absence of learning materials, especially that of text books, has made both parents and other practitioners in education to question the quality of learning in the NFPE centers. Fourthly, most of learning environments are not conducive for the purpose they are meant for even when compared to some of the formal primary schools, which are not well furnished.
8. Theoretically, evaluation of activities are given proper attention in the NFPE project. Mechanisms through which evaluation is carried out seem to have been deliberately chosen. But when it comes to implementation, this aspect seemed to have been less emphasized. More than anything else, NFPE teachers have no one around to help them in their difficulties during the teaching learning process and to supervise their day-to-day activities. Usually NFPE teachers see their superiors at district office while going there to collect their monthly payment. In earlier days there was a kind of linkage that was created by assigning part time supervisors for cluster of centers. This practice was discontinued starting from September 1999. Due to this lack of proper monitoring of NFPE activities parents also begun to complain because their children were left idle during school hours as a result of growing teacher absenteeism and or lack of conformity to a class time table.
9. Very little attention has been given in the way of follow-through activities to determine if the program was producing the desired results, or where it might be weak and need strengthening.
10. The trial period of the innovative model was too short to test its effect and to large-scale expansion. It was only after three months of small scale experimental scheme that the NFPE project has been scaled up into 257 centers across the zone.

successful for their strong commitment to involve the community into all phases of activities and decision making. Parents can also contribute by monitoring teacher and student attendance beyond material and labor support. Moreover, if communities are convinced and agreements are made to give them sufficient space to act upon, they may take their own independent initiatives to solve some problems that are at their reach, (Rugh and Bosser 1998). But unlike its precedents, the SDP - initiated NFPE project did not permit community participation to go beyond labor and material support. In this case unless a full-fledged community participation is encouraged in matters related to the program, there might occur a kind of contribution fatigue towards supporting activities that members of the community have no say on.

To be of lasting relevance and to continue operational after termination of their project period, Programs like NFPE need to rely on domestic source of resources. And yet it seems to be difficult to talk about the fate of NFPE activities after Feb. 2001, the phase out date, given that the budget is provided for by external sources, renewal of project agreement is not yet considered, and that no apparent alternative sources have been secured.

Evaluation, as one and decisive component of any organizational activities, need to be emphasized. When seen from this view point, designation of mechanisms of evaluation appeared properly done. But responsibility to evaluate, objective of evaluation, specified period for evaluation, and similar other aspects were not given due attention in implementation of the NFPE project. Apparently authorities in the NFPE project seemed to wait for ex-post evaluation which is scheduled to take place at the end of the project period. While this type of evaluation is an essential aspect, it does not substitute for continuous monitoring of progress and subsequent corrective measures throughout the period of the project.

Like many new programs of its kind the NFPE project has been faced by several unexpected and unplanned consequences like the one that NFPE centers were negatively understood as “places for destitute to stay”. Unless early corrections are made to clear up such misconceptions through continuous follow up, they may grow to the extent to

which they damage the total outcome of the project. Thus evaluation schemes in the NFPE project need to be revisited and revitalized.

Any effort in promoting equitable access to education need effective link to technical experts who produce, deliver, supervise, manage, and reflect on the inputs and outputs of education (Rugh and Bosser,1998: XIV). But individuals who were engaged in the NFPE activities seemed less motivated towards the program or not well informed about it.

To conclude, the NFPE project is characterized by some strengths and limitations. As for its strong sides, first, the project promotes girls participation by allocating 60 to 70 percent of a classroom places to females. Secondly, it provides opportunity for the poor. Thirdly, it focuses on the rural children who had no access to the formal system. On the other hand, the project has the following weaknesses. First, the NFPE project lacks clear assurance of sustainability because almost all of its cost, except a limited labor and material contribution from the community, used to come from overseas. Secondly, the attitude of and support from the technical experts towards the NFPE seem not to enhance and not synchronized with that of the NGO endeavor. Thirdly, the role of the ongoing evaluation is less emphasized in the project activities.

4.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are made in order to be given due attention both by the implementing agency (SZED) and the donor (SDP).

1. **Enhancing Community Partnership:** One of the most important partner in education is the community. It is believed that participation of community in the affairs of education results in success of that particular endeavor. In other words unrestricted community involvement may effect unreserved support to the program or the extent of community commitment may correlate with the degree of its involvement. To this end the NFPE project may benefit from:

1.1 Delegation of administrative responsibility: In so doing it could be possible to call upon the community for joint problem solving. The

delegation may take the form of vesting power on a committee organized by that particular community living where the NFPE center is found. This approach possibly helps in reducing teacher absenteeism; lack of conformity to teaching schedule by arriving late or leaving early; and in minimizing drop out rate by encouraging parents to send their children to the learning centers.

1.2 Arranging discussion sessions: By holding discussion with community members, it is possible to get first hand information about their satisfaction in what is going on around. This strategy also enables to incorporate inputs from the user side in making decisions so that needs of the community would be addressed directly.

2. **Ensuring Sustainability:** Dependence on foreign sources of resource may stand as one of the major impediments of sustainability. Aid from overseas could perhaps stop for reason one could not be sure or at the time no one would expect that to happen. Hence, looking for an alternative domestic source of finance remains a very important one. In this regard soliciting both in-cash and in-kind grants from the community, working with indigenous NGOs that are interested in education, and trying to draw the government's attention towards merits of the project may represent the role of potential strong strategic stakeholders to ensure sustainability of activities. Further more, an effective relationship can be cultivated between donors, government institutions, practitioners, and communities where capable leaders work to enhance effective coordination of efforts, (Rugh and Bosser, 1998:36).

3. **Legitimizing Mandate of Coordinating the NFPE Activities:** Coordinating the NFPE activities was left for individuals who did not take issues related to the project were serious business of their office. In fact, since there was no clear accountability chain concerning NFPE in the organizational structure of district education office or zonal department of education, it becomes difficult to hold anyone responsible for failure or success of the attempt. And also it is more challenging to attain the predetermined objectives through operations carried out on the basis of lacking

accountability. Therefore, a particular unit composed of educational authorities, government bodies, NGO representatives and community members fully responsible and legitimate to head the affairs related to the NFPE ought to be established at least on committee status at zonal, district and kebele levels.

4. **Emphasis on Evaluation:** Evaluation serves as a means through which feedback on one's action is brought to light. Despite its importance evaluation appeared to be a less emphasized aspect in the NFPE project. Therefore, the following suggestions are made to strengthen the evaluation scheme.

- 4.1 Teacher performance evaluation need to be introduced into the NFPE program to identify between the weak and strong paraprofessional teachers as well as to take measures accordingly.

- 4.2 A sort of academic competition need to be planned between the NFPE students and their counterparts in the formal primary in order to weigh the levels of performances of the two.

- 4.3 Attitude of parents towards the program has to be assessed so that possible deviation of the program from their expectations may be reconciled soon.

- 4.4 As an essential approach to address the improvement needs of the NFPE program, the project should emphasize on the ongoing assessment of the effects of its operation, besides its plan to conduct ex-post evaluation, in order to attain its desired end by giving timely response to the unforeseen shortcomings.

5. **Minimizing the Dropout Rate:** one of the most important characteristic features of nonformal primary education is its reduction of the drop out rate of students. It was noted that over 90 percent of BCAC's NFPE students used to complete their three years study. When it comes to the SDP - initiated NFPE,

average drop out rate in selected sample centers did reach over 26 percent at nearly the end of the second year of the program. Thus the following interventions may keep the rate of early leaving from the system low.

5.1 Provision for text books and furnishing of learning centers: As it has been commented earlier some centers operate on the expense of children's comfort and no text book was found in the hands of the learners. NFPE students were obliged to sit on small stools, or worn out mats or constricting places and usually put their exercise books on their laps to take notes. If NFPE centers are modestly furnished and books are made available, there could be a possibility of better retention. Since the NFPE project did not require a capital intensive buildings and equipment, supply of learning materials need to be an essential component of such a plan so as not to compromise quality of learning as well.

5.2 Minimizing competition between the school timetable and the need for child labour: Another factor that contributes to the child's early leaving of school is the seeming incompatibility between the rigid nature of school timetable and the need for that child's labour. In this regard NFPE classes need preferably to be rescheduled in a more flexible manner taking into consideration the choice of majority of parents instead of following a rigid pattern of class sessions from 8:00-11:00 in the morning and 1:00-4:20 in the afternoon throughout the zone.

6. Technical experts are one of the most important stakeholders in the efforts to expand educational opportunity. They produce, deliver, supervise, manage, and reflect both on the inputs and outputs of education, (Rugh and Bossler, 1998). Therefore, the NFPE project needs to work hard towards soliciting support from the education officials. Joint planning and willingness to incorporate consents of these personalities may help to enhance sharing of responsibility to the best of the NFPE goals.

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Appendix A

Formula used in chi-square test of association and homogeneity y'.

$$\text{Formula: } \chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^r \sum_{j=1}^c \frac{[o_{ij}-e_{ij}]^2}{E_{ij}}$$

Where: r = rows of the contingency table

c = columns of the contingency table

O_{ij} = the observed value in the i^{th} row and j^{th} column

E_{ij} = the expected value in the i^{th} row and j^{th} column

Appendix B

Questions for focus group discussion

Place _____ Date _____

No. of participants _____

1. Have you ever informed about the NFPE project before it get started here?
2. Had the chance been given to you to choose between the NFPE project and any other alternative which do you think that should come first than NFPE project?
3. Are you giving any support for NFPE activities?
 - 3.a If yes, what type of support you are giving?
 - 3.b If no, why did not you render assistance for the project?
4. Do you think the project implementation process has any weakness?
 - 4.a If yes, what kind of weakness have you observed?
 - 4.b Have you held any discussion about the weakness? with whom?
 - 4.c Are there any established mechanisms of information exchange between the community and project officials about the project?
5. Do you believe that all of the NFPE center students came from poor family?
 - 5.a If yes, how the selection was made?
 - 5.b If no, why?
6. What do you think that you will lose if this project is to be shut down?

Appendix C

Sample interview questions to NFPE teachers

1. Do you believe that the initial short term training enabled you successfully to carry out your work?
2. In line with assistance to be given for you, how do you compare the time you were accomplishing your task with frequent supervisory visits and those some five months you have not received any help?
3. How do you see the attitude of local community towards the NFPE project?
4. Have you faced any problem related to the project activities?
5. In what aspects the community around contribute to the well-being of the NFPE project?

Appendix D

Sample interview questions to NFPE coordinator at zonal level.

1. From whom did the idea for NFPE originally come?
2. Where do resources for NFPE project come from?
3. Do you have any problem related to disbursement of the allocated budget or budget allocation it self?
4. For the last five months or more the NFPE teachers have received no supervisory assistance. Even now, no part time supervisor is at work because of desistance of your office to pay them. The fact that the 15 days initial training is too brief to enable them well equipped to teach how do you see this lack of supervisory help?
5. NFPE teachers and students have no textbooks. Despite this critical problem of learning materials, your office acclaim that NFPE program is delivered on a learner-centered basis? Have you devised any means to abridge this big gap between what has been planned and what is in progress?
6. There was a plan to combine syllabi of grade 2,3, and 4 in order to be covered in two years. this was designed to enable 11-14 years old NFPE students to join grade 5 after 3 years study in NFPE. but till this time no materials of the combined syllabi were made available. Thus, do not you think your plan lack credibility?
7. Most of the NFPE centers seem not organized in such a way that they become conducive learning environments even by using locally available materials. why?
8. How does community involvement encouraged in the NFPE project activities?
9. In some centers the drop out rate reaches nearly 50 percent. Have the project team noticed this problem and its possible reasons? if yes, what remedies were introduced? if no, why?
10. As an education official and head of NFPE affairs are you satisfied with what is going on in the project?

Appendix E

Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
Faculty of Education
Dept. of Educational Administration

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is designed to assess the contributions of NGOs sponsored alternative strategies to primary education. Most questions can be answered by checking the response alternative which most closely corresponds to your personal judgment or observation. Some are prepared in a way that to be responded by writing briefly and to the point. As one method of summarizing the experience of education officials and other experts in the projects, I request your cooperation in responding to the following questions.

With sincere thanks for your cooperation.

I. IDENTIFICATION DATA

- 1.1 Administrative Zone
- 1.2 Name of the project/program.....
- 1.3 Your present position.....
 - 1.3.1 Sex Male Female
 - 1.3.2 Age
 - 1.3.3 Educational Qualification
 - 1.3.4 Nationality
- 1.4 Year project/program began
- 1.5 Year project/program will terminate.....

1.6 Source of financial assistance to the project/program

.....domestic external both domestic and external

1.7 Level of domestic contribution (approx. Birr):

Project total

Current Year

1.8 Level of foreign assistance (approx. Birr):

Project total

Current year

II. BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT

2.1 Approximate total number of children that will be covered during the project period:

Number of Girls

Number of Boys

2.2 How strongly does the project create an opportunity to learn for the rural child?

..... Very stronglyStrongly.....Not stronglyNot at all.....I do not know

2.3 How strongly does the project create an opportunity to learn for females?

..... Very stronglyStrongly.....Not stronglyNot at all.....I do not know

2.4 How strongly does the project create an opportunity to learn for children from poor families?

..... Very stronglyStrongly.....Not stronglyNot at all.....I do not know

2.5 How strongly does the project create opportunities to learn for children from minority groups such as religious, ethnic and other minorities?

..... Very stronglyStronglyNot strongly.....Not at all.....I do not know

If it benefits any minority group, please specify which group:

.....

If it does not benefit at all, which minority group do you think remains disadvantaged?
(please specify):

.....

III AWARENESS AND DEFINITION OF NEEDS TO SET OBJECTIVES

3.1 From what persons or groups did the idea for this project come originally?.....

3.2 How strongly was the need for the project felt by different groups?

Expected Groups	Very strongly	Strongly	Not strongly	No need at all	Need for the project disputed by
Technical experts from other countries					
Donor agencies					
Technical experts native to the country					
Political leaders					
Educational officials					
Members of the project team					
Local community					

3.3 Was the need clearly understood by different groups?

Different Groups	Very clearly understood	Clearly understood	Not clearly understood
Project team			
Political leaders			
Education officials			
community			

3.4 What media were used to express /communicate the need for the project?(check all which apply.)

- ◇ Large public meetings
- ◇ Small group discussions
- ◇ Newspaper articles
- ◇ Others, please specify,.....

3.5 Were needs transformed into a set of objectives for the project?

- ◇ Very precisely
- ◇ Fairly precisely
- ◇ Defined in general terms
- ◇ Vaguely defined
- ◇ Not defined in any formalized way

3.6 Was there consensus on the objectives of the project between all stakeholders?

- ◇ Yes
- ◇ No

If no, please explain briefly from which side consensus lacks and why:.....

.....
.....
.....

IV. PROMOTING PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

4.1 How are political leaders such as members of Zone administration, Woreda Council, and Kebele representatives involved? (Check all which apply)

- ◇ Participate actively in all major phases planning through evaluation
- ◇ Participate in making key decisions
- ◇ Are represented on project working teams
- ◇ Deliver speeches in support of the project

◇ Their involvement is limited to giving some sort of support only when invited by the project team

◇ Not involved at all, (Why? Please specify in brief).....

.....
.....

◇ Involved but in other ways, (Please specify)

.....
.....
.....

4.2 How are educational officials involved?

◇ Participate actively in all major phases planning through evaluation

◇ Participate in making key decisions

◇ Are represented on project working teams

◇ Consulted rarely

◇ Not involved at all, (Why? Please specify in brief).....

.....
.....

4.3 How do members of the community participate in the project? (Check all which apply.)

◇ Community representatives participate in all phases from planning through evaluation.

◇ Community representatives participate in making key decisions

◇ Community representatives participate in working teams

◇ Community members participate through financial contribution

◇ Community members participate through material contribution

◇ Community members participate through labour contribution

◇ Not participate at all, (Why? Please specify).....

.....

 V. SUSTAINABILITY CONCERN

5.1 What are sources of resources the project depends on? (Check the appropriate source where, 5 shows high reliance on internal sources and 1 denotes high dependence on the external means)

	External				Internal
• Human resource	1	2	3	4	5
• Financial resource	1	2	3	4	5
• Capital equipment	1	2	3	4	5
• Recurrent finance	1	2	3	4	5
• Recurrent materials	1	2	3	4	5

5.2 Presently supply of resources is:

- ◇ Very secure
- ◇ Secure
- ◇ Not as such secure
- ◇ Not secure at all
- ◇ I do not know

5.3 In your opinion, what will happen to the project activities after the project completes its term on non-renewable basis?

- ◇ It will continue to operate without any difficulty
- ◇ It will continue to operate with minimum difficulties
- ◇ It will stop its operation until any other alternative means found
- ◇ It will cease to exist at all
- ◇ Other, (Specify if any).....

VI. EVALUATION CONCERN

6.1 Are there evaluation mechanisms put forward by the project?

- ◇ Yes
- ◇ No

6.2 If “yes” for the above question, are the evaluation mechanisms mostly informal (for example, discussion between staff members or between directors and staff) or formal (such as staff meetings, reports, workshops, analysis by special unit or person)?

- ◇ Mostly informal
- ◇ Mostly formal
- ◇ Mixed

6.3 Who participate in meetings, discussions, or decisions concerning evaluation?

- ◇ Directors only
- ◇ Senior staff only
- ◇ All staff
- ◇ All staff and community representatives
- ◇ Others, (Please specify).....

6.4 Which of the following mechanisms are included in the evaluation procedure?

(Check all which apply.)

Mechanisms	Availability		Time to Employ				
	Yes	No	beginning only	End only	Beginning & End	Periodically	Continuously
Progress report							
Special meetings							
Follow up studies							
Designation of experimental and control groups							
Questionnaires							
Review of documents							
Interviews							
Observation of activities							
Written reports							
Oral reports							
Open discussions							
Others, (please specify).....							

VII What do you think the community will lose if this project is to be shut down? (State briefly and precisely.)

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

Thank you once again.

Appendix F

Number of students who were enrolled and retained in the sample NFPE centers.

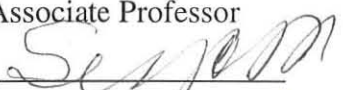
	A. Hageresalam District	Enrolled, May 1999			Attending Until Jan. 2000		
		M	F	T	M	F	T
1.	Kankicha	36	50	86	29	40	69
2.	Chirone	41	51	92	24	38	62
3.	Hanko Baya	41	41	82	27	29	56
4.	Ganjure Chicho	32	54	86	29	46	75
5.	Awaye Kararo	35	38	73	32	12	44
6.	Chalbessa	21	57	78	5	37	42
7.	Karsa	39	45	84	30	39	69
8.	Solle Charicho	24	51	75	17	35	52
	B. Dale District						
1.	Lello	30	50	80	22	29	51
2.	Hommo	40	40	80	34	16	50
3.	Halakana	27	53	80	18	38	56
4.	Shoye I	41	39	80	26	38	64
5.	Ajawa	10	70	80	6	57	63
6.	Chume	20	60	80	20	34	54
7.	Hida Kaliti	35	45	80	34	39	73
8.	Wennenata	34	46	80	23	46	69
	C. Awassa District						
1.	Bake Lalima	28	52	80	22	21	43
2.	Dore Bafano	25	55	80	16	34	50
3.	Rukesa Suke	28	52	80	23	40	63
4.	Tulla	28	52	80	18	44	62
5.	Chafasine I	28	52	80	28	42	70
6.	Chafasine II	28	52	80	23	41	64
7.	Sintaro	28	52	80	26	49	75
8.	Gike Aboye	28	52	80	26	11	37

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as university advisor.

Name: Seyoum Teferra(Ph. D)

Associate Professor

Signature:



Date of Submission: 19/05/2000

DECLARATION

The thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name: Alemayehu Debebe

Signature: 

Date: 12/06/2000