

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**THE QUALITY OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAM IN WEST
WOLLEGA ZONE, OROMIA NATIONAL REGIONAL STATE:
A CASE STUDY OF FOUR COMMUNITY PERSCHOOL.**

BY:

YEMANE GAMA DULO

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in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of
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The Quality of Preschool Education Program in West Wollega Zone,
Oromia National Regional State: A Case Study of Four Community
Preschool.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the quality of public preschool education in west Wollega zone in the aspect of quality as input and process. To this end qualitative case study methodology was employed to conduct the study. Among the eighteen woredas of the zone two woreda and one town administration were selected using purposive sampling technique. In each sample woredas and town administration available /comprehensive/ sampling technique was employed to select the sample of the kindergartens, Kindergarten teachers, kindergarten principals, and kindergarten education experts both at woreda and zone education office and town administration. The kindergarten children parents were selected using purposive sampling technique. Data were gathered from their sources using interview, observation, FGD and document review; and analyzed in word argumentation. Findings of the study revealed that: the kindergarten teachers and personnel are mostly not trained, all teachers were females with physical strength and adequate experiences of teaching in kindergarten, lack of suitable indoor and outdoor learning environment, shortage of human power, lack of kindergarten curriculum materials and related directives, inadequacy of teaching and evaluation method, lack of keeping kindergarten records and reports, lack of supervision, unsatisfactory kindergarten teachers employment status, teachers failure to create relations with children's parents and lack of relationships between children's parents and government structure on the issue of community kindergarten education. Based on these findings, two to four year training for preschool teachers and personnel in preschool education with continuous in-service training; and collaborative campaign of the community and the government structures were the implications forwarded to be practiced to improve the quality of kindergarten education.

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CSA:	Central Statistics Authority.
E.C:	Ethiopian Calendar.
EMA:	Educational Medial Agency.
ESDP:	Educational Sector Development Program.
ESDPI:	Educational Sector Development program One.
ESDPPII:	Educational Sector Development Program Two.
ESDPPIII:	Educational Sector Development Program Three.
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion.
ICDR:	Institute of Curriculum Development and Research.
IDRC:	International Development Research Center.
KG:	Kindergarten.
MOE:	Ministry of Education.
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization.
OBE:	Oromia Bureau of Education.
OEBPPS:	Oromia Education Bureau Planning and Project Service.
OECBB:	Oromia Capacity Building Bureau.
REB:	Regional Education Bureau.
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
UN:	United Nations.
UNCRC:	United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child.
UNICEF:	United Nations International Children's Fund.

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Education is the decisive power which lays the foundation for the expansion of science and technology. The base of this power begins at preschool level. Children can learn at every stage of their age things that are appropriate to their age. To foster this they have to be properly managed and facilitated. Mellor (1961:11) indicated that man's education begins at birth; before he can speak he is learning. This means there are a lot of things that are learned by children before they begin to speak. The provision of education during early childhood fosters the children's interests and ability in their future life. This indicates that preschool education is the pillar of their success in their future achievement of learning and the world of work.

In the life span of human beings early childhood is a crucial stage needing care and proper influence. Because rapid physical and mental development take place at this stage (Mialarret, 1976:33). The first four or five years of life is experienced with much intellectual development. This first four or five year of life is also the period of greatest sensitivity to environmental influence. Extreme environments can have far greater effects in either improving or retarding the child's intellectual capacity. When children moved from a deprived environment to the richest one "it was possible for many of them to increase their IQ as much as twenty points" (Bloom, 1964:14-15).

Children's receptivity to new influences and capacity to learn are high during their kindergarten years. They need different important skills, knowledge and attitudes that will affect their ability to learn, personal development, relationships with others and future participation in greater society (Curtis, 1998 cited in Gezahegn, 2005:1).

That is why Frobel said "come let us live for children". He also stressed the learning strategy which emphasizes on learning by doing (Aggarwal, 1996:209). Learning by doing deep roots the newly acquired knowledge with in a child and become the major factor that determines the whole personalities of his future.

Good kindergarten school is believed to lay good foundation for children below seven years old in their latter education. A good kindergarten is characterized by it's adequate and well trained teachers, adequate and appropriate facilities, adequate and well prepared curriculum materials (Gorman, et al, 1988:91).

According to Avalos and Haddad (1981 cited in Gorman, et al., 1988:92) student achievement was related to teacher's level of education and years of experience as well as teacher personality characteristics such as the degree of self-sufficiency, initiative and resourcefulness, type of management and course content. As a result many countries in the world responded to a wide spread demand for preschool provision and have established expensive college based initial teacher training course to professionalize teachers and upgrade the standards of preschools for community development.

Choudhury and Choudhury (2002:157-158) state that the research evidences confirmed that those children who pursue preschool education are successful in socio-emotional and cognitive variables. Their study also showed that a happy child wishes to go to school than those who are under stress and pressure to learn too much and too fast. The idea of preschool education is to provide the child with suitable learning environment where he can learn through play and get an opportunity for all round development between 2½ years to 5½ years old. Between this age group, a child's cognitive, psychomotor and sensory controls are best developed through the medium of play and creative rather than teaching the subjects formally.

Modak (1970 cited in Choudhury and Choudhury 2002:160) reveals that preschool education helps to develop social sense and adjustment in children. Another author, Muralidharan (1970 cited in Choudhury and Choudhury 2002:160) shows that one of the major causes of educational wastage particularly in grade one is mainly due to lack of attending preschool education before entering grade one. Salomy (1973 cited in Choudhury and Choudhury, 2002:160) further strengthened this idea by stating that children who attended preschool education are much more receptive to formal schooling, having better educational achievement, less drop out of school, easily understand the ideas of adults and mix with other children.

To effectively run the preschool program planning appropriate curriculum, using the services of consultants in health, education, nutrition, and other fields, and encouraging parents interests and involvement in all aspects of the program should be given due attention. Preschool is the place where children gain maximum benefits other than their homes. So, its physical set up, site, surroundings, plan and programs are paramount important in achieving the goals of preschool education (Choudhury and Choudhury, 2002:110).

The new Ethiopian education and training policy states that kindergarten education helps to prepare children for primary school and the program take up to three years by involving children between four to six years age. The education provided at kindergarten schools would enable children to express their feelings to appreciate beauty and learn numbers (MOE, 2002:76).

Preschool education is very important to introduce children to basic learning skills that are needed in elementary schools and to promote their chances of success in the education system. It has been proved that educating children at an early age is more critical than at a latter age. Educating children during their preschools is believed to reduce repetition and drop out in lower grades of primary education. Hence, expanding access to preschool program will serve to enhance the quality of education and improving the internal efficiency of

primary schools (MOE, 2005:41).

It is clear that the different regions of Ethiopia have adopted the education sector development program prepared at the federal government level. Among these regions Oromia is also the one that is implementing the program to address the issue of preschool education in all zones of the region. Based on this idea assessing the quality of preschool education in the aspect of inputs and process that is the provision of appropriate learning environments such as adequate and appropriate physical environment, adequate and well trained teachers and personnel and appropriate learning materials; preschool records and school-parent relationship is the concern of this study.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Some countries including Ethiopia give less attention for preschool education program (UNICEF, 1991:85). The number of kindergartens in the country grew to 550 in 1993 (UNCRC, 1995:27) The number of kindergarten grew to 1244 in the country, and to 380 in Oromia regional state in the year 2003/04(CSA, 2004: 335).

According to MOE (2005:49) currently there were 1497 kindergarten schools in the country with the total enrollment of about 153,280 or 2.3 percent out of 6,647,796 appropriate kindergarten age children (4-6). The total number of kindergarten teacher was 4,584, out of which 975 were untrained. The child teacher ratio was 1:33. Among the eleven regions of Ethiopia Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa, Harari, Gambella and Bene-shangul Gumuz held one up to five ranks with 32.9, 10.6, 6.6, 3.7 and 2.8 percent enrollment ratio consecutively. This figure indicates that the gross enrolment ratio of Ethiopian kindergarten education is very low.

Research finding also indicated that in Ethiopia the 1989 enrollment was only 2.1 percent out of the 4.1 million children of preschool age group. In 1992 due to the declined role of the "Kebele" association which managed and financed the

early childhood education program enrollment rates declined to 1.5 percent (UNICEF, 1994:86).

Choudhury and Choudhury (2002:151) reveal that in the life span of the children 2½ year to 6 year is the most important period at which the necessary foundation should be laid for their better future life. During this time home, school and their surrounding highly influences their characteristics, habits, behavior both within and outside the family especially in the school.

Dereje (1994:136-141) also showed that the provision of preschool education in the capital city of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa is poor. Because the learning environment that is the physical set-up of the kindergartens in general and the classrooms in particular was not conducive for proper implementation of the curriculum; basic facilities and equipment were considerably lacking and the training as well as competencies of the teachers were inadequate.

Cotton and Conklin (2001, cited in Gezahegn 2005:1) states many educators and researchers believe that studying early childhood education to general effective schooling is the interests of teachers, administrators, theorists, and researchers. So it is important to conduct such researches to identify the situations of preschool education program in the zone under consideration.

The new Ethiopian education and training policy and its implementation states that kindergarten education requires high investment and trained manpower. Teachers should have affection for children; educational and recreational materials have to be provided; there have to be facilities that allow children to rest when tired and to eat when hungry (MOE, 2002:76).

As stated in ESDPII the demand for preschool education is increasing in Ethiopia. In 2000/2001, a total of 109,358 children were enrolled in 964 kindergartens. This reflects an increase of 9.6 percent in enrollment rate and 15.6 percent in the number of kindergartens from the previous year. However, the enrollment rate of kindergarten education is still very minimal. Only 2

percent of the children between the ages of 4 and 6 were enrolled in the pre-primary education in the same year (MOE, 2002:9).

The number of kindergartens increased both in the capital and the regions of Ethiopia since 1994, because of the increasing community demand for the pre-primary education and the favorable conditions laid for the active involvement of the community and the private sectors. This has contributed to the increase in enrollments from 80, 835 in 1996/1997 to 151,943 in 2004/05 which is an increase of 88 percent. During the same period, the number of kindergartens has increased from 744 to 1408. However, pre-primary education is limited to the major urban areas and the gross enrollment rate is as low as 2.3 percent. This shows that only very few children in the kindergarten age group have access to preschool education (MOE, 2005:7).

ESDPII also indicates that 21.2 percent of teachers teaching in Ethiopian kindergarten schools are untrained (MOE, 2005:14). According to (MOE, 2005:2) Oromia has a gross enrollment ratio of 1.6% in kindergarten education. This indicates that the majority of kindergarten age children are not in kindergarten school in Oromia in general and in West Wollega zone in particular. OECBB (2004:113) illustrated that the gross enrollment ratio of kindergarten education was 1.69 percent at region level and 1.30 percent for west Wollega zone. This shows that the enrollment ratio of kindergarten education is declining in Oromia. In addition there is no kindergarten teachers training institute in west Wollega zone which can guarantee both the expansion and qualities of kindergarten education rendered by producing teachers that can motivate the society at large to send its children to kindergarten school and may handle their children properly. Local researches also hardly exist in the area to reflect a clear picture of the condition of kindergarten education in west Wollega zone. Based on this the study focused on assessing the conduciveness of indoor and the outdoor learning environments of kindergartens, the availability of appropriate human power and facilities, the role of the government to enhance

the quality of kindergarten education, the availability and fitness of curriculum materials and the preschool records and reports kept by the community kindergartens in West Wollega zone.

1.3. The Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study are:

- To assess whether or not the indoor and the outdoor of community kindergartens are facilitated in west Wollega zone.
- To examine how far the indoor and the outdoor facilities of community kindergartens are safe for children in the zone under study.
- To assess how much the indoor and the outdoor space and site of community kindergartens are conducive for kindergarten children in west Wollega zone?
- To examine how much the community kindergartens are filled with the appropriate human power in the zone understudy.
- To explore the government role in promoting the quality of community kindergarten education in west Wollega zone.
- To identify the types and extent of relations exist between community kindergartens and parents, teachers and children of west Wollega Zone.
- To assess the relevance of current kindergarten curriculum in relation to the children in kindergarten age.
- To check whether the community kindergartens are keeping preschool records and reports appropriately.

1.4 Basic Research Questions

Based on the purpose of the study the following questions are expected to be answered in the final analysis.

1. How far the community kindergartens are provided with teaching-learning materials?
2. What types of supportive services are being provided by the government to enhance the quality of community kindergarten education in West

Wollega Zone.

3. How much the community kindergartens are filled with trained human power?

1.5. Significance of the Study

The importance of this study embraces the following issues.

- It helps to show the status of the quality of the community kindergarten education program in the zone.
- The study may help those who need literature in the area of preschool education to conduct further study.
- It helps to identify the problems that lowered the quality of preschool education in community kindergartens in the zone understudy.
- It helps to increase the awareness of the community to participate on the provision of quality preschool education.
- It initiates the Oromia education structure and Oromia town administration structure to seek solutions for the problems related to the quality of kindergarten education in the community kindergartens.
- To strengthen the collaborative and interactive efforts and responsibilities of principals, teachers and parents to assist children's learning.

1.6. Delimitation of the Study

The study would have been more fruitful if it embraces all preschools found in Oromia national state. But such a large scale study requires much resource, time and manpower. So for the matter of manageability the study is delimited to kindergartens found in to two Woredas and one town administration of west Wollega zone. In addition the content of the study is also delimited to the quality of community kindergarten education in reference to quality as inputs and process.

1.7. Limitations of the study

Local researches conducted on preschool education prior to this study and documented evidences in the area of kindergarten education in community kindergartens, woreda and zonal education offices were not available in the zone. This made the researcher's not to elicit rich documentary data using document analysis.

1.8. Operational Definition

Kebele: The division of woredas or towns in to small manageable administrative areas.

Quality Preschool Education: - preschool education program provided with desired input and process: such as provision of materials, manpower, indoor and outdoor facilities, relevant curriculum materials and appropriate space and process that reflect teacher -child relationships, school- parent relationships and preschool records and reports.

Woreda: The division of zone administration in to manageable administrative areas.

Zone: The division of regional state administration in to manageable administrative areas.

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Historical Perspectives of Preschool Education

The education development of any nation is strongly related to the nations economic, social, political, cultural and technological development. It is when there is progress in these aspects of development that preschool education can get substantial attention. On the other hand this multifaceted development is also achieved when preschool education is given due emphasis. In relation to this idea Aggarwal (1981:54) stated that the real education begins from the conception as the mother begins to take up the responsibility of the child. In addition he elucidated that preschool education begins when a mother appropriately instructs and prepares her child for future responsibility.

March (1984: 395) states that preschool period is an important time for shaping and modeling the child. Mahatama Gandhi stressed that "The real education begins from conception as the mother begins to take up the responsibility of the child. If a mother is correctly instructed her coming responsibility, then that will be education of the child as well" (Choudhury and Choudhury, 2002: 105). Dewey a great humanist and educator state that, education is a process by which civilization is preserved and developed further. Education is not some thing that child starts at school entrance; rather it begins at birth and proceeds through out life (Choudhury and Choudhury, 2002: 101).

According to Hilderband (1971:337) the attention given to preschool education dates back to the age of early Greek philosophers such as, Socrates 469-339 B,C, Plato 425-347 B.C and Aristotle 384-322 B.C. To grow up the children properly by understanding the importance of preschool education Plato and Aristotile advocated for the establishment of community nurses.

Preschool education began to be recognized as early as the time of Plato. Then Comenous had put the first corner preschool education program. Latter on the known scholars like Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Oven, Piaget, Dewey, Froebel, Montessori and others contributed a lot to the development of preschool education. The present day preschool education program in general and kindergarten education programs in particular are influenced by the writings and works of these educators (Mitizel, 1982: 489).

Kindergarten education has its root in the historical epoch of Froebel (1782-1852). The leading concept of kindergarten had been originated from the German word meaning, "the children's garden." That means a place where young human plants are cultivated, by using the teachers, principles, methods and techniques as gardner while the child is considered as plants (Aggarwal, 1996: 209-220). The teachers are expected to systematically and skillfully handle children as the gardner is expected to preserve and protect the sustainable growth of plant to bear satisfactory fruit. In this way the children can grow appropriately both mentally and physically. In 1816 a small kindergarten established by Froebel, the pioneer of the idea of kindergarten in Griesheum for children whose age range from 3-7 years. The school had got international acceptance for its novel approach targeted at preschool children. Later on the school has transferred to Blankenberg where the school termed as "kindergarten" as the foundation of present day school (Ornstein and Levene 1981:141).

Concerning kindergarten education, Froebel had the motto of his famous saying "come let us live for children" in which he propounded love and sympathy for children which should be granted by parents and teachers of children. He developed learning strategies for his kindergarten school children, under the leading slogan known as "learning by doing" which involved sense training, of shapes, forms colors, size and numbers (Aggarwal 1996, 209-220). The other educator, Montessori (1870-1952) took the initiative in the preschool education

that stressed on children age range from 3 to 7 years whose parents were unemployed. In 1907, Montessori opened a school called "children's House", which adapted the methods employed by Froebel called sense training. In 1922 Montessori had trained teacher of kindergarten school in the new method (Mitzel, 1982:491).

Now a days two approaches or combination of both is being working for the leading world kindergarten school methodology for teaching children. Kindergarten by and large is a product of 20th century, beginning from 1940 to mid 1960's in which preschool education has become the subject of serious studies by scholars, researchers, because of the accelerated social changes during this time. Moreover, during this time research evidences and provocative literature on child development and early learning had motivated the community in general and policy makers in particular (Ibid). These ideas show us that better economic development and the advancement of human knowledge on the importance of early learning brought the need for the establishment and expansion of preschool education all over the world including our continent, Africa. However, the differences in economic development and educational status among the nations of the world created disparities in the development of preschool education. In relation to this UNESCO (1991:47) states that though the intelligence base of cognitive development is assumed to occur before the age of 10, the distribution of the educational expenditures in the third world countries for education and care of children is less than 10% of the total budget. This indicates that the low economic standard and less attention given for kindergarten school program in the third world nations tempered the qualities and expansions of kindergarten school services rendered to their society.

In Germany Froebel who designed a program for young children started preschool education in 1835. It was aimed at helping children understand the unity of man, God and Nature. This was done through a set of symbolic activities. He developed a number of manipulative materials to be used by

children in prescribed ways. Besides he developed arts, crafts, a set of songs and games which are now used by modern preschools (Bernard, 1986:520).

German immigrants brought Froebel's kindergarten ideas to the United States. Later kindergartens for German-speaking children were organized in various cities in the United States. The idea of kindergarten existed in many areas. A number of settlement houses offered kindergartens education to children from poor and immigrant families. Some community schools also experimented with kindergartens. The first kindergartens school in America was opened in 1955 by Mrs. Carl Schurz, who had studied in Germany under Froebel (McCarthy, 1980: 9).

According to Heron (1979:82) in Africa usually most of the education budget is spent on the provision of secondary and higher education. As a result the majority of kindergarten age children do not benefit from the program. This made the provision of preschool education the privileges of very few children of the influencing classes and the "new elites" of the continent. In addition due to the influence of inherited colonial models in which the Africans attempt to adjust the few existing western type kindergarten programs to the local resources and needs has made the opportunity so costly that only few privileged population are being benefited. Another author Swaminathan (1990:2-3) states that in Kenya less than one fifth of the children between the ages of 3 and 6 attend kindergarten programs, while more than a million are left on their own to play around their homes in the rural areas and open spaces in the towns. In Zambia the provision of kindergarten education is confined to small percentage of children mostly living in urban areas. Since the African governments couldn't satisfy the demands of their children in the provision of kindergarten education, the responsibility of running the kindergarten school program have become more of the duties of voluntary organizations such as the National council of women's societies in Nigeria, the Zambian preschool Association and the community based center for stimulating children of Benin. (UNESCO, 1991: 46-47).

Modern kindergarten education began in Ethiopia in 1908 in Dire Dawa. This time coincides with the beginning of modern education in Ethiopia. The Ethio-French Railway Company established this first modern kindergarten for the children of the workers. The French Embassy took the initiative to Ethiopia. Fifty years later the second kindergarten was opened in Addis Ababa (Bizunesh, 1983: 52; Aregash, 2005:6).

According to ICDR (1996:i-ii) the objectives of preschool education are:-

- To lay foundation in producing active, happy and physically strong child by designing balanced physical exercise.
- To initiate the child's ability to think, analyze and remember.
- To create suitable conditions that could promote the development of child's sense organ.
- To help the child to develop the ability to express himself.
- To help the child to develop the ability to appreciate nature and man made things around him.
- To acquire the ability to work in group and feeling of responsibility and discipline.
- To develop democratic behavior and love of work.
- To develop love of peace and their country
- To develop basic literacy and innumeracy concept.
- To prepare children for their future education.
- To develop love of music, art and craft in children.
- To enable children to grasp important cultures for their future life.

2.2. Importance of preschool Education

Many research evidences have reflected that preschool education has a very positive impact on the social, physical, emotional and intellectual development of young children that lasts well into adulthood (Andreski and Nichollas, 1997:10).

Rudolph and Cohen 1984:12) stated children who built a broad base of

understanding at kindergarten school level will be more successful in their elementary school years. However, this holds true when parents and teachers work close together, when the curriculum comprise subjects which are helpful in elementary schools, when teachers have provided the integral training and when other essential conditions for effective teaching- learning process are fulfilled. Thus to make kindergarten education supportive and that fosters children's latter schooling, the need to facilitate and organize all the desired elements is indispensable.

Preschool education deals with assisting the child to learn to work. Besides, it helps the child to participate with other children of similar ages by means of guided activities such as playing and group interactions. More over, it helps the child to acquire the experiences of working and living together through the interplay of group activities. Preschool education is also a preparatory program of teaching children with the task of learning. This enables them to join the elementary school. It also provides children knowledge and skills subsequently leading up to their overall motor development. In addition it helps to enhance the intellectual and language competence of children (Audat, 1979:63-64).

ESDPH states that the provision of early childhood education plays a positive role on the learning potential of the children. A comprehensive preschool program, focusing on the cognitive as well as physical and health needs of the child, enhances its ability to perform and increases the survival rate of the child in the primary school (MOE, 2002:8).

2.3. Quality of preschool Education

2.3.1 The Physical Environment of Preschool

The physical environment of preschool is one of the major issues that plays a significant role in determining the quality of preschool education. Children need safety and enough space where they can play, jump, run, rest, observe natural and man made objects, create things themselves and the like.

According to Choudhury and Choudhury (2002:111-112) the preschool building should be clean, pleasant and well maintained. All the rooms must have an outlet and inlet, but should avoid opening to each other. Hallak (1990:209) suggested the preparation of an evaluation checklist that could enable to select and obtain a favorable and suitable site that consists of drainage capabilities, access to utilities, size and shape, type of soil, playground features, roadways traffic conditions, residential surroundings and the like. In addition the author further argues that school buildings should be located far away from unnecessary noise, air pollution and other impediments such as places of amusement, taverns, dance halls, cemeteries or other installations which would in any way demoralize or adversely affect the children's attitude.

These situations distract the children's attention and even frustrate and make feel of insecurity. In addition they also attack the health condition of the children spoiling the fresh air the children took in. So they must be far away from the causes of such problems like heavily traveled high ways, airports, market areas, and factories. Koivula (1983:15) also suggested that residential areas than business and industrial areas should surround the location of a school.

Herrick, et al. (1956:237) stated that poorly sited schools are worthless in their educational contribution and selecting educationally inadequate site is wastage of human and material resources. Davis and Lovels (1981:1-2) strengthened this idea by stating that a well planned and designed site is necessary to fulfill inspiring and desired educational objectives.

In addition to the need for adequate space, the classroom in general, has to be aesthetically pleasing and comfortable. To save the children from the danger of easily falling when skipping or running floors must not be polished or waxed. Floors must be kept dry, sanitary and warm, because children spend much of their time sitting and playing on the floor (Lambert, 1960:16). From an

aesthetic and optical health point of view colour is very important in the classroom. To prevent glare non-shiny finishes should be used on walls. Research findings pointed out that color has an impact on academic achievement. For instance, red is said to be a good choice for areas planned for gross motor activities and concept development activities. Yellow colour is selected for music and art activities. Green, blue, and purple are selected for reading areas (Decker and Decker, 1988:253).

The arrangement of windows and doors should allow enough spaces for bulletin boards, for attaching things and for black boards. The walls of the preschool should be painted with attractive pictures and posters. Because children like bright colours very much (Choudhury and Choudhury, 2002: 114).

The floors should be cemented to make it suitable for children when they draw some pictures on it. It should also keep clean in a good sanitary condition from dust by maintaining its warmth since many of the child's activities are done there (Ibid).

To enable the child to look out for better view and understanding of the outside world in different seasons, different time and different occasions, the windows should be low enough to their height. Windows must have the facilities for easy operation by the children such as low level hinges that enable them to use whenever required. All windows should be provided with guards, screens or both. All doors must be light to enable the children to handle them easily. Indoor equipment includes chairs, tables, and shelves. Chairs must be of such weight and design that can be carried easily and safely about the room by children. It should permit the child to sit comfortably in relaxed position. Tables that are square and wide enough to allow children to work opposite to each other encourage conversation and appreciation of the work of others required. Child sized and open shelves make it easy for children to have toys and books when they need them (Bruce, 1997:115). The heights of doorknobs must be

with in easy reach of the children so that they easily use it without much difficulty. Water facilities are important for the cleaning up activities in the preschool. Both the outdoor and indoor of preschool must have toilet and washing facilities to serve the children appropriately. Concerning the proportion of toilet and the number of children, one toilet should be provided for ten children. The floor of the toilet should be washable but not of slippery tiles. To make the toilets of preschool suitable for the children the height of toilet fixtures should be between 25-30 cm from the floor. The size of the toilets should fit to the size of the children who use them. To store its equipments blocks, large toys, smaller articles, linen, books, teaching aids and records the preschool should have storage space. Based on the specific plan use both open and closed shelves and cupboards. The storages should be low in height to enable the children to take easily the required materials from the shelves or cupboards whenever needed and to keep it back in its proper place. This enables the children to take care and manage the things independently. All storage space should be well ventilated and kept free from insects and cobwebs (Choudhury and Choudhury, 2002:114-115).

Isenberg and Jalongo (1993:189-194) stated that many research findings revealed that many teachers still consider the purpose of outdoor play as a release of tension and excess energy. This narrow view reflects from the neglect of the outdoor environment as a valuable setting for children's creative growth and development. This scholar further stressed that the outdoor environment like the indoor environment is a learning laboratory for children. So the same emphasis should be given for fitness of outdoor environment like the indoor environment in space, material and equipment. Good outdoor environments offer so many uses for children of all ages and give opportunities to engage in various forms of play. Gore and Kourey (1964:57) explained that the outdoor space serves for painting, listening to music and stories, building with large blocks, gardening, taking walks to observe natural soil, rocks, animals, plants and etc.



To ensure the safety of the children Choudhury and Choudhury recommended a nursery school or kindergarten school must have a playground close to the preschool building. The outdoor space and playgrounds must be safe and secure for the children to play freely. It should be free from nails, rocks, broken parts, end edges, and glass pieces. The area should be well-fenced, drained and surface material and equipment should be appropriate and well arranged for the activities in the area (Curtis, 1998:112; Foster and Headley 1995:195). Outdoors a space provides exposure to nature, initiate imaginative play and allows children to exercise large muscles and to play together in groups or individually. Based on the weather conditions, many indoor activities can be exercised outside the school building. To make the outdoor space pleasant to the children, large-scale painting is necessary. In the outdoor space children can entertain music, dancing, marching, storytelling, and napping under a shady tree (Choudhury and Choudhury, 2002:115-116).

The outdoor space must have adequate area that enables the children to freely jump, skip, run and play the types of play they interested in both under the guidance of their teacher and without the guidance of the teacher but under the supervision of the teacher. Concerning the issue of space Choudhury and Choudhury (2002:116) recommended that the minimum area of two square meter of play space per child. When the space become limited due to the increasing number of groups of children, a schedule for using the playground should be provided so that all children are not outside at the same time. The play area should be divided in to proportional sun and shadow area to meet the demand of the children. In addition the outdoor play area should include hard surface where wheel toys can be used and balls bounced, grass plot for playing, running and jumping, spot for pets, gardens and digging, sandpit for sand play and manipulative activities, and some space for water play.

To make the supervision of outdoor play easy and satisfactory the outdoor area must be regular in out line. It ought to be securely fenced with a non-

splintering material at least four feet high and kept in good repair, with a gate that can be locked. All outdoor play environments should be free from nails, rocks, broken parts and edges, and glass pieces. The area must be well drained having surface material appropriate for the activities in the area (Wills and Stegeman, 1954: 258).

According to MOE (2004:3-5) a preschool must have outdoor play materials like different size balls, skipping ropes, foam javelin, gymnastic mat, multipurpose mats; large and mobile toys, tricycle and small car tires. In addition a preschool need to have out door play apparatus namely swinging, merry -go- round, slide, balance, boxes, crawling tunnels and climbing

2.3.2. Preschool Teachers Training

The training of teachers and personnel of kindergarten is a critical issue which demands serious attention of government, private, community, community and non government organizations. Because the courses given in kindergarten teachers institutions have a complex nature that requires a sound knowledge and skill acquisition on the part of the teachers. Defects created in training of kindergarten teachers and personnel is equated with the killing of generation, since the qualities of education rendered at preschool level plays decisive roles in the future children's learning.

Woodfield (2004:98)stressed the fact that preschool teachers need to have knowledge and understanding of:

- all aspects of child development including theories and approaches to learning;
- how to combine and apply pedagogical knowledge and understanding;
- multi-sensory learning and teaching approaches for young children, and
- safety issues and application in practice.

The training duration of kindergarten teachers vary from country to country based on the nature of programs offered. The survey study made by UNESCO on 67 United Nations member countries shows that most of them found to offer

courses that last for two years. However, the study showed that in some countries there were no specified certification records other than completion of primary or secondary level (UNESCO, 1985:5). With regard to the trends of Ethiopia, kindergarten teachers attend one year pre-service training after completing grade ten. Teachers should be provided with periodic refresher courses of workshop to keep themselves abreast of current trends and research and their application to the understanding of children and curriculum development.

As to Gore and Kourey (1964:21) the training of nursery or kindergarten school should emphasis on developmental learning and a background of understanding of children and the entire program of early childhood or elementary education. The qualified teacher must be a graduate of an officially recognized four years college with major work in elementary education, completed either at the graduate or postgraduate level. This professional training must include courses that help to develop basic knowledge of human growth, development and learning, mental and physical development, health and nutrition, school, parent, home and community relationships, curriculum content, methods, current problems, history, and philosophy of education and the administration and organization of schools.

The survey study made in the United States of America indicated that the general requirements for teachers of preschool education include:

- Approximately sixty hours per semester training in the areas of physical and biological sciences, language and literature, mathematics, the social and/or behavioral sciences and humanities.
- Between twenty four to thirty hours per semester training for professional education courses, including introduction to education and/or early childhood education, including history and philosophy.
- At least three hours (five to eight hours in some states) per semester training on teaching in an early childhood education program and additional student

teaching in primary or intermediate level or grade.

- Course elective in the area of psychology of the exceptional child, abnormal psychology, psychology of learning, mental hygiene, parent /community relationships, linguistics, nutrition, speech correction and school administration and /or supervision (Decker and Decker, 1988:183).

Among the issues that determine the qualities of preschool education teachers training is the major one, especially in kindergarten schools, because at this level the teachers effort of helping the children to learn is very important in determining their future overall personalities. Concerning this Spodek (1986:521) states that "the quality of a preschool depends to a great extent upon the teacher".

The duration of time of trainings and the number and types of courses given at preschool teachers training institutes/colleges have significant impact on the attainment of the desired qualities of preschool education. Ample duration of time of training which enables to complete the courses needed to handle and promote the preschool children development appropriately is unquestionably enhances the provision of the qualities of preschool education.

As survey study made by UNESCO on the training program of preschool teachers of member states of UNESCO indicates, that the methods for training preschools teachers are varied and range from post graduate courses to non degree diploma courses of one or more years of training, as well as to very short courses or orientations of a few weeks (UNESCO, 1985:5).

In the United States of America most states require a four-year professional program for certification in early childhood education or kindergarten. A few states of America developed a five-year program. Several states are offering certification for teaching preschool handicapped children (Decker and Decker, 1988:182).

In France and Italy preschool teachers mostly have been trained at the teacher training colleges, prospective kindergarten teachers follow a three years course. At the end of the third year students take a state examination leading to the preschool teaching diploma. Countries like Belgium, former Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and South Africa train preschool teachers in two-years college (UNESCO, 1985:5).

In Cameroon teachers mostly have no specific training in the field of early childhood education, or they may lack training altogether (Avalos and Haddad, 1981 cited in Gorman, et al., 1988:94). The Ethiopian Kindergarten teacher training institutes train kindergarten teachers only for certificate level program for one year.

Preschool teachers training duration varies from country to country and even with in the same country. Ethiopia's kindergarten teacher training duration seems that does not allow the completion of the desired courses that support teachers of preschool children to run their duties in handling the children properly. Regarding this Kuzin (1972:37) states that teachers of preschool children are expected to be highly versatile, posses knowledge of preschool child care and psychology, teaching method using appropriate equipments and materials in teaching etc. From this, one can conclude that there should be ample time allotted for teachers training like most states of the United States of America, France and Italy to have skillful and effective teachers who promote the development of preschool education efficiency.

The survey study made by UNESCO on the current situation of preschool education in the world on 88 countries which comprises 17 countries from Africa, 15 countries from Asia, 11 countries from Arab states, 24 countries from Europe and 21 countries from Latin America and Caribbean showed that in most of the countries subjects such as child development, health and hygiene, teaching methods, music and movement, theory of education, handicrafts, and

curriculum development are included in pre-service teacher training course. The subject called parent education is given only in preschool teachers training program of 59.4 percent of the 88 countries. Those countries whose general education is not well developed included in their pre-service preschool teachers' training program subjects such as language, mathematics, science, domestic science including children nutrition, environmental studies and physical education to upgrade the academic knowledge of the trainees (Fisher, 1995:49-51).

Concerning the methods of pre-service training of preschool teachers this study indicated that 93 percent of the 88 countries use theoretical training, observation or visits and teaching practice. The study also revealed that of the 88 countries, Bahrain, Colombia, Israel, Malta and Thailand use workshops in addition to other methods. In Bahrain and Grenada discussion method, in Cote d' Ivore, Cyprus, Israel and Canada project method in Ireland and New Zealand micro teaching method and in Indonesia active learning methods are on use in pre-service preschool teachers training program. This study reflects that a very new technique of training pre-service preschool teachers training is on use in Ukraine in which the Ukrainians organize "conference on experience exchange" and also arrange trainees' meetings with painters, musicians, children's writers, mass media representatives as well as radio and television workers. The study also confirmed the availability of in-service preschool teachers training in 70 percent of the 88 countries (Ibid).

2.3.2.1. Selection Criterion of Prospective Preschool Teacher

Kindergarten teachers must have adequate qualification to support the kindergarten children appropriately. Because kindergarten teachers are responsible in shaping and care of children in addition to teaching. Such highly responsible duties require appropriately recruited prospective kindergarten teachers, though the task seems marginalized.

According to Attwood and Stuart (1996:142) the process of recruiting kindergarten teachers involves attracting and judging the applicants. The effort made to attract potential employers with the required characteristics should address to the quality required by the job available. Another author, McCarthy (1980:197) added that the recruitment process is essential to consider the level of post qualification experience of any new applicants. Since there are various kindergarten education programs, the requirements and standards of their staff members also differ accordingly in order to fit the needs. Some are very strict asking for considerable certificate, while others are not. Obviously, the kind of people a certain program requires strongly depends on the job specification that has to do with age, education and experience factors. Monday (1990:108) states that the recruitment process which attracts only a few applicants of poor performance can not enable the organization to be successful even if it has perfect plans, a sound organizational structures and control system. Because these organizational factors are not self-actuating that competent people must be available to make things happen. Invancevich and William, (1989:268). Summarized the selection criteria as the educational level, experience, physical fitness and personnel characteristics. According to Choudhury and Choudhury (2002:145) females handle children in soft motherly love than males.

2.3.2.2. Personal Characteristics of Preschool Teachers

The very important man in the educational programs is the teachers. The characteristics of such decisive men have great importance in the achievements of teaching learning goals. Effective teachers should be friendly, constructive, encouraging and supporting in teaching and human relationship. According to Foster and Headlley (1966: 42):

The teacher is the wholesome person, not easily upset who has the physical stamina and energy to cope with lively young children

According to Austin, (1976:54) motivation in Froebelian type kindergarten primarily focuses on pleasing the teacher. Teachers employed "fun" as

motivation made the activities enjoyable experiences for children by showing them their love. The modern kindergartens motivation originates from the child's felt needs. Since his friends are there or "the teacher is nice" a child likes kindergarten. Living with children of kindergarten age is strenuous business and requires vigorous good health, energy buoyant spirits, and enjoyment of the out doors. In addition to effectively carry out their duties, kindergarten teachers must be trained (Ibid)

As Witty (1947:662) reveals a preschool teacher should be cooperative, democratic, kindness, thoughtful for others, having patience, have good personal experience, have fairness and impartiality, have sense of humor, interest in child problems, flexible, use recognition and praise, proficient in subject mater.

2.3.3. Preschool personnel

In addition to the teacher, qualified personnel should be assigned for preschoolers to meet their developmental needs in every aspect. To keep clean the school environment there should be personnel who could take the responsibilities of charging the duty. Because unless the school environment and its surroundings are kept clean the preschool children and all the preschool communities can be exposed to communicative and non-communicative diseases. In addition preschools ought to have a physician who could supervise the health condition of the children and provide them health services. Concerning these idea Choudhury and Choudhury (2002:145-146) state that a preschool must have one or two assistants for house keeping services like cleaning, washing the linen and care of the grounds, putting up new sheets on the bulletin and easel board, putting on and taking off the equipment. Such personnel must be those who are not irritated by the noise or confusion created by the young children. The children spend much of their time playing on the ground. So the floor has to be kept clean without dust and free of broken equipment, glass pieces, loose nails and other hazards. The assistant or the personnel must be on duty in the toilet room and washing area helping the children and the teachers to manage the conditions effectively.

A preschool ought to have a physician preferably pediatrics doctor as a part-time worker for the physical examination of the children at least once a week and to help in case of accidents or emergencies. In addition if a preschool gives a whole day service to get the children on time it must have a well-trained cook to prepare sweet food for the children. In such a case the teacher plans a menu, supervises the preparation and serving of food. A cook should take directions from the teacher to prepare sweet food for the children in homely atmosphere

A preschool should have a director, a vice director, teachers, assistant teachers, caretakers, a cleaner and a guard (YFWO, 1996:11-13). Preschool education experts could play significant role in improving the quality of preschool education by rendering professional aids for kindergarten principals and teachers. In relation to this Brown (1993:887) states that an expert is a person with the status of an authority (in a subject) by reason of special skill, training or knowledge; a specialist.

2.3.4. Play and Play Equipment in Preschool

2.3.4.1. Play in Preschool

Froebel states play as follows:

“play is the purest, most spiritual activity of the child and gives joy, freedom, contentment, inner rest and peace in the world. It is the source of all that is good.” (Bennett et al. 2001: 171).

An individual learns through out his life span, especially in early childhood, intellectual development is very fast and about 80 percent of brain growth appears to be completed by the time a child is six years old. So this crucial period demands the provision of the right type of play environment for learning. An appropriately planned play provides the child with dynamic experiences and opportunities for learning and expressing him self (Choudhury and Choudhury, 2002: 127). ICDR (1996:i) stated that preschool education helps the children to acquire basic knowledge and skill. This could be realized though the use of play as a main instrument.

2.3.5. Method of Teaching Preschool Children

Teaching preschool children require special skills and care. The implicit ideas of the work of Choudhury and Choudhury show the important teaching method in preschool as follows:

- 1. Play:** - All types of play helps to teach preschool children based on the concepts required to be taught. So a preschool teacher must think of what type of play is appropriate in relation to the available space and facility, weather condition, number of children and concepts required to be taught before he begin to teach or guide the children. In play children exercise and learn much. As to the two author children love to create with their hands in their play. While they work with their hands, they are also exploring with their senses, acquiring new experiences and using the imagination. When they make something, they express their thoughts and feelings, practicing skills with their hands and fingers and co-ordination and controlling their muscles. Preschool teachers are expected to facilitate such creative activities like free painting, drawing, pasting, collage work, paper craft, modeling, clay work, and printing to enhance muscle brain coordination in addition to exercising muscle and other play to maintain both physical and mental development.
- 2. Story Telling:** - Listening to stories is the interests of the children. When they listen to stories they learn new words, ideas, feelings and experiences. In addition such opportunities enable the children to make their own stories. So preschool teachers are advised to use story telling skillfully as one of the method of teaching preschool children.
- 3. Motivating the curiosity of the child:**-teachers of preschool teachers are expected to encourage the child to be curious by posing questions.
- 4. Helping the child to learn through experiences.** The teachers of preschools should encourage the children to learn from every part of their natural environment like trees, leaves, plants, animals, stones, sun, shade,

water, air, mud, light, sand, and house hold articles.

5. **Discussion:**-preschool teachers ought to allow the children to talk freely and to ask questions.
6. **Rhythm, music and movement:**- children love three of these issues,. Music helps a child to be happy and gives avenue of expression to a child, which in turn helps the children to develop their language. To attract the attention of the child the teacher should also move here and there smartly.
7. **Dramatization:** - Children like to imitate and act out different experiences. So preschools teachers are expected to guide or teach the children through the use of simple dramas in which characters selected from the children themselves.
8. **Field Trips and Excursion:** - It is the interests of the children to see and explore their environments. So children must be taken out at least once a week to observe and explore the environment around them. The common interests of children at this stage include observing animals, trees, flowers, birds and other beauties of nature. Children can also visit people who serve them like doctor, postman, grocer, washer man etc and places like markets, bus station, railway station, post office, police station, cinema, theatre and the like. Field trips and excursions help to get first hand ideas and experience to develop proper understanding (Choudhury and Choudhury, 2002:141-143). To avoid the teachers individual emotion and daily interests in teaching kindergarten education there should be both annual plan and daily plan (CYFWO, 2002:15).

2.3.6. Methods of Evaluating Preschool Children

Hespe (2000:9) states that the assessment of young children should be an on going process which includes identifying, collecting, describing, interpreting and applying indoor and outdoor based evidence of early learning in order to make informed worth while decision. This evidence may include records of children's conversations, drawings and constructions, peer relations, participations and anecdotal notes describing their behavior. Assessment must be done carefully so as to increase teacher's understanding of children's

progress, assist in identifying the needs of the children and enhance teachers to reflect in education program.

Similar ideas are reflected by Choudhury and Choudhury (2002:125-126) which claim that evaluation must be based on informal evaluation techniques like observations, structured interviews, analysis of children's products/work and play way techniques like group games, quiz etc. The preschool teacher should make a note of the points, which she has not able to put across and plan the next year's program based on the experiences acquired this year. Based on the objectives set for each aspects of development for a particular age group, the evaluation of preschool education should be continuous and should embrace all aspects of the child's development.

2.3.7. Staff- Child Ratio and Group Size

The number of children served both by teachers and personnel has impacts on the qualities of provision rendered. If a few staff is made to serve large number of children the quality of provision will be less. On the contrary when sufficient number of teacher and personnels are employed to large number of young children the service given will have high quality. However, the number of teacher and personnel required will be influenced by the program, finance, fees, plan of building, provision of equipment, the age group and number of children enrolled, characteristics of children, abilities of the teacher and the training and experiences of the teachers.

According Chudhoury and Choudhury (2002:146) the ratio of staff: child ratio for children between 2 to 4 years old should be 1:10 and for children between 4 and above to 6 years old it should be 1:15. This statement shows that one teacher should serve 10 young children of 2 to 4 years or fifteen young children of 4+to 6 years old. This expression is also true for the personnel.

As to CYFWO (2002:10-11) in a 7m x 9m class the number of children should not be more than 40. For these 40 children there should be one teacher and one assistant teacher. A cook must be there for 80 children. In addition one day guard and one night guard need to be available in each kindergarten.

Zirpoli (1995:2) states that small group size is important to promote children's attention and engagement in tasks facilitate their social interactions and foster independence as well as feeling of competence. It provides a suitable condition for both children and teachers decreases the likelihood of occurrences of misbehavior and increases opportunities for practice and learning across different activities. On the contrary large class size limits learning opportunities, create tensions and foster social aggressions.

2.3.8. Preschool Curriculum

The importance of early years of learning is unquestionable. But the question lies on what children are learning, how they are learning and where they are learning (Christine and Jill, 1999:126). According to Miller and McDowell (1993:95) quality preschool curriculum reflects organized central themes and integrated areas of development; designed to accommodate a broad range of abilities and personalities; employs sound and consistent assessment and documentation procedures; integrates objectives, methods, materials as well as implemented by teachers those who have training and experiences.

In a rapidly changing contemporary world it is difficult to precisely decide the nature of experiences that the preschool must provide. However, some preschool educators believe that the content of the curriculum need to be relevant, have meaning for the child and wholly child centered (Bruce, 1997:63). According to Husen and Postlethwaite (1994:4669) the preschool experiences are organized around certain areas of learning like aesthetic and creative, languages, mathematics, social and natural science and physical education. Wilson (2000:25) strengthened that the language and literacy experiences of preschool curriculum have a profound and lasting effect on the

social and academic lives of preschool children. Charney (1997:38) states that the social science experiences of preschool curriculum help the children to develop social attitudes, skills and concepts of good citizenship to participate in a culturally diverse, democratic society and increasingly interdependent world.

Ndagi, J. et. al (1986:91-95) considered curriculum as the experience that is planned, published and circulated for use in the schools. But the sum total of all that is learnt in the school includes the informal or hidden curriculum in addition to the formal or planned activities (experiences) of the schools. The hidden curriculum is school experiences that are usually done by head masters, teachers etc. It is influenced by teachers attitudes and reflected in the way they teach a topic, the after school sports and other activities we plan for children. It presents what really goes on in school (Ibid). Similarly Choudhury and Choudhury (2002:116-120) elucidated that the preschool curriculum can be viewed in specific and broader way. Conventionally preschool curriculum means a carefully planned set of lessons to be taught and learned or a set of learning opportunities to be presented in a certain way. In this sense curriculum is seen specifically having clear goals, concrete and measurable objectives, a set of requirements for teacher training a rationalized educational philosophy and a method for evaluation. In a broader sense curriculum is taken as all the developmental experiences that are planned for the whole program. In light of this, the care giving style, the entire day's activities; the degree of freedom or control for both children and preschool teachers; the relative emphasis on cognitive, emotional or social values; and even the choice of whether to accept and use unplanned events as developmental experiences. This shows that the preschool curriculum encompasses the whole school experiences and opportunities for learning, designed by the teachers, the administrators and planners for the total and integrated development of children. According to ICDR (1996: IV - Vii) the type of subjects designed in the new education and training policy to be taught at kindergartens is four in number. These are play in preschools; language (mother tongue),

environmental and labor education; and mathematics, aesthetics and physical education. For these subjects tentative syllabus was prepared in Amharic that would be improved through time and expected to be developed when translated in to regional media of instructional language based on the tangible situation of the region. In addition the kindergarten teachers are also expected to prepare books based on the syllabus by considering the real environmental conditions and children's background. The total weekly periods allotted for the four subjects are 25. Among these ten periods are for play in preschool; six periods for language, environmental and labour education; three periods for mathematics; and six periods for aesthetics and physical education.

2.3.9. Preschool Records and Reports

Neauma and Tallack (1997:73) state that record keeping is important to build up a picture of individual child, to monitor individual progress, to plan for the future progress and communicate achievements and progress to parents. Preschool records are information gathered on every aspects of a preschool activities, which includes the child's history, family background, the preschools possession, preschools relations with the concerned bodies and the like. Such activities are crucially important to maintain the qualities of preschool education since it helps to pinpoint the problem areas easily and to propose its solutions (Choudhury and Choudhury, 2002:146-151). These authors state that records and reports are very important in guiding and planning education for the individual child and in achieving the objectives of the preschool education. These records help the teachers to know the child's family background, home environment, developmental history, health conditions of the child, needs and abilities, in order to stimulate and achieve growth. So the teacher collects the required information from a variety of sources and keeps it in a folder to which she adds her own observation of the progress made by the child in the school. The information obtained in such a way serves as a point of discussion with parents and to keep the parents inform the behavior and progress of their child at school. When the children leave preschool and join

primary school their records send to the primary school teacher. The importance of the preschool records and reports embrace the individual child, assessing the child's rate of development, curriculum planning, determine the readiness of the children, guiding the teacher in achieving the goals of preschool education and valuable resource for the researcher.

There are various types of preschool records in order to maintain the required information to run the program effectively. These are personal record of the child, home background of the child, health records, attendance record, stock register, house visits records, parent-teachers meeting records, records of admission forms and progress report of the children (Ibid).

2.3.10. School Parent Relationship

Many educators emphasize the participation of parents in preschool education. Research findings have also confirmed that parental involvement enhances the value of the program for the child (Butler, 2001: 554). Eldridge (2000) cited in Fitzgerald (2004:6) found that when parents and teachers work together in early years settings, the results have positive impact on the child's development and learning. These include; increased achievements, better attendance, an improved attitude to learning and less behavior problems.

In light of this idea Sadek (1996:6) stresses that parents should be recognized and respected as children's first and continuing educator and consulted as partner in any decision making process related to their children's education. In addition Seigel (2002:4) explained that both parents and the school must share common perception and responsibilities about the child. Mutual involvement, accountability and cooperation as well as reciprocal communication systems are very important.

The relation between home and school plays a significant role in creating suitable conditions by identifying the behavior and interests of each child to provide him with the appropriate support and to enable him to learn easily.

Regarding this idea Choudhury and Choudhury (2002:151-156) reveal that "home and school are the two worlds for preschool children, where total development take place." Home and school must work together for better understanding of each other, guiding the children co-operatively for more improved welfare of the children. The teacher should contact the parents of children to know the child's interests, needs and motivation. The relation the teacher has with the parents, enable her to create a healthy, secure and favorable environment for the child in the preschool. Home school relations are promoted through different ways such as home visits, parent's interview or individual meetings, parents and teachers meeting, parent's participation in school programmes, material for parents and parents counseling by preschool teacher, parents participation in school programmes with their children. Such participation can be the organization of children's festivals on which samples of children's work can be exhibited in a short progamme of half hours duration by the children and games for parents, which can entertain both the parents and children. In addition participation in school programmes can be done through the invitation of parents on picnics and outdoor trips prepared by the preschools. In these conditions many interested parents may lend a helping hand to staff in arranging the transportation or fulfilling any other requirements.

Material for parents is one of the ways through which home-school relations develop by using techniques like sending written diary of the child to his parents, and newsletter for keeping the parents informed about a child development, child rearing practices, new trends in education of young children, new songs and stories that will help the parents to guide their children better. Parent's counseling by preschool teacher is the process by which preschool teacher advises parents to understand the significance of early intervention in preventing later educational deficits (Ibid).

2.3.11. Controls of Preschool Education

The issue of preschool education has become a matter of great national and international concern. Since children are the future builders of their nation the services provided to them, undoubtedly determines the future of any nation. In this respect, the education sector is charged with responsibilities of educating the young then the family. According to Foster and Headley (1966:30) in the United States of America kindergarten schools are authorized by law to collect state funds. In France, the ministry of national education and the municipal government finance community kindergartens. However, each child pays an insignificant amount of money for his meal (MOE, 1983: 9).

Kuzin and Kondakov (1977:32) revealed that in the former USSR, all preschool establishments are run by the state, which allocates especial funds for the construction and equipment of these establishments. Parents pay very small amount of money.

Child-centered, family-focused, community-based holistic care and education of preschool children is essential for securing the well being and rights of all children and should be supported by national policies and sufficient funds. This should be the result of a synergistic partnership among families, communities, civic societies, NGOs and the government (Ibid).

In Ethiopia the government policy education in the coming five years is not to establish and run preschool education. However, the government has critical role in policy development, curriculum design, standard setting, supervision, etc. Therefore, the government will encouraging the private sector, NGOS and communities (MOE, 2002:77).



CHAPTER THREE

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Theoretical Framework

There are a number of indicators that contribute to the quality of educational provisions. These are teacher-pupil ratios, class size and availability of facilities and qualification of teachers. Grisay and Mahlick (1991:4) state that the quality of education system or part of the system is often described in terms of inputs into the teaching process rather than in terms of student achievement, basically because inputs are easier and less costly to measure. Different writers have tried to explain quality. For example, Salis (1993:11) defined quality, as "we all know quality when we experience it, but describing and explaining it is a more difficult task". So this shows that quality in education is difficult to define and to measure (World Bank, 1995:2).

According to Ethiopian ministry of education quality education is a complex matter and it has varied features. One of these is its relationship with the society's cultural, economic and political realities and activities. Thus, quality indicates that the student learns in his mother tongue and enriches his language, equitable distribution of educational services. The other aspect of quality of education is its close dependence on the resources of the country and society. This implies that quality of education is a function of the country's level of economic development subject to improvement and change with time. For instance, if the teacher/student ratio was 1:70 at one time it can be improved to 1:30 or 1:20 through time when the country's economy grows significantly. The ministry set the minimum criteria and requirements of quality education as follows:

- The existence of professionally competent and ethically-minded teachers in the system;

- The existence of an efficient management of education;
- A student-centered and equitable curriculum which has a high standard relevant to the society;
- The supply of necessary educational materials and equipment (MOE, 2002:71).

On the other hand, Educators and policy makers viewed quality education in six perspectives. These are: quality as reputation, quality as resource and inputs, quality as process, quality as content, quality as out puts and out comes, and quality as value added.

1. **Quality as reputation:** is the situation in which some educational institutions gain the fame of providing best quality education. However, information or assumption about inputs and outputs often acts as the basis for reputation.
2. **Quality as resource and inputs:** Here quality in education embraces resource allocation, adequate and qualified manpower provision, student quality, size, adequate and appropriate teaching learning materials and facilities, adequate and appropriate curriculum materials and over all prestige.
3. **Quality as process:** This aspect of quality education reflects the nature of the intra-institutional interaction of students, faculty, and others; the whole institutional environment, in addition to inputs or results.
4. **Quality as content:** shows the particular bias of a community, an institution or a country toward a body of knowledge, skill or information.
5. **Quality as outputs and outcomes:** In this context quality education enshrines knowledge achievement, skills, entrance ratios to next level of education, income and occupational status of graduates. It indicates how well an institution prepares students to become responsible citizens in skills, attitudes and values relevant to the country's need.
6. **Quality as value added:** Is a measure of change; how the students have changed because of the learning program, the culture and the norms of

the institution; how the institution helps students to achieve their potential or enlarge human capacities (Adams, 1993 cited in Assefa 2002:29).

The quality of preschool education can be seen in many perspectives. For instance according to information available on line, quality preschool education refers to the inclusion of the following experiences. These are:

- The availability of positive relationships between teachers and children.
- The classroom equipped with sufficient materials and toys.
- Communication throughout the day, with mutual listening, talking/ responding/ and encouragement to use reasoning and problem solving.
- Provision of materials and activities to promote understanding and acceptance of diversity.
- Encouraging parents to involve in all aspects of the program.
- Small size groups
- Qualified teachers and staff, and
- Supervision and evaluation of all staff with professional growth.

Tegegn Nuresu (1998:41) elaborated that a discussion on the quality of education usually focuses on level of pupils achievement in examinations, parents satisfaction of the out come of education, relevant skills, attitude and knowledge acquired for life after schooling and the condition of learning environments. However, some of these are subjective and hence difficult to measure. Based on these, in this study quality preschool education refers to quality as input and process. Quality as input indicates the provision of appropriate learning environments such as adequate and appropriate physical environment, adequate and well trained-teachers and personnel and appropriate learning materials; and in relation to quality as process, preschool records and school-parent relationships have been assessed in light of the reviewed related literature.

3.2. The Research Methodology

3.2.1. Method of the study

The issue of education is one of the complex human endeavors that requires in depth exploration to understand. As a result to study the quality of community preschool education in West Wollega Zone this study employed qualitative research method. Because Lecompte and Pressle (1993:34) elaborated that qualitative research can be employed when the concern is with people, since controlling and manipulating activities of human beings are some how difficult. Because the unique quality or consciousness of human beings are more than parts of the physical world with thoughts, feelings, intentions and the likes in accordance to the situation that they live. Hence, to study about human beings qualitative method is recommended (Wamahiu and Karugu, 1995:122). Similarly Borgdan and Biklen (1992: 65) stated that using the natural setting of humans as the direct source of data, which is primarily characteristics of qualitative research, is recommended in educational research. In addition Wester (1991) Goetz and Lecompte (1991) cited in Dessalegn (2000:112-113) stated that qualitative method of study is an inquiry process of understanding social or human problem, based on building a complex holistic picture formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting. This shows that qualitative research emphasizes on understanding through looking closely at people's words, actions and records. Therefore, this study uses qualitative method of research. Because to investigate issues in education, which is human endeavor, using a qualitative approach is appropriate. The approach helps to study quality of community preschool education in the zone under study in their natural setting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them.

3.2.2. Design of the Study

The researcher employed qualitative case study design. Since the study examines issues related to the quality of community kindergarten education in the aspects of input and process in Gimbi town administration, Nole Kaba and

Lalo Assabi woredas of west Wollega zone, qualitative case study design is appropriate. In a case study, a researcher makes a detailed exploration about population. In line with this Wiersman (1995:213-214) stated that a qualitative case study emphasis to deal with a few cases and many variables. In other words, it takes few research settings (informants) and makes detailed explorations around and in the research settings. Merriam (1988) also stated that case study is employed to get an intensive and holistic description of a single instance, phenomena or social institution. According to Adelman and et al (1980) cited in Amera (2004:29) case study is the study of an instance in action. The single instance or a bounded system, for example, a child, a clique, a class, a school, or a community can be taken as a case for investigation. Similarly Gomm et. al (2000:3) stated that the case of case study might be an individual, an event, an institution or even a whole national society. According to Gomm and his associates, usually, case study refers to research that investigates a few cases, often just one in a considerable depth. Similarly this study also considered a few cases of quality of community preschools in the aspects of input and process that is the provision of adequate and appropriate physical environment, adequate and well trained teachers and personnel, appropriate learning materials; and the availability of preschool records and school parent relationships in Gimbi town administration, Nole Kaba and Lalo Assabi woredas of west Wollega zone to investigate issues related to the quality of community preschools in these three areas more intensively.

3.2.3. Sample Selection

The subjects or the total population of the study includes all the community kindergartens, community kindergartens children parents, community kindergartens principals, community kindergartens teachers, town administration officials, woreda and zonal education office kindergarten education experts in west Wollega zone. Since it is very difficult to embrace all these population in such a thesis, the researcher employed purposive sampling in selecting the woredas and town administration to be included in the study.

In such a way the researcher sampled two woredas and one town area administration namely Nole Kaba woreda, Lalo Assabi woreda and Gimbi town area administration from eighteen total woredas of west Wollega zone. Because these woredas and the town administration have relatively long experiences in providing preschool education for the children of the area than other woredas in the Zone understudy so that they could provide rich in formations needed for the study. Nole Kaba woreda has one community kindergarten. Lalo Assabi woreda has also one community kindergarten. Gimbi town administration has two community kindergartens.

Data were gathered from four community kindergartens, four community kindergarten directors, six community kindergarten teachers, two woreda education office kindergarten education expert, one town administration education office kindergarten expert and one west Wollega zone education office kindergarten education expert and two town administration head using available/comprehensive/ sampling technique. Because the sample units or sampling elements are manageable that enabled the researcher to include all the members of the population as a research participant. According to EMA (2002:12) when you find a members of a population possessing the required characteristics small in number, may include all of them in your study. From thirty four parents of the kindergartens children data were gathered using purposive sampling based on the parents education status .In such a way parents of the children who have completed grade 10 in new education and training policy or grade 12 in the former education system and above were selected. Information concerning the education status of the parents was gathered with the cooperation of community kindergarten principals, community kindergarten teachers, woredas education office kindergarten education experts and town administration education office kindergarten education expert of the respective sample woredas and town administration. Because people with better education level can have better experience in relation to the quality of preschool education and the need for preschool education.



Teachers and the parents are purposely mixed for two reasons. First the number of teachers in each kindergarten school is not enough to conduct FGD separately. Secondly the two groups that is the selected parents and teachers have the knowledge of quality preschool education to provide rich information.

3.2.4. Source of Data

The source of the data were Bubbe town administration community kindergarten, Innango town administration community kindergarten, Gimbi town 03 kebele community kindergarten, and Gimbi town 04 kebele community kindergarten; four principal and six teachers of these four community kindergartens; thirty four parents of the four community kindergartens children; two woreda education office kindergarten education expert. That is one expert from Nole Kaba woreda and the other from Lalo Assabi woreda and one kindergarten education expert from Gimbi town administration. In addition the West Wollega zone education office kindergarten education expert and one Bubbe town and one Innango town administration head were the source of the data for the study. Besides the documents of the two woredas and Gimbi town administration community kindergartens were also taken as a source of data.

3.2.5. Tools and Procedures of Data Collection

Educators have advocated the use of multiple methods of data collection. Because by selecting complementary methods, a researcher can improve the weakness of one method with the strength of another. It is also recommended that good qualitative case study will often include multiple methods of data collection and advised that no single source has a complete advantage over all others. Documentation, in-depth interview, observations, and FGD, have been stated as key ways of collecting qualitative case study data (Yin, 2003:83-96; Best and Khan, 1993:198-203; Merriam, 1988:85). In line with this Hunter (1989) and Patton (1987) cited in Teshome (1998:46) stated that the use of a single data collection technique has both strengths and weaknesses. The use of more than one data collection technique in a single study helps the researcher

to substantiate the strengths and to correct the defects of any one source of data. Based on this idea the researcher employed unstructured interview, observation, FGD and document review as a data gathering tools.

3.2.5.1. Interview

In qualitative case studies, interviewing is a major source of data needed for understanding the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 1988:86). It is defined that an interview is a kind of conversation with purpose. A researcher interview is an interpersonal situation, a conversation between two partners about an issue (Robson, 1993:227). This is to mean that interview is a specific form of human interaction in which common understanding evolves through dialogue. Robson (1993:228) stated the importance of using an interview as follows:

Interview carried out for research or inquiry purposes are very commonly used approach, possibly in part because the interview appears to be a quite straightforward and non-problematic way of finding things out. The situation that provides to the interviewee the opportunity to describe his/her ideas and to give more emphasis on what he/she thinks important.

Best and Khan (1993:199), Fraenkel and Wallen (1993:385) also stated that the purpose of interviewing people is to find out what is in their mind what they think or how they feel about something. In addition to this, there are many things, which we cannot directly find out through observation and through other means unless we interview people. Taking this idea into account for this study, interview guides were developed to collect data from community kindergarten principals, experts of kindergarten education both at woreda education and zonal education level and the two towns administration head. According to Patton (1987:11) an interview guide is a list of questions or issues that are to be used in the course of an interview, and it provides topic or subject areas about which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and reflect that particular subject. Another author, May also states to have more latitude to probe beyond the answer and thus inter into dialogue with the interviewee (May, 2001). This technique is

convenient in gathering data for qualitative case studies. As a result interview guide was used to extract sufficient information from the respondents on the quality of community preschool education in west Wollega zone.

Interview was conducted with four community kindergarten principals of each of the two sampled woredas, and one town area administration. That means two community kindergarten principals from 03 kebele and 04 kebele community kindergartens of Gimbi town administration, one community kindergarten principal from Nole Kaba woreda and one community kindergarten principal from Lalo Assabi woreda. In addition interview was conducted with two kindergarten experts of woreda education, one expert from each of the two sampled woreda and one town administration education office kindergarten education expert, west Wollega zonal education office kindergarten education expert and two heads of town administration were also interviewed to elicit more intensive information along with the interviews conducted with community kindergarten principals and woreda education experts.

All the interview principals are females. Two of them are trained in preschool education for one year. One of the trained principals served for 27 years as a kindergarten teacher and principal. The other trained principal has served for 2 year. The other two untrained principal have completed grade 12 in old curriculum. Three of the principals have 22-26 years old. The other principal is 49 year old. The interviewed woreda education office kindergarten education experts are three in number. They are all males. Two of them are diploma holders, one of them in Amharic and the other in management. The third one is trained in teaching first cycle primary school at certificate level. The service year of the three experts ranges from 16-22 years. They have served as a teacher and expert in woreda education office. The kindergarten education expert interviewed from West Wollega zone education office is male. He is diploma holder in management. He has served for 15 years as a teacher and

expert in zone education office. The two interviewed town administration officials are males and have diploma in management. One of them served for 13 years at different levels in town administration. The other has served for 14 years as a teacher on different positions in the town administration.

These people were selected because of their important positions and contributions in describing the status of quality of kindergarten education in their area. To avoid communication barrier in the discussion the interview was conducted in Oromo language, and later translated into English. All the respondents were interviewed during the time of office work with the permission of the head of their offices for the convenience of having ample time of discussion.

3.2.5.2. Observation

Yin (2003:92) elucidated that observation evidence is often useful in providing information about a topic being studied. In addition he explained that some relevant behaviors or environmental conditions would be available for observation that can serve as a source of evidence in a case study. By supporting this idea Merriam (1988:102) confirmed that observation is a major means of collecting data in case study research. This means it gives a first-hand account of the situation under study; when combined with interviewing and document analysis, it allows for a holistic interpretation of the phenomenon being studied. Wamahiu and Karugu (1995:125) label observation, as a more appropriate method in qualitative case study because the researcher's sense organs are the key instrument to collect data. According to Adler and Adler (1998:135) besides the competencies of speaking and listening which are used in interviews, observing is another every day skill which is methodologically systematized and applied in qualitative research. Not only visual perceptions but also those based on hearing, feeling and smelling are integrated. As to Kumar (1999:106) observation may be either participant or non-participant. In this study non-participant observation was employed for it

is convenient with the nature of the study. Because Kumar (1999:106) states that in non-participant observation the observer does not get involved in the activities of the group but remains a passive observer, watching and listening to its activities and drawing conclusions from this. According to Nachmias and Nachmias (1992:199) the main advantage of observation is to directly observe and describe the phenomena as they occur in their natural setting. Based on these ideas to get relevant data in relation to the qualities of community preschools using direct observation the researcher prepared observation checklist consists of three parts, that means details of instruction in classroom, appropriateness of the classroom and outdoor environment. Using the checklists the researcher observed the classroom interaction between kindergarten teachers and kindergarten children, interactions between kindergarten children and materials, appropriateness of the classroom and the outdoor facilities, space, site and neatness. The Oromo language, English language and mathematics classes were selected for classroom observation in all community kindergartens of the two sample woredas and one town administration. The three subjects classes were observed each for two periods. The exception was in Innango town pabilic kindergarten where the English language was not being taught. So the English language period class was not visited in this town community kindergarten.

3.2.5.3. Focus Group Discussion

According to Wellington (1996:59-69) making a discussion among individuals or more than two individual may provoke individuals mind to generate more ideas and to make an exhaustive argumentation among each other. Therefore, in addition to the interview, FGD among members of small group made up of perhaps six to ten individuals have been considered as a good instrument to obtain useful information. In addition focus group discussion helps to understand issues with consensus and variation among the members of the discussion. In line with this Wamahu and Karugu(1995:122) stated that focus group discussion are best suited for obtaining data on group attitudes and

perceptions by initiating members for active discussion. Taking this idea into account the study utilized FGD to obtain stronger well-discussed and versatile information from more than a single individual. So the researcher planned to participate eight to twelve community kindergartens children parent with the total of thirty four to forty eight parents and six teachers from all the four kindergartens understudy. To realize the plan from each of the four community kindergarten twelve parents and their teachers were invited to participate on the FGD. Finally the parents and the teachers who participated in FGD were six parents and three teachers from Gimbi town 04 kebele community kindergarten, twelve parents and one teacher from Gimbi town 03 kebele community kindergarten, eight parents and two teachers from Bubbe town community kindergarten and eight parents from Innango town community kindergarten. Age wise 10 persons or 25 percent of the participants are 21-26 years old. Thirteen individuals or 32.5 percent of the participants are 27-31 years old. The other 17 individuals or 42.5 percent are 32-36 years old. Concerning the work experiences of the FGD participants 10 respondents or 25 percent of the FGD participants have served for 2-7 years in different government offices. Among these six of them are kindergarten teachers who have been serving in the profession. The other four teachers are diploma holder teachers teaching in second cycle primary school. Eleven respondents or 27.5 percent of the FGD participants are served for about 8-13 years. They are all first cycle primary teachers with TTI /certificate/ level. The other 19 respondents or 47.5 percent of the FGD participants have served for about 14-19 years as government employers in town administration, woreda education office and woreda finance and development office at different position. Twelve individuals of this group have completed grade 12 in old curriculum. The rest seven are diploma holders in accounting. Teachers and the parents purposely mixed for two reasons. First the number of teachers in each school is not enough to conduct FGD separately. Secondly the two groups that are selected parents and teachers have the knowledge of quality preschool education to provide rich information. The total participants of the FGD were thirty-four

parents and six teachers. The discussion was held in Oromo language and later translated in to English.

3.2.5.4. Document Review

Document analyses are important and relevant sources of qualitative case studies. That means document sources could serve a useful purpose in yielding information that is important in explaining social or educational practices (Best and Khan, 1993:191-193). Based on this, documents of the two woredas and one-town administration community kindergartens were reviewed and used as the sources of data for the study. The documents reviewed as the sources of data were:

1. Documents indicating the number of children in each section and the whole number of children in each kindergarten.
2. Documents indicating the number of kindergarten teachers and personnel
3. Documents indicating teachers' evaluation of kindergarten children.
4. Documents indicating kindergarten teachers' bio data like sex, age, experience, and qualification and documents indicating the availability of curriculum materials like syllabus and related directives.
5. Documents indicating the kindergarten records and reports such as personal records of the child which include the name of the child, sex, date of birth, place of birth, ordinal position, mother tongue, detail address etc, records of home background of the child (parents or guardian of the child, such as their age, educational qualifications, occupations, income, information about siblings, types of family (single and joint), information about relatives staying at home and facilities at home, attendance records, house visit records, records of parent-teacher meeting, records of admission forms, health records and stock register.

3.2.6. Methods of Data Analysis

As it is explicitly elucidated in the earlier part, this study employed qualitative research approach. Merriam (1988) stated that qualitative data analysis is a complex process that involves back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, and between description and interpretation. Borgdan and Biklen (1992) have shown that data analysis in qualitative studies basically involves in word argumentation than numerical explanation. To analyze the data I employed Merriam's thematic data analysis technique (Merriam, 1988).

Therefore the data drawn from interviews, observation, FGD, and document sources, have been presented, discussed, and interpreted qualitatively by categorizing in themes after it has been studied carefully and repeatedly.

3.3. Standards of Quality and Verification

3.3.1 Ethics

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) stated that ethical issues should be given serious attention in qualitative research. Taking this in to account to make the research participants well aware of the purpose of the research the researcher made discussions with them before the beginning of data collection. In such a way the researcher made clear for the research participants that the information or data gathered will be employed to examine the quality of community kindergarten education in west Wollega zone and that the information they render is crucial to bring the objectives of the study in to reality. In addition the researcher informed the participants that they have full right of expressing their ideas on the topic under discussion with out any restriction and that the differences of opinion, anonymity and the confidentiality of their information are well respected.

3.3.2 Triangulation

Guion (2002:1) states that there are five methods of data triangulation. These are investigator triangulation, theory triangulation, methodological

triangulation, data triangulation and environmental triangulation. She also elucidates that a researcher can use one or more data triangulation techniques. Based on this idea, I used data triangulation technique. In this way I triangulated the data I gathered through interview from one community kindergarten principal with the data I have gathered through the same data gathering tool from another community kindergarten principles, kindergarten education experts both at woreda and zone education offices; and the data gathered through FGD, observation and document review.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter examines the data obtained through interview, observation, FGD and document review. To maintain the validity of the finding the information gathered through interview, observation, FGD and document reviews, facts from the literature and meanings of the researcher have been presented in an organized manner. The data presentation and discussion is made in categorized forms.

4.1. Issues Related to the Availability of Appropriate Man Power

4.1.1 Kindergarten Teachers Training

Table 1. Teachers' Training

Trained						Untrained						Total					
Principals			Teachers			Principals			Teachers			Principals			Teachers		
M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
-	2	2	-	2	2	-	2	2	-	4	4	-	4	4	-	6	6

The table drawn from the document review and the interview responses reveal that the lack of trained and experienced teachers are challenges that hinder the qualities of kindergarten education being offered in the community kindergartens. Concerning the training or qualification of the teachers of the two sampled woredas and one town administration only four of the community kindergarten teachers were trained in preschool education out of the eight community kindergarten teachers they have. Among these Gimbi town administration has two community kindergartens. These are Gimbi town 04 kebele community kindergarten and Gimbi town 03 kebele community kindergarten. Gimbi town 04 kebele community kindergarten has three trained kindergarten teachers. Two of them are trained for preschool education for one year. The one left is trained as elementary school teacher for one year in

Nekemete teachers training institute. The second sample woreda was Nole kaba woreda. It has one community kindergarten called Bubbe town community kindergarten. Bubbe community kindergarten has two teachers. One of them is trained in preschool education for one year at Park kindergarten teachers training institute. The other has no training but she was employed in this job after completing grade 10 in the new curriculum. The third sample woreda was Lalo Assabi woreda. This woreda has also one community kindergarten called Innango town community kindergarten. Innango town community kindergarten has only one teacher. This teacher is teaching with out training and orientations on preschool education. These show that half of the community kindergarten teachers of the sample woredas are teaching with out training.

Concerning the pre-service training one of the woreda education expert responded the following:

The training of community kindergarten teachers is an issue that has not been given attention.

Gemechis 10-03-2007

In addition the respondents of the interview explained that the community kindergarten teachers were not given workshops on preschool education. The excerpts of two community kindergarten principals clearly show respondents argument:

I only participated in preschool education workshop in 1971 and 1972 E.C. After 1972 E.C I am administering and teaching in the kindergarten with out any professional development in the field of preschool education through workshop, seminars, experience exchange and the like.

Lalise 5-03-07

The other kindergarten principal said as follows:

I have participated only in one workshop on preschool education with the invitation of one NGO in 1998 since I was employed in this profession in 1991 E.C.

Anane 10-03-07

Except these two principals no community kindergarten principals and teachers were offered the opportunity to participate in preschool education workshop, seminars, and experience exchange. The respondents response indicates that they asked the kebeles, town administration and woreda education offices several times for training but their attempts remain unsuccessful because of the discouraging responses of these three bodies. The account of one interviewed kindergarten principal could be illustrative of this:

We are not trained. We presented our petitions many times to woreda education office and town administration office to train us in preschool education. But they responded that the issue is not their mandate or responsibility.

Derartu 13-03-07

In general, the data gathered through interview and FGD show that teachers of Gimbi 04 kebele community kindergarten teachers are trained even though the interview respondents and the teachers participated in FGD elucidated that the one year teachers training duration is not enough to cover the courses that enable to produce highly trained and skilled kindergarten teachers who can properly handle and prepare children for primary schools. These respondents' views could be illustrated by the account of one of the FGD participants:

When I compare the knowledge I have acquired from preschool teacher training institute with the practice of dealing with preschooler here in kindergarten where I am working, I understood that I didn't learn many important things to deal with children effectively. We didn't get enough time for practice in the institute. I think the courses are also not enough both in variety and depth.

Efa 07-02-07

The responses of woreda education office kindergarten education experts and the community kindergarten principals reflect that there are lack of in-service and pre-service training in preschool education. Concerning this issue

document review also revealed similar ideas. The review of the community kindergarten teachers and principals educational status document showed that half of or fifty percent of Bubbe town community kindergarten teachers are not trained. Gimbi town 03 kebele community kindergarten and Innango town community kindergarten teachers are not trained at all. The kindergarten principals and teachers also revealed that the 'Kebeles' and the town administrations consider the duties or tasks of kindergarten teachers easier than the tasks of the elementary teachers. As a result they give no attention to the professional development of kindergarten teachers. But the training of kindergarten teachers must be a critical issue which demands serious attention of the concerned body. Regarding this Woodfield (2004:98) stresses that preschool teachers must have the knowledge and understanding of all aspects of child development including theories and approaches to learning, how to combine and apply pedagogical knowledge and understanding, multi sensory learning and teaching approaches for young children, and safety issues and application in practice. From this perspective it is possible to understand that the less attention given to training of preschool teachers both from the community leaders who have the responsibility to present the issue of kindergarten teachers to the government and the Ministry of Education who is the authorized body to control the qualities of preschool education in line with its professional duties and tasks strongly attacking the qualities of kindergarten education in the sample woreda in particular and in zone understudy in general. Concerning the one year duration of kindergarten teachers training Gore and Kourey (1964:21) stated that the qualified kindergarten teacher must be a graduate of an officially recognized four years college with major work in elementary education, completed either at the graduate or post graduate level. This illuminates that the training duration of the Ethiopian kindergarten teacher is not enough to enable the kindergarten teachers to acquire the necessary knowledge that enhances the quality of kindergarten education which unequivocally affects the quality of kindergarten education in Ethiopia including the zone understudy.

In relation to the importance of in-service training the survey study made by UNESCO on the current situations of preschool education in the 88 countries of the world confirmed that the availability of in-service preschool teachers training is compulsory in seventy percent of these countries which ranges from two days to eight semesters (Fisher, 1995: 49-51). This helps to renew and coup up the knowledge of kindergarten teachers with the current trends and research findings. But this is almost null in the zone understudy.

The trained teachers also complain that the training institutions have no enough materials like books, suitable grounds in their campus where theories can be seen in practice and materials with which to practice in the ground to prepare themselves for the future carrier in the kindergarten

4.1.2. Teaching Experiences of the Kindergarten Teachers

Table 2. Teaching experiences of teachers

Teaching experiences	Number of teachers	Percent
2-6	5	83.3
>6	1	16.7

Table 2 which drawn from document review and the responses of the principals revealed that five teachers or 83.3 percent of the sample worda community kindergarten teachers have two to six years of teaching experiences as kindergarten teachers. One kindergarten teacher has 27 years of teaching experiences in community kindergarten. Foster and Headley (1959:43) stated that the preschool teachers ought to be well trained, experienced etc. The experiences the teachers acquired observed seem to support the kindergarten teachers to handle the children with patience rather than to use punishment when the children disturb both in indoor and outdoor activities. The experiences helped the teachers to handle the children properly both in indoor and outdoor environment of the kindergarten even though they have inadequate trainings and working in unsuitable learning environment.

4.1.3. Sexual Composition of Kindergarten Teachers

Table-1 and the interview reveal that all the teachers of community kindergarten both in the sample woredas and the zone as a whole are females. All the respondents support that the kindergarten teachers should be females. Because females have rich experiences of the skills of how to deal with children that they have acquired from their mothers close relation than males. In addition they are endowed with motherly responsibility in nature, which enables them to deal with children in any hardship and give them motherly love. Considering this females' convenience as a criteria no one marginalized the males not to come to be kindergarten teachers. But males themselves fear to take such arduous and prestigious responsibilities of preparing and preserving the leader of future world. In addition males have no patience to work with less salaries that range from 127 birr to 280 birr per month.

The excerpt of one of the FGD participants could be illustrative of this:

A child has close relation with his/her mother than his/her father beginning from his /her birth. Immediately as the child born the mother begins to feed the child her breast. Latter she begins to feed him/ her an additional foods. In such a process a mother of a child develops the skills of how to deal with children. In addition home management is culturally considered as females duty. Males are engaged on other works out side the home management or works done at home. This made a child and a father unfamiliar /strange/ one to another. More over a father and brothers of a child are not believed to have the skills to appropriately treat him/her. This situation discouraged the males to acquire the knowledge of how to deal with children. As a result when they become adult they could not properly handle the children. For this reason they could not develop the tendency to join the profession which demands the ability to deal with preschool children. Because they consider it as a very difficult task and the only females' responsibility and task. But the kindergarten teacher profession is the prestigious task that enables to prepare and preserve the leader of future world.

Ararso 14-03-07

Similarly, one of the interviewed principals response that confirmed this idea is stated:

Most of the time children's nature is monotonous for males so that they couldn't dare to deal with children. This is not because of lack of love for children. It seems rather they are not gifted with such skills and patience. In addition the kindergarten teachers are paid low salary. For instance in our kindergarten, newly employed teachers are paid 127 birr per month. The teacher served for more than 27 year paid 280 birr. I think males have no patience to work with such low salary. Because there is a saying: don't ask males' salary and females' age.

Lalise 05-03-07

Generally the FGD and interview reveal that in addition to the difference of gift in nature the low salary with which the community kindergartens are working does not attract teachers toward the profession. This could undoubtedly harm the quality of kindergarten education.

In relation to this idea Choudhury and Choudhury (2002: 145) state that the preschool teachers should be preferably women to support the children with their soft and motherly affection. The trends in community kindergartens in West Wollega zone coincide with the issue of sexual composition of kindergarten teachers suggested by educators in the field.

4.1.4. Issues Related to the Age of Kindergarten Teachers

Table 3- Age Composition of the community kindergarten teachers

Age group	Number of teachers	Percent
21-26	5	83.3
>26	1	16.7

Concerning the age of community kindergartens in the sample woredas the table constructed from document review revealed that five teachers or 83.3 percent of the teachers are 21-25 years old. The other one teacher is 49 years

old. These teachers are observed when they are running and play with children. They seem to have physical strength that enable them to deal with the children except the 49 years old teacher in Gimbi town kebele 04 community kindergarten. Witty (1947:662) reveals that preschool teachers should be mature enough to handle the young children. So the minimum age of preschool teachers should not be less than 18 years. In line with this Foster and Headley (1966:42) suggested that the preschool teachers ought to be wholesome person, who has patience, the physical strength to deal with young children. In light of the idea of these authors, most of the community kindergarten teachers of the sample woredas have the fitness to the profession

4.1.5. Personnel of the Kindergartens

The interview made with kindergartens principals, woreda and zone education office kindergarten education experts and FGD confirmed that there is the acute shortage of community kindergarten personnel in most of the community kindergartens of the three sample woredas. One FGD participants also said:

This kindergarten has no personnel. The tasks that are expected to be accomplished by the personnel is some what covered by the teachers. When the children want to go to the toilet or get sick the teacher goes to help these children leaving alone in a class the other children. For such and the like problems the teachers are busy to cover all the duties in the kindergarten.

Ebawak 15-03-07

Observation also revealed that all the principals are teaching the children in addition to their administration tasks. Concerning the health worker only Gimbi town 04 kebele community kindergarten has a principal trained as a first aid worker in addition to her administrative tasks. Except Gimbi town 04 kebele and Bubbe town community kindergarten the other sample woreda community kindergartens have no assistant teachers. Other than these all the community kindergartens have no personnel. For instance one respondent from the woreda education office kindergarten education expert said:

. . . due to the absence of a cleaner in the kindergarten, the teacher herself clean the class after children have left for their home . . .

Beka 10-03-07

Similarly one of the kindergarten principals mentioned: Our kindergarten has no cleaner, guard, caregiver, health worker, assistant teachers and teachers. I am assigned as a principal and at the same time working as a teacher, assistant teacher, care giver, guard and a cleaner.

Derartu 13-03-07

The document review also showed that only Gibmi town 04 kebele and Bubbe town community kindergarten have each one assistant teacher. Other than this all kindergartens have no personnel. But the importance of kindergarten personnel is very important in providing the children's need. These respondents voices indicate that the teacher accomplishes all the kindergarten activities. So it is hardly possible to say that the kindergarten children's needs are well assessed and supported. Regarding this issue Choudhury and Choudhury (2002:145-146) state that a preschool must have one or two assistants for house keeping services like cleaning, washing the linen and care of the grounds, putting up new sheets on the bulletin and easel board, putting on and taking off the equipment. Such personnel must be those who are not irritated by the noise or confusion created by the young children. In addition a preschool should have a physician preferably a pediatrics doctor as a part-time worker for the physical examination of the children at least once a week and to help in case of accidents or emergencies. According to CYFWO (1992: 11-13) a preschool should have a director, a vice director, teachers, assistant teachers, caretakers, a cleaner and guards. These conditions are not implemented in the community kindergartens of the sample woredas and the zone as a whole. But the personnel are very important to keep clean the kindergarten environment and to prevent both the communicative and non-communicative diseases from the kindergarten children in particular and from the kindergarten communities in general.

4.1.6. Issues Related to the Training of the Kindergarten

Education Experts

According to Brown (1993:887) an expert is a person with the status of an authority (in a subject) by reason of special skill, training or knowledge: a specialist. From this perspective and the experiences of job structure we have an expert is undoubtedly the one who have deep knowledge about the job area he is engaged on. He should be the one in a position both in responsibility and knowledge to provide professional assistance for others in his job area especially for those who are below him in job structure. For instance the experts of kindergarten education in the ministry of education should be able to provide professional guidance for those kindergarten education experts at regional education bureau to run the program effectively. In the same way the kindergarten education experts at regional education bureau are responsible to support and initiate those kindergarten education experts at zonal education office. Again the zonal education office kindergarten education expert is responsible to lead with professional guidance the kindergarten education experts at woreda level. Finally the woreda education office kindergarten education experts are responsible to provide professional supports for kindergarten principals, teachers and personnel. But the kindergarten principals, kindergarten education experts at woreda and zonal education office and FGD revealed that this is not being implemented in West Wollega zone. The following excerpt of one kindergarten principal could be a good example of the respondents response:

The woreda education office kindergarten education experts are not supervising and providing us with constructive criticism or suggestion.

Bikiltu 17-03-07

The woreda education office kindergarten education experts also accepted this criticism. The experts added that they do not have enough knowledge about kindergarten education to supervise and support the kindergartens professionally. Because they have no directives, pre-service and in-service

training and the zonal education office expert of kindergarten education supervision and professional aid on how to run the program of kindergarten education. The account of one of the interviewed woreda education office kindergarten education expert could be illustrative of this:

We are not supervising and providing professional aids for the kindergarten teachers . . . even those untrained teachers of kindergartens have also more knowledge of preschool education through experiences than us . . .

Beka 10-03-07

The West Wollega zonal education office kindergarten expert also agrees on the criticism and explained:

The Oromia education bureau kindergarten education expert is not sending detail and timely directives and curriculum materials to the zonal education office. In addition I am recently assigned to the kindergarten position without having pre-service and in-service training on the issues of kindergarten education. Because of this we do not know the detail of what we have to do on kindergarten education.

Leta 19-03-07

The responses of woreda and zonal education office kindergarten education experts and the community kindergarten principals support one another. This clearly indicates that the kindergartens are not supervised and not provided professional aids. In addition the experts both at woreda and zonal education office seem to have the fear of less knowledge and experiences on kindergarten education than the kindergarten teachers. Generally the problems reflected in relation to the competence of the kindergarten education expert are due to lack of experiences of training highly qualified human power in the field of preschool education in Ethiopia.

4.2. Provision of the Kindergarten Curriculum Materials

The community kindergarten principal town administration officials, kindergarten education expert both at woreda and zonal education office, the

observation made and document review indicated the absence of kindergarten curriculum material provision in all the community kindergartens in the sample woreda in particular and all the kindergartens found in west Wollega zone in general. As a result all the kindergartens are suffering from the lack of curriculum materials (Syllabus, teachers guides and related directives) with which they can provide quality kindergarten education to the children. The excerpt taken from the west Wollega zonal education office response unequivocally substantiates this idea:

Even though we frequently requested for the provision of kindergarten curriculum materials and related directives, the Oromia Bureau of Education couldn't send us. This forced us to recommend the woredas to seek for solutions that could solve the problem of lack of kindergarten curriculum materials until the final solution will appear when the Oromia Bureau of Education publish kindergarten curriculum materials for the pushing questions of the woredas, as a tentative solution.

Leta 19-03-07

Similarly the excerpt of one woreda education office kindergarten education reflected:

We recommended the kindergarten teachers to teach from the first grade subjects until the appropriate curriculum materials for the level is provided by Oromia Bureau of Education.

Tulu 04-03-07

This problem brought differences among all the kindergartens in the education they provide to children. Gimbi town 04 kebele community kindergarten's principal mentioned:

We provide education for our children by translating the old kindergarten curriculum prepared during Dergue regime in Amharic to Oromo language with some modification. In this way we are teaching eight subjects. These subjects are Oromo language, English, environmental science, mathematics, Art,

music, indoor and outdoor play and sport.

Lalise 05-03-07

One can easily judge that the education given in this kindergarten could miss the improvement made through time. Because using books prepared before 20 years with out revision and evaluation in light of the contemporary world may lead to fill the children with rubbish concepts that could not enable them to compete in the modern world. In addition these teachers are translating the old books themselves from Amharic to Oromo language. So mistakes can occur during translation both in meaning and concept since translation requires fluent language competence in both languages from which to translate and to which to translate. Gimbi town 03 community kindergartens principal explained:

We are teaching by preparing some thing that we think important to teach the kindergarten children from our experiences or mind to solve the problems created due to lack of curriculum materials. In such a way we teach three subjects namely Oromo language, English and mathematics.

Bikiltu 18-03-07

In addition the researcher's observation and informal teachers interview revealed in all the community kindergartens there are no timetables prepared and number of periods allotted for each courses. The teachers teach the subjects given in the kindergartens whenever they want. What is known about these kindergarten programs is only their starting and end time. Except Gimbi town 04 kebele community kindergarten, the entire community kindergartens daily program starts at 8:00 Am and ends at 11:30 Am. These kindergartens have break time from 10:00 Am to 10:30 Am. Gimbi town 04 kebele community kindergarten's daily program ranges from 8:00 Am to 3:30pm with 10:00 to 10:30 Am break time and 11:30 Am to 1:30pm lunch time. Children go to their home for their lunch during the lunch time. The kindergartens are closed and opened following the academic days set for primary and secondary schools by ministry of education. The type of subject designed in the new education and training policy to be taught at kindergartens are four in number. These are play

in preschools; language (mother tongue), environmental and labor education; and mathematics, aesthetics and physical education. For these subjects tentative syllabus was prepared in Amharic that would be improved through time and expected to be developed when translated in to regional media of instructional language based on the tangible situation of the region. In addition the kindergarten teachers are also expected to prepare books based on the syllabus by considering the real environmental conditions and children's background (ICDR, 1996:IV). The total weekly periods allotted for the four subjects are 25. Among these ten periods are for play in preschool; six periods for language, environmental and labor education; three periods for mathematics; and six periods for aesthetics and physical education (ICDR, 1996: VII). So it is easy to judge that the three subject alone are not enough to be taught at this level. In addition what the teachers are teaching from their experiences could not fit to the level of the children and standards of knowledge set by the professionals in the field of preschool education. Choudhury and Choudhury (2002;116) state that the preschool curriculum should be a carefully planned set of lessons to be taught and learned or a set of opportunities to be presented in a certain way. In Nole kaba woreda the Bubbe town community kindergarten principal explained:

We are teaching the children from all the books prepared for grade one students in new curriculum. Grade one students learn five subjects. These subjects are Oromo language, English, mathematics, environmental science and aesthetic. The Bubbe town community kindergarten children also learn all these subjects.

Anane 10-03-07

This approach unquestionably loads knowledge beyond the level of kindergarten children on kindergarten children. As a result children can be frustrated and irritated when they are learning. Children learn to write and read just like grade one students. Choudhury and Choudhury (2002:158) explained that kindergarten age children's cognitive, psychomotor and sensory controls are best developed through the medium of play and creative activities

rather than teaching the subjects formally. Innango town community kindergarten principal also mentioned:

I am teaching the children only two subjects. These are Oromo language and mathematics. I have books of these two subjects. The books are published by bible translation and literacy department and slightly revised by Oromia education bureau and reprinted by Code Ethiopia in 1996. My kindergarten has got the book from the evangelical church of Mekane Yesus here.

Derartu 13-03-07

Even though the books are suitable for teaching the kindergarten children the limitation of the subjects taught only to two subjects does not enable the children to get the appropriate knowledge to the level in different aspects. Children must have the opportunity to learn through play. But there is no subjects given in relation to play in this community kindergarten.

Zonal and woreda education office kindergarten education experts and the community kindergartens principals response revealed that the absence of distributed curriculum materials from Oromia bureau of education forced the kindergartens to depend on different sources to teach the children. In relation to this Ndagi, J. et al (1986; 95) stated that curriculum is the experience that is planned, published and circulated for use in the school.

4.3. Suitability of the Indoor and the Outdoor of the Kindergartens

4.3.1. Appropriateness of the Indoor of the Kindergartens

The interview made with kindergarten principals and woreda education office kindergarten education expert; town administrations officials; and observation indicate the lack of appropriate indoor space and facilities in almost all the sample woreda community kindergartens. The account of Gimbi town 04 kebele community kindergarten principal could be illustrative of this:

We have three classrooms but one of the classes is recently taken by the kebele to serve as a store. Two of the classes are serving for teaching the children. One of

the class is serving for thirty children of kindergarten one (KG1). The other one class is serving for thirty four KG2 and KG3 kindergarten Children. Due to the lack of classes kindergarten two and kindergarten three children are combined in one class.

Lalise 05-03-07

The integration of the data that were gathered through observation, document review and interview made with kindergarten principal and woreda education office kindergarten education expert indicate that the average class -child ratio of the Gimbi town 04 kebele community kindergarten is 1:32. The average indoors space -child ratio of this community kindergarten is 1.3m²: 1. That means each of the class has 7m x 6m for thirty-two children on average. Gimbi town 03 kebele, Bubbee town and Innango town community kindergarten are teaching KG1 through KG3 in the same classes due to the lack of classes and teachers. Among these four-community kindergartens Gimbi 03 kebele and Innango community kindergartens building are not constructed for the purpose of kindergarten schools. Gimbi town kebele 03 community kindergarten is first built as kebele's hall for meeting purposes and latter on decided to serve as the kindergarten. Innango town community kindergarten is the house constructed for dwelling purposes by the private owners during the Haile sellasie regime and confiscated by dergue regime. Gimbi town 04 kebele community kindergarten and Bubbe town community kindergarten buildings are built for the purposes of kindergarten from their origin. Gimbi town 03 kebele community kindergarten has 2 classes. The first class has 47 children. The second class serves 50 children. The average class-child ratio is 1:49. This ratio also represents teacher child ratio of Gimbi town 03 kebele community kindergarten. The space child ratio of this kindergarten is difficult to compute, because they are teaching in different sections of the hall at different time. Bubbe town community kindergarten has two classes. Each class has 50 children with the area of 6m x 7m. The space-child ratio of the kindergarten is 0.44m²: 1 with teacher child ratio of 1:50. Innango community kindergarten has only one class with the area of 6m x 6m serving 154 children. The space-

child ratio, class-child ratio and teacher-child ratio of the kindergarten is 0.23m²:1, 1:154 and 1:154 respectively. Due to the overcrowd of the class some children sit on the door and follow their teachers teaching. These data show that the kindergartens are teaching the children in inappropriate class environment due to large class size. But the extent of the problem varies from kindergarten to kindergarten. In all the kindergartens the class size is beyond the suggested limit and couldn't enable the kindergartens teachers to assess the case of all individual child and to support him/her. As to CYFWO (2002:10-11) in a 7mx9m class the number of children should not be more than 40. For these 40 children there should be one teacher and one assistant teacher. A cook must be there for 80 children. In addition one-day guards and one-night guards need to be available in each kindergarten. Choudhury and Choudhury (2002:13) stated that the adequate space in relation to the number of children must be 1.5 square meter per child to allow the free movement of children. In addition the author explained that the teacher child ratio of preschool should be 1: 10 for children between two to four years old and 1:15 for children between four to six years old (Choudhury and Choudhury, 2002:146). The observation revealed that the floors of all the community kindergartens in the sample woreda are cemented and not polished. Except the Gimbi town 04 kebele community kindergarten all the others walls of classes are not painted and are not facilitated with different pictures and posters to attract the children. In addition their sanitation is poor. There are full of dusts on the cemented floors and even the seats of the children. This can most probably affect the health condition of the children. Especially Gimbi town 03 kebele community kindergarten's sanitation is on the worst condition among all others. Concerning this Lambert (1960:16) stressed the use of floors that are not polished or waxed to save the children from the danger of easily falling when skipping or running. In addition the floors should be kept dry, sanitary and warm, because children spend much of their time sitting and playing on the floor. Research findings pointed out that colour have an impact on academic achievement. For instance, red is said to be a good choice for areas

planned for gross motor activities. Green, blue and purple are selected for reading areas (Decker and Decker, 1988:253). Painting the walls with variety of pleasant colours add beauty and a feeling of spaciousness. The walls of the Preschool should be painted with attractive pictures and posters for the children. Since children like bright colours very much it is advisable to use it. The floors should be cemented to make it suitable for children when they draw some pictures on it. It should also kept clean in a good sanitary condition from dust by maintaining its warmth since many of the child's activities are done there (Choudhury and Choudhury, 2002:114).

The doors and windows of all the sample woreda community kindergartens are observed inappropriate for the kindergarten children service. There are heavy doors with the knobs beyond the height of the children to open and shut when necessary. The hinges of the windows are also beyond the easy reach of the children so that the children cannot open and allow the free movement of air or observe out side without the help of their teachers. Their windows have no sunlight breakers. In line with this idea Choudhury and Choudhury (2002:114) suggested that all the windows must be light to enable the children to handle them easily. The heights of doorknobs must be within easy reach of the children so that they easily use it without much difficulty. To enable the child to look out for better view and understanding of the outside world in different seasons, different time and different occasions, the windows should be low enough to their height. Windows must have the facilities for easy operation by the children such as low level hinges that enable them to use whenever required. All windows should be provided with guards, screen or both.

The kindergarten principals, woreda education office kindergarten education expert and observation revealed that except the Gimbi town 04 kebele community kindergarten all other community kindergartens of the sample woreda have no resting room, bathing room, kitchen and water facilities. Gimbi town 04 kebele community kindergarten has two resting rooms, one for female

children and the other for male children. This kindergarten has enough resting room with ten mattresses in each resting rooms that enable the children to sleep or take nap whenever they feel. Only Gimbi town 04 kebele community kindergarten and Bubbe town community kindergartens have offices. Including Gimbi town 04 community kindergarten all other community kindergartens of the zone are in lack of dining room, and store room. One of the four community kindergartens principals could be illustrative of this:

Our kindergarten has no dining room. As a result the children could not bring their food from their home and feed when they get hungry.

Lalise 05-03-07

Innango town community kindergarten principal mentioned:

The Kindergarten has only one classroom and one toilet. It has no water, dining room, resting room, mattresses, bathing room, kitchen, office, play material and store.

Derartu 13-03-07

Observation also revealed that the kindergartens were forced to store their equipments in the class where they are teaching the children. The classes have no shelves and cupboards to store the materials. Choudhury and Choudhury suggested that to store its equipments, blocks, large toys, smaller articles, linen, books, teaching aids and records the preschool should have storage space. Based on the specific plan of use there should be both open and closed shelves and cupboards. The storages should be low in height, to enable the children to take easily the required materials from the shelves or cup boards whenever needed and to keep it back in its proper place. This enables the children to take care and manage the things independently. All storage space should be well ventilated and kept free from insects and cobwebs (Choudhury and Choudhury, 2002:115).

Observation revealed that all the community kindergartens have toilets. But the toilet of the Gimbi town 03 kebele community kindergarten is on dangerous position. The kindergarten building is on the hilly space. The toilet is below the hilly space. As a result the children can most probably fall when they go to the

toilet to use. All the toilets of all the community kindergartens have no height from the ground. All the toilets of the sample woreda community kindergartens have the outdoor toilets. Except the Gimbi town 04 kebele community kindergarten toilet floors all the others toilets floor are not cemented. So it is not possible to wash. All toilets have enough space and small hole which does not endanger the safety of the children. The toilet-child ratio of Gimbi town 04, Gimbi town 03, Bubbe town and Innango town community kindergartens are respectively 1:34, 1:97, 1:100 and 1:154. Choudhury and Choudhury (2002:114-115) stated that water facilities are important for the cleaning up activities in the preschool. Both the indoor and the outdoor of preschool must have toilet and washing facilities to serve the children appropriately. Concerning the proportion of toilet and number of children, one toilet should be provided for ten children. The floor of the toilet should be washable but not of slippery tiles. To make the toilets of preschool suitable for the children the height of toilet fixtures should be between 25-30 cm from the floor. The size of the toilets should fit to the size of the children who use them.

All the observed kindergartners have no playrooms. Chouchury and Choudhury (2002:12) stressed that a preschool must have one or two play rooms. Except the Gimbi town 04 kebele community kindergartens the seats of all the community kindergartens of the sample woredas observed inappropriate. There are long table manner chair on which six to eight children seat. It is also inconvenient to make the seating arrangement V-shape or circular. Because of this, the sitting arrangements are in traditional form. Bruce (1997:115) states that Indoor equipment includes chairs, tables, and shelves. Chairs must be of such weight and design that can be carried easily and safely about the room by children. It should permit the child to sit comfortably in relaxed position. Tables, which are square and wide enough to allow children to work opposite to each other, encourage conversation and appreciation of the work of others required. Child sized and open shelves make it easy for children to have toys and books when they need them. Gimbi town 04 kebele community

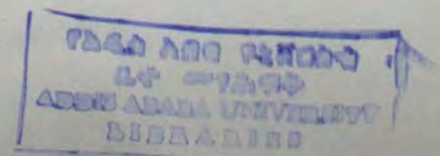
kindergarten uses both circular and v-shape sitting arrangements interchangeably at different times. Different indoor play materials made from local materials like mud, clay, wood and sand done by teachers and children were observed. Using these materials animals, numbers and letters are taught by the teachers. Tables are not available in all the community kindergartens observed except the Gimbi town 04 kebele community kindergartens. The lack of all these facilities discomforted the children. They stand from their seat while the teacher teach and stay for some seconds or minutes until the teacher order them to sit down due to lack of things to which to lean. In some classes some of the children observed taking snap where they are sitting because of the increased temperature of the class due to the overcrowding with large number of children in small classes. This problem is especially common in Innango town community kindergarten where 154 children are sitting and learning in one small class with 6mx6m area. Such places cannot be kindergartens where children freely relax through play and different activities to develop the future school experience orientation, but they are rather prisons where the children suffer and develop sense of insecurity and negative attitude toward school.

4.3.2. Suitability of the Outdoor of the Kindergartens

Here the word suitability refers to the adequacy and safety of the outdoor place and play facilities of the community kindergartens. In such a way the observations made in each community kindergartens of the sample woreda and the responses of these kindergartens principals revealed that almost all of the community kindergartens have poor outdoor learning environment. Among all the kindergartens only Gimbi town 04 kebele community kindergarten is on relatively better conditions than the other. The principal of this kindergarten mentioned:

Our kindergarten has 200 square meters of out door spaces with no leveled play ground. The outdoor play materials of this kindergarten are only one merry-go-round, one climbing frame, one slide and two foot balls.

Lalise 05-03-07



Similarly observation also revealed that the outdoor places of this kindergarten are full of ups and downs here and there, which could not be convenient for children to play freely. The chance to fail and hurt is high there. So the teachers follow seriously every child's play to protect them from danger. The kindergarten is adequately fenced with wood. It has also some gardens which help the children to sit and play under its shadow all round the fence. In addition the kindergarten has outdoor water facilities to wash their hand after play and to drink if they are thirsty while they are playing during out door play and the rest time play. Even though the outdoor space of this kindergarten is not aesthetically decorated with painting, drawing (arts) and pictures it is neat and free of materials that could endanger the safety of the children. It has one merry-go round, one slide two footballs and one swinging as outdoor play facilities.

The other three observed community kindergartens have no outdoor water facilities and play materials except a few local balls made from pieces of clothes both by children and teachers with which the children play in groups only during their rest time on their small outdoor unlevelled play-grounds since they do not have time allotted for play in their program. The excerpt taken from the responses of one of these kindergarten principals support this idea:

Children play during the rest time. Other than this play has no time allocated in our kindergarten program.

Anane 10-03-07

Observation showed that Gimbi town 03 community kindergarten has an estimate of 100 square meter outdoor space with unlevelled playgrounds. It is adequately fenced with wood. Innango town community kindergarten has no outdoor playgrounds and play materials and fence. Cows, ships and goats of the town wonder and rest on the verandas of this kindergarten. This can endanger the safety of the children while they are playing and running here and there in the presence of these cattle. Due to this reason the teacher persuades the children to sit in a class and she goes out to chase away the cattle from the

veranda during rest time and when the time reaches to go to their home for the children before they leave the class. The teacher of this kindergarten is serving for multi purposes. She is a director, a teacher, an assistant, a cleaner and the guards of the kindergarten with a monthly salary of 127 birr. Bubbe town community kindergarten has 200 square meter outdoor spaces with unlevelled playgrounds. It has no outdoor play materials and fences. The interview and observation made uniformly reflect that the outdoor of the community kindergartens have no enough spaces and playing materials. So the outdoor environment could not permit the children to learn through play and to explore nature around them. Isenberg and Jalongo (1993:189) stated that emphasis should be given for fitness of outdoor environment like the indoor environment in space, material and equipment. Good outdoor environments offer so many uses for children of all ages and give opportunities to engage in various forms of play.

4.4. The Site of the Kindergartens

As observation and the community kindergartens principal response confirmed almost all of the community kindergartens of the sample woredas are surrounded by the residential houses where the children come from to the kindergartens. In fact the principals explained that some children of the poor families who couldn't afford the payment of the private and religious organizations kindergarten payment come to these community kindergartens from distant areas of the town because of the lack of community kindergartens in their kebeles. One kindergarten principal explained:

Our kindergarten is the only community kindergarten in this town. So most parents want to send their children to this kindergarten. Because the religious organization kindergartens demand high payment for the service they render.

Anane 10-03-07

Observation showed that these kindergartens have no more enough open spaces for their future expansion. Except the Innango community kindergarten

the other community kindergartens of the sample woredas are away from the main road, business and noisy area. The Innango community kindergarten is beside the market place. The principal of this kindergarten expressed:

Two days a week, on Monday and Thursday some people are selling and buying sitting in the shadow of the kindergarten class that disturbs the children attention to learn on these days. I consider these days as the bad days for me. Because I spend the days quarrelling with people who come to sit under the shadow of the class while I am teaching.

Derartu 13-03-07

Except Gimbi town 04 kebele community kindergartens all the other observed community kindergarten have no gardens that enable the teachers to introduce the children with nature. All the community kindergartens are built on raised areas and have verandas only on one side of the room. Gimbi town 04 kebele Community kindergarten and Bube town community kindergarten doors face southward. All the windows of these two kindergartens face southward and northward. Gimbi town 03 kebele community kindergarten and Innango town community kindergarten doors face eastward and westward respectively. Their windows face eastward and westward. As a result the sunshine directly hits the two community kindergartens children in the class both through the doors and the windows. Their windows have no curtain to break the sunshine. To shut both the doors and the windows they do not have ventilator to moderate the temperature of the class when it increases. The woreda and zonal education office kindergarten education experts responded that there are no plans and monitoring of proper site selection and constructions of kindergarten due to the less emphasis given for this education sector in human power, budget and directives. The following is the account of zonal education office kindergarten education expert taken from the interview:

Our problems are many. Scarcity of man power trained in preschool education, lack of directives with which site selection could be monitored and absence of allocated budgets with which preschool buildings are build could

contribute to the absence of plan and monitoring of proper preschool site selection.

Leta 19-03-07

The data appeared through observation and interview reflect that some of the site of the community kindergartens is inappropriate, most probably because of lack of allocated budgets for community kindergartens. However, many authors on the field of preschool education stressed on the importance of appropriate site of preschool to maintain the quality of preschool education. For instance Hallak (1990:209) argues that school buildings should be located far away from unnecessary noise, air pollution and other impediments such as places of amusement, taverns, dance halls, cemeteries or other installations which would in any way demoralize or adversely affect the children's attentions and even frustrate and make feel of insecurity. In addition they also attack the health condition of the children spoiling the fresh air the children took in. so they must be far away from the causes of such problems like heavily traveled high ways, air ports and factories. Another author Koivula (1983:15) also suggested that the location of a school should be surrounded by residential areas than business and industrial areas. Choudhury and Choudhury (2002: 12) strengthened that the sites of preschool should include proper location, soil, the aspect and elevation. The suitable location of preschool should be the neighborhood of the children served. To secure the children's safety preschool should be located away from the crowded areas of the city/ town, burial ground and main traffic areas. Its vicinity must allow any future expansion. Preschools need to have proximity to garden or a community park, which allows play in the sun light even in the remotest corner of the school building for the greater part of the day. The garden adds a beauty to the preschool so that the children appreciate and love their school. In relation to the soil condition the site should be a raised area, dry and natural drainage area free from water lodging. The site should allow the construction of school building to face south. To permit free access of light the preschool verandas should be on one side of the room. Heric, et, al. (1956:237) stated that poorly sited schools and selecting

educationally inadequate site is wastage of human and material resources. Supporting this idea Davis and Lovels (1981:1-2) argued that a well planned and designed site is necessary to fulfill inspiring and desired educational objectives.

4.5 Methods of Teaching and Evaluating the Kindergarten Children

To assess the teaching and evaluation methods of the community kindergartens of the sample woredas, the investigator employed classroom observation. To this end the researcher selected the mathematics and two languages periods, that is the period of Oromo language and English language. Because Audat (1979:64) states that the preschool education enhances the intellectual and language competence of the children. In line with this the researcher believes that the children can learn through these three subjects concepts that develop their intellectual and language competence. In addition in learning language children can also learn subjects like environmental science and aesthetics. These three subjects are observed each for two periods in all the community kindergartens. The exception is only in the case of Innango town community kindergarten where the English language subject is not being taught, that unabled the researcher to observe the subject's class. So in this kindergarten only the two subjects' classes were observed. Lesson plans were not prepared in all the observed kindergartens. According to CYFWO (2002:15) to avoid the teachers individual emotion and daily interests in teaching kindergarten education, there should be both annual plan and daily plan. The four community kindergartens are commonly teaching to read and write letters, numbers, words and mathematics. Most of the teachers teach these letters and numbers using teaching aids they have prepared from the local materials. There are large letters, numbers and different animal's model prepared from cards, clay, mud and wood. Using these materials the teachers motivate the curiosity of the children to learn the letters and numbers with interests. Some time they raise the stories of some animals they teach which

makes the children amazing and laugh. With this some children motivated to ask questions that come to their mind and some children ask for permission to raise their similar experiences with the stories the teacher has raised. The teachers also appreciate those children who participate in this way by calling their name and at the same time initiates those few individuals who are not participating by calling their name. But this condition was not reflected in Bubbe town community kindergarten. They have no teaching aids when they teach. In addition in teaching English language the teacher entered the class and began to write on the blackboard without motivating and catching the children's attention and order them to write what she has written on the blackboard from the grade one English textbook. Some students were not writing what were on the blackboard. They rather talk and play with each other even though the teacher told them not to do so by calling their name.

Gimbi town 04 kebele community kindergarten and Innango town community kindergarten teachers encouraged the children to learn from their experiences by giving them clues. For instance by listing some animals and inviting the children to raise what they know about these animals. In Gimbi town 04 kebele community kindergarten children have opportunities of learning both in indoor and outdoor play. The teachers participate the children in indoor play by dividing them into small groups of three to five members and make them play, plays like asking and answering riddle and compete to form letters and numbers using sands. In outdoor play the children participate in group and individual play using merry-go-round, climbing frame, slides and foot balls. They repeat this outdoor play during rest time. In addition this kindergarten uses rhythm, music and movement that is replaying the already recorded rhythm and music that the children listen and follow with movement. These methods are not practiced in other community kindergartens. Because they have no tape recorders and players. The children also play only during the rest time, since plays are not included in their kindergartens program. ICDR (1996: i) stated that preschool education helps the children to acquire basic knowledge and

skill. This could be realized through the use of play as a main instrument. Because play is a major trend of children between four to six years age. Dramatizations and field trips are not applied as a method of teaching in all the observed community kindergartens. The excerpt of one of the kindergarten principals would clearly show this:

We are not using field trip as one of the method of teaching our kindergarten children. Because it is expensive. It demands renting a car by which the children could reach to a desired place for academic journey. We don't have budget with which we can cover the expenses. We are also not using dramatization as a method of teaching due to lack of well-trained human power in the profession. Dramatization needs someone who has interest in art. Getting such a person could be difficult with the employment status of Ethiopian preschool teachers, in which preschool teachers are paid low salary.

Lalise 05-03-07

Concerning the methods of teaching the facts seen through classroom observation and the responses of the interviewed principals Uniformly showed similar condition. That is all the community kindergartens are not employing dramatization and field trips. But these methods are among the suggested methods to teach kindergarten children. Concerning this Choudhury and Choudhury (2002:141-143) states the methods of teaching preschool children as play, story telling, motivating the curiosity of the child, helping the child to learn through experiences, discussion, rhythm, music and movement, dramatization, and field trips. As to the two author children love to create with their hands in their play. While they work with their hands, they are also exploring with their senses, acquiring new experiences and using the imagination. When they make some thing, they express their thoughts and feelings, practicing skills with their hands and fingers and coordination and controlling their muscles. Preschool teachers are expected to facilitate such creative activities like free painting, drawing, pasting, collage work, paper craft, modeling, weaseling, clay work and printing to enhance muscle brain

coordination to exercise muscle and other play to maintain both physical and mental development.

Observation and informal teacher's interview revealed that all the community kindergarten teachers of the sample woredas conduct evaluation of kindergarten children while they are teaching by asking oral questions whether the children have understood what they have taught. Those children identified in this way, as slow learners will be grouped with those fastest learners to get support from these children and to enter into competition. The excerpt of one informally interviewed teacher could be the illustrative of this:

I frequently assess my children's understanding while I teach them by asking questions that I think could evaluate and motivate them. In addition I tell them to ask and bring riddles, proverbs and stories from their parents that they discuss it in the class. I use this method as both the method of teaching and evaluation. In this way some talent children transfer/ impart/ the experiences they have got from their parents appropriately to the classes, but others are not. Based on this I identify the slow learners and fast learners and then group them by mixing the slow learners and fast learners so that they could learn one from the other and inter into group and individual competition in their learning.

Ebise 04-03-07

Similarly classroom observation revealed that as the major evaluation method teachers made the children to read and write letters and simple words turn by turn both on the floor and the black board. In addition during the mathematics period children are made to write numbers and add, subtract, divide and multiply small numbers like $2+1$, $0+2$, $1+1$, $1-0$, $2-1$, $3-2$, $1\div 1$, $2\div 1$, $2\div 2$, 1×1 , 1×2 , 2×1 and the like as an evaluation. KG1 or four-year-old children or the new entrants were observed when they were confused with such questions and not participated in giving the answer. KG2 and KG3 children were observed answering these questions easily. Except in Gimbi town 04 kebele community kindergarten the evaluation questions raised by the teachers were the same for

all KG1-KG3 children. As a result all the KG1-KG3 children participate and answer the questions simultaneously since they are learning in the same classes. But KG3s dominate the class in participation. Because they have three years experiences in kindergarten with the exposure to similar condition year after year.

The document review, the principals and teachers responses showed that all the community kindergartens have not documented their evaluation and evaluation results. But all the community kindergarten teachers explained that they conduct continuous evaluation while they are teaching. One of the informally interviewed teachers mentioned:

No one told me to document the evaluation results of the children I teach. When their age become seven year the children inter grade one. So I don't think that it is important to document their evaluation result.

Hawi 10-03-07

Observation and Informal teachers interview uniformly indicate that the teachers entirely focus on to use question and answer as a method of evaluation. Moreover the teachers also seem to have no the knowledge of the importance of evaluating preschool children. Regarding this Hesper (2000:9) states that the assessment of young children should be an on going process which includes identifying, collecting, describing, interpreting and applying indoor and outdoor based evidence of early learning in order to make informed worth while decision. This evidence may include records of children's conversations, drawings and constructions, peer relations, participations and anecdotal notes describing their behavior. Assessment must be done carefully so as to increase teachers understanding of children's progress, assist in identifying the needs of the children and enhance teacher's understanding to reflect in education program. Click (1981:64) explained that there are different methods through which the achievement of the child can be assessed by comparing the entering behavior of the child and the change of behavior seen

through the evaluation made after the child has attended preschool education. Some of the methods of such evaluation are tests, observation, collections of end products, samplings, questionnaires and interviews. Similar ideas are reflected by Choudhury and Choudhury (2002:125) which claim that evaluation must be based on informal evaluation techniques like observations, structured interviews, analysis of children's products / work and play techniques like group games, quiz etc. The preschool teacher should make a note of the points, which she has not be able to put across and plan the next year's program based on the experiences acquired this year.

4.6. Administration of the Kindergartens

The interviews and the focus group discussions reflected that the community kindergartens are suffering from the lack of the body who could run their duties taking as its responsibility and accountability. One kindergarten principal said:

The Oromia bureau of education is not printing and distributing curriculum materials like syllabus, teachers guide and directives. In addition the Oromia bureau of education is not training the kindergarten teachers both in pre-service and in-service training. The woreda and zonal education offices are not supervising the kindergartens to provide professional support. The kebele and town administrations are not allotting budgets for community kindergartens to run the kindergarten education program effectively. Especially the town administrations have enough incomes that enable them to allot budget for kindergarten education. However, they do not give attention to this education as one of their tasks and responsibilities. They collect incomes from the society /community/ in different aspects but they are not providing the kindergarten education services for the community. Because they could not get income from the kindergartens. Their aim is always with the activities that bring direct or immediate income like the commercial banks or an ordinary merchant. That is the only development for them. But kindergarten education is one of the base of development that has to be emphasized to bring the real development in education and other development aspects like the other

countries of the world. Because the children are going to compete in the globalized world that demands similar education standards with the international education or the other countries of the world.

Lalise 05-03-07

Similarly one FGD discussant explained:

The town administrations are not recognizing the importance of kindergarten education and do not want to recognize also since it demands scarification or share from their incomes. Their income should have aimed at promoting social services. But they do not even pay the teachers salary in time. They are also not striving to solve the problem of lack of places and site selection to construct kindergarten buildings having its budgets allotted in their hand. They do these because the regional government of Oromia is not controlling them whether they are effectively working on kindergarten education or not. Community kindergarten teachers are paid very low monthly salary, which ranges from 127 birr for newly employed teachers to 280 birr for those who have served for more than 27 years as kindergarten teachers. This does not enable the teachers to lead their life with the existing living condition (inflation) in Ethiopia.

Gadissa 19-03-07

On this issue the interviewed town administration officials explained that they have no enough income to properly facilitate the community kindergartens. One of the interviewed town administration officials said:

We do not get budget from the regional government. We run the service needed in our town using only the income we collect here from the society. But it is not enough to accommodate all the expenses. So relatively more critical issues are given priority. For instance, we give priority to provide water for the town. Because getting clean water is one of the matter of survival. For this reason up to now we didn't allocate enough budget to run the activities of the kindergarten. We hope through time we will satisfy our needs in preschool education. For instance we have 40,000 birr budget proposal for preschool education for the next year.

Wayessa 06-04-07

The interviewed kindergarten principal and FGD participants almost uniformly explained that the town administrations do not give emphasis to the development of preschool education. The town administration officials on their side argue that they are striving to improve the quality of kindergarten education even though the economic problems limited the success. The principals further elucidated that the Oromia bureau of education, zone and woreda education offices are not striving to maintain the quality of kindergarten education by development the professional competencies of the teachers.

The FGD and the observation revealed that the community kindergartens principals and teachers are not being monitored whether they are available on their works with the program of the kindergartens. The following is one of the FGD participant account:

Some teachers come to the kindergarten late. There are also days when they do not come at all. As a result the children spend the day play around the kindergarten with out adult control.

Bontu 04-03-07

The FGD also revealed that kindergarten principals and teachers are not striving to accomplish their responsibilities. One FGD participant mentioned:

The kindergarten teachers and principals haven't designed the ways in which they can maintain the relationship between the parents and their kindergartens to elicit their support and to enhance the qualities of children's learning.

Sagni 13-03-07

The FGD participants and interviewed principal responses clearly indicate that the teachers and principals failure to accomplish their duties may be due to lack of close supervision from woreda education offices and dissatisfaction in their job because of their discouraging monthly salary.

In line with this Eldridge (2000) cited in Fitzgerald (2004:6) stated when parents and teachers work together in early years settings, the results have positive impact on the child's development and learning. These include; increased achievements, better attendance, an improved attitude to learning and less behavior problems. Choudhury and Choudhury (2002:151-156) reveal that "home and school are the two world for preschool children, where total development take place." Home and school must work together for better understanding of each other, guiding the children co-operatively for more improved welfare of the children. The teacher should contact the parents of children to know the child's interests, needs and motivation. The relation the teacher has with the parents, enable her to create a healthy, secure and favorable environment for the child in the preschool. Home school relations are promoted through different ways such as home visits, parent's interview or individual meetings, parents and teachers meeting, parents' participation in school programmes, material for parents and parents counseling by preschool teachers, parents participation in school programs with their children. Such participation can be the organization of children's festivals on which samples of children's work can be exhibited in a short programme of half an hours duration by the children and games for parents which can entertain both the parents and children. In addition participation in school programmes can be done through the invitation of parents on picnics and outdoor trips prepared by the preschools. In these conditions many interested parents may lend a helping hand to staff in arranging the transportation or fulfilling any other requirements.

Material for parents is one of the ways through which home school relations develop by using techniques like sending written diary of the child to his parents, and newsletter for keeping the parents informed about a child development, child rearing practices, new trends in education of young children, new songs and stories that will help the parents counseling by preschool teacher is the process by which preschool teacher advises parents to

understand the significance of early intervention in preventing later educational deficits (Ibid)

The parents of the children in particular and the community in general have great interests and demands to get the kindergarten education services for their children. Other FGD participant reported:

At the beginning of the academic years many parents came to the kindergarten to register their children, but due to the lack of places / classes, teachers and facilities they were not given the chance of registering their children. Most of the children in the appropriate age of the kindergarten are wondering in the village void of the right to learn until they reach seven years old to enter to grade one. Embracing this problem, the community is not requesting the government to facilitate the provision of kindergarten education for their children either by designing the mechanism by which to participate the community or seek for other source of fund or by allotting budget for kindergarten education like the case of primary and secondary education.

Sagni 13-03-07

The community kindergarten principals also stated that they returned many parents without registering their children when they come to register other children at the beginning of the academic year. Because they have no enough classes and teachers. One of the interviewed community kindergarten principals could be illustrative of this:

At the beginning of the academic year many parents came to our kindergarten to register their children. We registered only a few among the crowd those who came early in the first date of registration that we can accommodate with classes and teachers we have. The others are told that we cannot register and accept their children. They were discomforted and returned to their home. Because they do not have other alternative. To send their children to private and religious organization they cannot afford their payment. Because most of this peoples are poor.

Lalise 05-03-07

The FGD discussant and the principals responses almost uniformly reveal that the failure of different lower level government structures in organizing the society to participate on the development of preschool education and lack of the control of upper level government structure restricted the children's right to learn in the kindergartens. Regarding this Foster and Headley (1966:30) state that in the United States of America kindergarten schools authorized by law to collect state funds. In France, the ministry of national education and the municipal government finance community kindergartens. However, each child pays an insignificant amount of money for his meal (MOE, 1983: 9). As to Kuzin and Kondarkov (1977:32) in the former USSR all preschool establishments are run by the state, which allocates especial funds for the construction and equipments of the establishments. Parents pay very small amount of money. Ayalew (1978:48) pointed out that in the former USSR, former GDR and former Czechoslovakia "Teachers financed, employed and paid by the government. On the contrary according to MOE (2005:41) in Ethiopia the government policy education in the coming five years is not to establish and run preschool education. However, the government has critical role in policy development, curriculum design, standard setting, encouraging private sectore, NGOs and communities, supervision and undertaking closer monitoring to improve the quality of pre-primary education. The government is not persuading the community and designing the mechanism in which the community contributes to the development of kindergartner education. Butler (2001: 554) pointed out that the research findings have confirmed that parental involvement enhances the value of preschool education for children. Sadek (1996: 6) stresses that parents should be recognized and respected as children's first and continuing educator and consulted as partner in any decision making process related to their children's education. Seigel (2002:4) explained that mutual involvement, accountability and cooperation as well as reciprocal communication systems are very important to run the preschool education. Choudhury and Choudhury (2002:110) stressed that parents interests and involvements should be encouraged in all aspects of the preschool education program.

To whom the responsibility of evaluating the kindergartens principals belong is not known. As a result the community kindergartens principals are commonly not evaluated. The kindergarten principals are also not evaluating the kindergarten teachers. The community kindergarten principals and teachers have no career structure and promotion. Their employment condition is also not permanent. The account of one of the interviewed woreda education office kindergarten education expert could be illustrative of this:

We are not evaluating the kindergarten principal. Because we do not have directives for this. In addition it is also not an accustomed practice.

Gemechis 12-03-07

Similarly one kindergarten principal mentioned:

No bodies told me to evaluate the teachers. I am also not being evaluated. I think that may be due to the contract employment condition and lack of promotion for kindergarten teachers.

Anane 01-03-07

This problem does not motivate the kindergarten principals and teachers to accomplish their tasks effectively.

The document review showed that the four community kindergartens are not keeping the records of children's personal history, family background, and attendances of the children, teachers' bio data, kindergarten possession and kindergarten relations with the concerned bodies. Only records of admission that holds the names of the child and his addresses are being kept in all the community kindergartens. This seriously weakens the teachers activity to identify the children's problem in relation to their learning and to provide them support. Choudhury and Choudhury (2002:146-151) state that the preschool records and reports are very important in guiding and planning education for the individual child and in achieving the objectives of the preschool education. These records help the teachers to know the child's family back ground, home environment, developmental history, health condition of the child, need and

abilities, in order to stimulate and achieve growth. So the teacher collects the required information from a variety of sources and keeps it in a folder to which she adds her own observation of the progress made by the child in the school. The information obtained in such a way serves as a point of discussion with parents and to keep the parents inform the behavior and progress of their child at school. When the children leave preschool and join primary school their records send to the primary teachers. The preschool records and reports promote the activity of assessing the child's rate of development, curriculum planning, guiding the teacher in achieving the goals of preschool education and valuable resource for the researcher.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION FOR PRACTICE

5.1. Summary

The idea of different educators and research finding reflected in the reviewed literature clearly indicate that maintaining the quality of kindergarten education with the provision of appropriate man power, materials, classes, water facilities, toilet, resting rooms, dining rooms, site, indoor and out door facilities, play and play grounds; keeping preschool records, maintaining appropriate relations between kindergartens and parents, using appropriate method of teaching and evaluation unequivocally promotes the children's learning ability in the future. By understanding this idea many countries of the world are striving to increase both the qualities and coverage rates of their countries kindergarten education. Concerning the kindergarten teachers training USA trains for about four to five years, France and Italy for three years, South Africa, Congo, Afghanistan, Belgium, former Czechoslovakia and Hungary for two years and Colombia trains for eight semester. In addition there are countries reached the top level in participating the appropriate kindergarten age children into kindergarten education like Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary and former Czechoslovakia. On the contrary the Ethiopian kindergarten education is in deplorable condition both in quality and expansion. Studies revealed that even in relatively most developed parts of the country, Addis Ababa, the learning environment is not suitable for proper implementation of the curriculum; basic facilities and equipment are considerably lacking; and the training as well as the competencies of the teachers is inadequate. In addition only a few children have got the chance to participate on kindergarten education.

Even though, there are scarcities of literature on Oromia's kindergarten education, the Oromia bureau of education annual statistics indicates that

most of the kindergarten age children in Oromia in general and in west Wollega in particular were not participated in kindergarten education. This could be due to lack of provision of quality preschool education in the region. Based on this, the study is aimed at investigating the qualities of kindergarten education in the perspectives of the reviewed literature. Then, three sample woredas of west Wollega zone are taken for the study using simple random sampling. These woredas are Gimbi town administration, Nole Kaba Woreda and Lalo Assabi woreda. All the community kindergartens in the two woredas and the Gimbi town administrations are included in the study. To maintain the validity of the data gathered multiple data gathering instruments were employed. These are interview, observation, FGD, and document review. Finally the data gathered using the instruments were integrated and organized for discussion in themes. From the analyzed data the following major findings were observed:

1. Half of the community kindergarten teachers are teaching the children with out having training in preschool education. The remaining fifty percent teachers are trained. But their training couldn't enable them to have deep knowledge about preschool education due to the inadequacy of the one-year training time, lack of proper training facilities and inadequacy of number and depth of courses they were trained in. In addition these teachers are not provided with refresher on job training like seminars, workshops, and exchanging experiences on preschool education. The inadequate pre-services training, employing the untrained individuals as kindergarten teachers and lack of in- service training paralyzed the effectiveness of the teachers teaching skill and knowledge.
2. All the teachers have enough experience that could enable them to deal with the children by the lesson they have learned from the difficulties or problems they faced in teaching children. The teachers and principals are all females. This helps the children to get warm motherly love from their teachers similar to their parents love. The age of the teachers ranges from

24-49 years. This age could enable the teachers both in maturity and physical strength to deal with the children.

3. All the kindergartens suffer from lack of appropriate personnel. Fifty percent of the kindergartens have no assistant teachers. All the kindergartens have no health worker, care taker (baby sitter), cook and guards. As a result the health condition of the children is in jeopardy. Almost all of the kindergartens have no neatness. They are full of dusts. In addition no one is controlling the health condition of the children.
4. No in- service and pre- services training was given to woreda and zonal education office kindergarten education experts on the issue of preschool education. As a result they have no enough knowledge to contribute their parts in maintaining the quality of kindergarten education. Lack of kindergarten curriculum materials (syllabus, teachers guide) and directives related to the kindergarten education under the approach of the new training and education policy of Ethiopia is another acute problem that deteriorates the quality of preschool education in the zone. This led the teachers to teach from the old kindergarten curriculum prepared during dergue regime in Amharic by translating in to Oromo language, grade one text book and from their experiences. These could not help the children to coup up with the existing preschool environment since some ideas of such content could be obsolete and others may be beyond the level of the children and not systematically organized.
5. Most of the kindergartens are over crowded. Suitable and enough chairs and tables that could allow proper sitting arrangements are not available. The windows and doors are not easily operated by the children. Floors and the walls of kindergartens are not attractive. Appropriate indoor and outdoor facilities are not available. In addition the whole nature of the outdoor of the kindergartens is not conducive. They have no play ground and gardens that enable the children to play freely and to explore nature.

Half of the kindergartens have no office. Besides all of them have no stores, resting rooms and dining rooms. Except two kindergartens, the others have appropriate sites that make free the attention of the children from disturbances. Some of the kindergartens have no fences to maintain the security of the children.

6. Lesson plans are commonly not prepared in all of the kindergartens for all the subjects they teach. This indicates that there is less preparation for teaching the children. Most of the teachers were using teaching methods like motivating the curiosity of the child, story telling, helping the children to learn from experiences, and discussion by using teaching aids like the big letters and models of animals prepared from cards, clay and wood. Only one kindergarten is using rhythm, music and movement as a method of teaching by replaying the previously recorded rhythm and music. The children became happy and follow the rhythm and music when the teachers replay the tape records. Dramatization and field trips are not on use as a method of teaching in all the kindergartens. But they are interesting and pedagogically supported teaching methods, which could motivate and attracts the children toward learning.
7. The evaluation methods of the kindergartens are oral questions asked by the teachers while they are teaching in a class, and giving assignments for the children to bring riddles, stories and proverbs. The common methods of evaluation are asking the children to write letters, simple words, and numbers and to compute simple mathematics. But these evaluation systems emphasized only on language development and concept formation by neglecting motor development and social development using conversation, but to enable the children to grasp the whole rounded knowledge and skills needed to their level using other method of evaluation like observation, structured interviews, and analysis of children's products like work and play techniques are advisable.

8. The administration of community kindergarten education is in deplorable condition. Kindergarten syllabus, teachers guide and directives are not available in the zone. Teachers and personnel are not provided pre-service and in- service training in preschool education area. They are also not employed to the desired number. Teachers are employed by unfair salary and are not paid their salary on time. They do not have initial salary, career structure and promotion in their job and not employed as a permanent worker. Teachers are not striving to create close and effective relations with parents to promote children's learning. This is created due to lack of close monitoring of the kindergarten principals and teachers by woreda education and kebele/ town administration. The kindergarten principals are not evaluated. They are also not evaluating the kindergarten teachers.
9. Most of the appropriate kindergarten age children who came to the kindergartens were sent to their home due to lack of classes, teachers, and facilities to participate them. The community didn't address the issue strictly to the government, so the problems are still as it was. The kindergartens are not keeping their records. As a result they are not in a position to identify their children's personal and family back ground to provide them with appropriate support. However, the community has the interest to participate in expanding and improving the quality of kindergarten education if there are parts to organize them.

5.2. Conclusion

Quality of preschool education is determined by its adequate and well trained teachers and personnel, adequate and appropriate facilities, proper site, adequate classes, appropriate method of teaching and evaluation; and adequate and well prepared curriculum materials. To realize this the relationship between preschools and parents; and the governments support are very important. That is, principals and teachers should design the way

to work with the parents in finance and to assess the children's need to provide supports that fit to the children's real situation. The government structure support is also the vital issue in preparing materials, setting standards, supervision and encouraging the community, NGOs and private organizations to participate on the provision of preschool education. However in the zone understudy this issue is not given attention. Because the findings of the study indicates that the community kindergartens in the zone are providing preschool education by inadequate number of teachers and personnel who have no adequate training in preschool education. In addition the community preschools have no enough classes, chairs, tables, books, play materials, toilet, resting rooms, dining rooms, bathing rooms, stores, kitchens and enough and appropriate out door play grounds.

Moreover the teaches are paid very low salary that could dissatisfied them. To solve these problems the community kindergarten schools, parents and the government structures especially education bureau structures and town administration bureau structures at different level are not working to the extent expected from them to provide quality kindergarten education for the children in the zone.

5.3. Implication for Practice

The finding of the study revealed that the quality of community kindergarten education in West Wollega zone is in deplorable condition. This indicates that much has to be done by the government structures at different levels and the community to improve the quality and to expand the coverage of this branch of education.

Therefore, the following implications are forwarded on the basis of the findings.

1. Training the kindergarten teachers, personnel and kindergarten education experts on preschool education is indispensable in promoting the qualities of kindergarten education. Employing individuals as a kindergarten teachers,

personnel and experts without having training in preschool education is deteriorating the quality of preschool education. The kindergarten teachers, personnel and expert should be provided the in- service training like summer training, seminars, work shops and experience exchange on preschool education to refresh their knowledge and skills on the area of preschool education that suit with the contemporary world. Pre- service training should be given for prospective kindergarten teachers, personnel and experts for two to four years deeply on preschool education and different related courses that would enable the Oromia national state in general and West Wollega zone in particular to have quality preschool education. Priority should be given for females to be trained in pre-service trainings. Because studies show that females handle the children in motherly love more appropriately than males (Choudhury and Choudhury, 2002:145). So if they are trained in preschool education they could be more effective than males in the profession (witty, 1974:662).

2. The collaborative campaign of the community; woreda and zonal education offices and kebele and town administration has no substitute to provide adequate and appropriate human power, indoor and outdoor facilities, buildings, classes, resting rooms, dining room, offices, toilets, cook room, bathing rooms; to select proper site and to fence the kindergartens each by having clearly known responsibility and accountability.
3. The immediate measure to prepare, print and publish or distribute the kindergarten syllabus, teacher's guides and related directives to the kindergartens should be taken by Oromia bureau of education.
4. Various community kindergartens' activities should be supervised, evaluated and suggested by woreda and zonal education experts; kebele and town administrations; principals and teachers each by taking responsibility and accountability that belong to each.

5. The employment condition of the kindergarten teachers should be examined and given solutions by Oromia national regional state.
6. The means to create the source of funds with which to run the community kindergarten education should be sought by the collaborative measures of both Oromia bureau of education and Oromia bureau of town administration at region level.

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የአፀደ ሕፃናት መመሪያ (1985) በኢትዮጵያ የሽግግር መንግስት የህፃናት ወጣቶች ቤተሰብ ደህንነት ድርጅት አዲስ አበባ

ትምህርት ሚኒስቴር (1987) የአፀደ ሕፃናት ፕሮግራምና የመጀመሪያ ደረጃ ትምህርት ስታንዳርድ አዲስ አበባ

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APPENDICES

Appendix - A

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

College of Education

Department of Curriculum

and

Teacher professional Development Studies

Interview guide presented for Community kindergarten principals.

1. Concerning the kindergarten teachers training, do you think the one-year kindergarten teacher training is adequate to effectively implement the kindergarten curriculum?
2. Is there a practice of assessing the performance of kindergarten teachers? If yes, how do you carry out it?
3. How far do your kindergartens equip with the necessary materials and facilities for the attainment of the objectives of the program?
4. How does your kindergarten keep preschool records and reports?
5. Is there relationship between your kindergarten and the parents of your kindergarten children? If there are relationships, in what aspects of kindergarten activities the relationship is going on?
6. How much parents understand the importance of their children attendance of kindergarten education?
7. How do parents perceive their children's play both at home and kindergarten?
8. Do parents, government, religious organization, NGOs and private organizations give much attention to the development of your kindergarten?

9. If your answer is "No" would you explain what made them not to give attention to kindergarten education?
10. What are the contributions of woreda education office to your kindergarten?
11. Who finance and administer your kindergartner?
12. What are the problems that hindered the quality of your kindergarten education?

APPENDIX - B
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
College of Education
Department of Curriculum
and

Teacher professional Development Studies

Interview Guide presented for expert of kindergarten education in the woreda education office.

1. Concerning the kindergarten teachers training, do you think the one-year kindergarten teacher training is adequate to effectively implement the kindergarten curriculum?
2. What are the attempts made to improve the profession of community kindergarten teachers through on job training, workshop, seminars and the like?
3. How do you select the sites of community kindergartens?
4. When building community kindergartens, how do you check whether proper rules and regulations are considered?
5. How far do community kindergartens equip with the necessary materials and facilities for the attainment of the objectives of the program?
6. What are the contributions of woreda education office to the development of community kindergartens?
7. Who finance and administer community kindergartens in your woreda?
8. How do kindergarten would be teachers are selected for training? What are the selection criteria of these teachers?
9. Do parents, government, religious organizations, NGOs and private organizations gave much attention to the development of community kindergarten education in your woreda?
10. If your answer for question number 9 is "No" what made them to neglect the program?
11. Is there the practice of assessing the performance of community kindergartens? If yes, how is it being done?
12. What are the problems that hindered the qualities of community kindergarten education in your woreda?

APPENDIX - C
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
College of Education
Department of Curriculum
and

Teacher professional Development Studies

Interview Guide presented for expert of kindergarten education in the zone education office.

1. Concerning the kindergarten teachers training, do you think the one year kindergarten teacher training is adequate to effectively implement the kindergarten curriculum?
2. What are the attempts made to improve the profession of community kindergarten teachers through on job training, workshop, seminars and the like?
3. How do you select the site of community kindergartens?
4. When building community kindergartens how do you check whether proper rules and regulations are considered?
5. How far do community kindergartens equip with the necessary materials and facilities for the attainment of the objectives of the program?
6. What are the contributions of zone education office to the development of community kindergartens?
7. Who finance and administer community kindergartens in your zone?
8. How do kindergartens would be teachers are selected for training? What are the selection criteria of these teachers?
9. Do parents, government; religious organizations, NGOs and private organizations gave much attention to the development of community kindergarten education in your zone?
10. If your answer for question number 9 is "No" what made them to neglect the program?
11. Is there the practice of assessing the performance of community kindergartens? If yes, how is it being done?
12. What are the problems that hindered the qualities of community kindergarten education in your zone?

APPENDIX - D
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
College of Education
Department of Curriculum
and

Teacher professional Development Studies

Guiding questions prepared for focus group discussions held with community kindergartens children's parents.

1. Are there relationships between parents and the kindergarten teachers?
2. If your answer for question number 1 is "yes" in what aspects of kindergarten activities the relation is going on?
3. Do parents support their children's learning in kindergarten?
4. How do parents perceive their children's play both at home and kindergarten?
5. Do parents, government; religious organization, NGOs and private organizations gave much attention to the development of kindergarten education in your woreda?
6. If your answer for question number 5 is "No" would you explain the reasons?
7. What are the problems that hindered the development of community kindergarten educations?



APPENDIX -E
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
College of Education
Department of Curriculum
and
Teacher professional Development Studies

Interview Guides presented for the Heads of Towns Administration

1. What are the roles of town administration in leading the activities of community kindergarten?
2. Does your town administration have budget plan for community kindergartens? If your Answer is not, why? If your answer is yes could you explain the extent of the budgets?
3. Are the community kindergartens provided with adequate and appropriate man power, classes, and facilities? If your answer is not, why?
4. What are the problems of community kindergartens in your town?

APPENDIX – F
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
College of Education
Department of Curriculum

and

Teacher professional Development Studies

Observation Checklist

I General Information:

1. Name of the kindergarten _____
2. Woreda _____
3. Town _____
4. kebele _____
5. level _____
6. Section _____
7. Number of children in a class _____ male female _____
8. sitting arrangement (circular, v. shaped, Traditional). _____
9. Date of observation _____
10. Time _____

II The Teacher:

1. Sex _____
2. qualification _____
3. Experience as a kindergarten teacher _____
4. Experience as an elementary teacher _____

III . Lesson Plan:

1. Is it timely? _____
2. Is it checked by principal? _____
3. Is it in active learning form? _____

IV. Classroom Observation.

1. Details of Instruction in a Classroom.

No	Observation items	Remark
1.1	Teacher	
1.1.1	Calls children by name	
1.1.2	Visits /contacts/ every individual and each groups in a class to support their learning.	
1.1.3	Encourages children to talk.	
1.1.4	Provide opportunities for children to acquire initiative and independence	
1.1.5	Encourages children to take care of books on shelves, use them appropriately and place them carefully on shelves after use	
1.1.6	Forms groups and encourages children to discuss	
1.1.7	Appreciates children when they ask questions and participate in group discussion.	
1.1.8	Use a variety of teaching	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -0 play -1 story telling -2 motivating the curiosity of the child -3 helping the child to learn through experiences -4 Discussion -5 Rhythm, music and movement -6 Dramatization -7 Field trips/excursion 	
1.1.9	Asking questions and assessing children's progress	
1.1.10	Reading books to children	
1.1.11	Lecturing /telling/ children through out the period.	
1.2.	The children	
1. 2.1	Ask questions	
1. 2.2	Play and work with materials.	
1. 2.3	Play with other children	
1. 2.4	Learn numbers and alphabets in the context of their everyday experiences.	

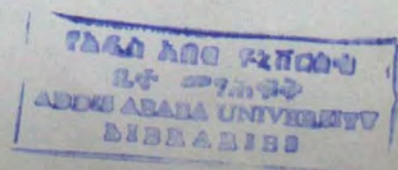
2. Appropriateness of the Classroom

No	Observation items	Remark
2.1	Neat and decorated with different colours	
2.2	Decorated with different posters and children's original work and writing.	
2.3	Well lit and ventilated enough	
2.4	Has access to playground, water and toilet.	
2.5	Has adequate space for storing, clothing, personal possessions and small group works. (1.5 sq meter per child).	
2.6	Has attractive books suitable for kindergarten children like poetry, fiction, non fiction	
2.7	Size and flammability nature of the equipments	
2.8	Presence of indigenous and low cost materials	
2.9	Presence of toys that are easy to understand and manipulate.	
2.10	Proportionality of play equipment and number of children	
2.11	Suitability of play equipment to the children.	
2.12	Contains playrooms, lavatories, and washrooms. Kitchen rooms, restrooms, dining rooms.	

No	Observation items	Remark
2.13	Cemented, dry and clean floors	
2.14	Non shiny walls	
2.15	Low enough windows to the size of the children.	
2.16	Windows facilities for easy operation by the children such as low level hinges, that enable to use whenever required.	
2.17	All the doors are with in the easy reach of the children.	
2.18	Has enough water facilities	
2.19	Has toilet fit to the size of the children.	
2.20	Open and closes shelves and cupboards that are suitable to the height of the children and free from insects and cobwebs are available.	
2.21	The rooms are constructed for the purpose of kindergarten	
2.22	The rooms are constructed for the purpose of housing or other purpose.	

3. Out of Classroom Observation

No	Item	Remark
3.1	Outdoors are aesthetically pleasing	
3.2	Has enough playground (2Sqmeter per child)	
3.3	Playgrounds are readily accessible to adjoin the kindergarten room.	
3.4	Playgrounds are readily accessible to adjoin the kindergarten room.	
3.5	The rooms are not opening to each other.	
3.6	The kindergarten is the neighborhood of the children it serves.	
3.7	Located away from the crowded areas like burial ground, and main traffic areas	
3.8	Free from unnecessary noise and air pollution.	
3.9	The play areas are proportionally divided in to sun and shade.	
3.10	Facilitated with eight to ten inches of fall absorbing material.	
3.11	Play areas include hard surface where wheel toys can be used and balls bounced, grass plot, gardens and digging, sandpit, and water.	
3.12	Fenced and free of non-splintering Material.	
3.13	It is raised area and free from water legging	
3.14	Outdoor spaces allow future expansion	



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

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Date: _____