

**An Assessment of the Practices and
Problems of the Management of Cluster
Resource Centers in Primary Schools of
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By

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UPE- Universal Primary Education

WEO – Woreda Education Office

ZEO – Zonal Education Office

Abstract

School Cluster Model has been one of the strategies that are being implemented in Ethiopian education system to address the problems of educational quality and efficiency. In practice, however, the management of the school cluster resource centers has been highly challenged by a number of problems. Thus, the main purpose of the study was to assess the practices and problems of the management of primary schools cluster resource centers in East Wollega Zone.

Based on this purpose, a review of related literature was made. Descriptive survey method was used for the study. Samples were taken from ZEO experts, WEOs experts and officials, CRC committee members, and teachers from both satellite schools and CRCs to be used as data sources. Questionnaire and an interview guide were employed for data collection. In order to select representative samples from the populations, availability and random sampling techniques were followed. Percentage and chi-square test were used as statistical tools for data analysis and interpretation.

The findings of the study revealed that despite some improvements in the cases of students participation rate/enrollment, better framework for teachers' inspection, pupil competitions and teachers' and schools' experience-sharing, the important purposes and strategies of the implementation of the cluster model were not well practiced in the CRCs and lacked comprehensiveness in terms of coverage of essential administrative, pedagogic, economic and political aspects. The important managerial functions did not involve the major actors such as teachers and the community. One of the principles of good governance- the clear definition of roles, responsibilities, authority and accountability of different parts of the CRC system was not well practiced.. On top of this, the finding showed that the major difficulties that hindered the effectiveness of the CRC management system were found to be insufficiency of awareness, lack of financial and material budget, shortage of skilled manpower (lack of proper staffing), lack of facilities, and lack of community financial, material and labor support. The findings of the study imply that the current situation of the CRC management really calls for special attention if the systems are to be efficient and effective in bringing about the desired change.

Finally, measures that should be taken by OEB, EWZEO, WEOs and the CRC systems were suggested. The major ones were the need to build adequate awareness among the major CRC stakeholders about the purposes, basic requirements and implementing strategies of the cluster model, establish clear vision, mission and strategies for the implementation of the model, staff the CRCs properly, clearly define the roles, responsibilities, authorities and accountabilities of each portion/actor of the systems, generate one's own income, build consensus among the CRC actors with regard to the acceptable standards of performance and basic requirements in terms of financial, material and skilled manpower needs, arrange workshops and trainings for each segment of the cluster systems to enhance their managerial and implementing capacities were suggested.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0. THE PROBLEM AND ITS APPROACH

1.1 Background of the Study

Primary education being the base of formal education pyramid has often been viewed as the most crucial educational level in the formal system because any problem at this level would automatically reflect at the secondary and tertiary levels. The issue of quality primary education depends on how efficiently and effectively the primary education system meets the goals of primary education and national objectives (Yalokwu, 2001:85). Taking into account the insufficiency of the opportunity of quality primary education to African Children different measures were taken. The Addis Ababa conference of African states on the development of education held in 1961, reached the resolution to attain Universal Primary Education by 1980 (UNESCO, 1961 as cited in Forojalla 1993:97). Moreover, the aim of extending basic level of education to all children, young and adults around the world as an outcome of the World Conference on Education for all (EFA), held in 1990 was rectified in a series of summits throughout the following decade, and later was re-specified as six major goals of the World Education Forum, held in Dakar in April, 2000. Two of these goals were adopted as Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the same year, and both of them were concerned with achieving UPE and ensuring gender equality and empowerment (UNESCO, 2002:13). However, the implementation of the resolutions was not as effective as expected (Anderson Mary B., 1992:9).

To overcome the major failures to achieve Universal Primary Education by 2015 many countries have made comprehensive attempts to undertake educational reforms and restructuring with the aim of improving school effectiveness by introducing efficient and effective ways of organizing and managing schools. One of such strategies has been the adoption of school cluster model.

The introduction of the term school cluster is traced back to 1960 in England where small rural and urban schools were in short of subject expertise. One way in which small schools have sought to enhance their educational provision and overcome these challenges have been to form collaborative group of schools, which are called clusters (Linda, 1995:8).

School clustering system is now being applied as an educational reform strategy in the developing world. Given the resource deficits facing many schools in the developing countries and the inability of national or regional governments to effectively reach those schools with the resources and professional developments that they desperately needed, many educational systems turned to school clustering (Kahn, 1991; Kana Miller, 1999).

Bray (1987:8) defined school cluster as “a grouping of schools for administrative and educational purpose.” The Nomenclature of school cluster is also known by different terms in different parts of the world. For example, nucleons (popular in Latin America), Teacher Resource Centers (TRCs) in Anglophone Countries (Kahn, 1991; Enameller, 1999); and complexes, zones and school learning zones in various parts of the world.

There are about two perspectives about purposes of clusters: distinguished as Teacher Resource Centers by Bray (1987:22) and Cluster Resource Center by Kahn (1999:31). As Teacher Resource Center, Bray (1987:9) proposed the following points as the purposes of school clustering categorizing them into four major areas: economic, pedagogic, administrative and political purposes.

Kahn (1991), on the other hand, suggested the following as the purposes of TRCs:

1. To provide professional development for teachers
2. To provide support services for teachers and pedagogies
3. To acquire, produce and distribute teaching resources.
4. To provide social and recreational services for teachers
5. To be a center for community involvement in education that is more closely organized around the interests and needs of teachers.

Many authors have compiled the key characteristics of high quality in different ways. According to Knamiller (1999: 83), a cluster system of high quality is characterized by neutrality, relevance, flexibility, education, problem-centered, professional atmosphere, small beginnings, locality, and democracy. Lackney et al, on the other hand, identified about five principles of school clustering: responsibility, result-oriented, integrity (Lackney, et al 2003: 1, 12), problem solving, flexibility (Lackney, 2004:3, 9).

McNeil, on his part, identified the following two principles of school clustering: participatory and unity (McNeil, 2004:3; 2004:13).

Clusters have numerous benefits that are based on purposes that countries have in implementing them in their primary and, in some case, secondary schools. Brunswic and Valerian (2004:58) identified cluster benefits categorized as: academic, economic, and educational benefits.

While clusters have been organized in a variety of ways in different context, there remain some common characteristics. School clusters may be organized based on:

- **Number of Schools-** for example, Bray (1987) cites 5-14 schools to be organized into a cluster, while present practices in a variety of contexts suggest that most cluster systems are organized for teacher professional development with 5-10 schools included in a single cluster (Carron et al., 1998; Dittmar et al., 2002; Mihretu et al., 2001) considering the number of teachers with no more than 50 and 10-15 schools in a cluster being optimal.
- **Number of Students-** for example in Sri Lanka with an appropriate range falling between 3,000-5,000 that said, the overwhelming majority of ITPD implementation utilize the number of schools as a deciding factor, and between 5-10 as a guideline.

The staffing of clusters differs greatly between and within countries, and by the purposes that clusters were originally designed. In most contexts, clusters are staffed by a cluster director (otherwise known as a resource person) and run by the cluster school head teacher, where one or more support staff are hired to support his/her work (Bray, 1987).

The introduction of the organization of schools into clusters in Ethiopia is traced back to 1995. This innovation was initiated by BESO I project which was concerned with the provision of support to CRCs (Asnake, 2007:3) Harari Region was the first to adopt the innovation in 1995.. ESDP III (2005: 14-15) emphasized the importance of school cluster approach for school-based training system that focuses on teachers' effectiveness in classroom teaching, continuous professional development of teachers, child-centered teaching approach and better classroom management skills such as self contained classroom organization. CRCs take the responsibility to provide member schools with materials and financial support. Other activities such as experience-sharing and in-service trainings are conducted mostly at CRCs level.

In Oromia Regional State (one of the nine regions in Ethiopia), the school cluster system has been adopted with the aim of promoting quality and equity of education in an endeavor to alleviating the problems of efficiency, quality and equitable educational distribution(OEB,1999E.C).

East Wollega Zone is one of the 17 zones in Oromia Regional State. It is situated in the western part of Oromia. It is divided into 16 Woredas and one city administration council. These woredas and city administration are administered by elected council members. The Zone has a total area of 14,235 square kilometers. Its geographic features range from a peak of 900-3,178 meters above sea level. Its climate varies with its topography. The temperature ranges from 14⁰c in the highlands to 26⁰c in the low lands (Kolla). East Wollega Zone has a total population of 1,008,419 (CSA, 1997). The population is increasing by 3% annually (EWZEO, 1999 E.C).

While the school age population (7-14) was male 174,900; female 180,330; and total 355, 230 in 1997 E.C, the majority of the population (92%) lives in rural, and the rain-fed subsistence agriculture is the mainstay for this 92% population (EWZEO, 1997 E.C). As the part of the overall development vision of the zone administration, the zonal government body is making an endeavor toward the achievement of Universal Primary Education by 2015. To this end, different strategies are being adopted among which school cluster system is one. By now all primary schools have been organized into clusters (EWZEO, 2008). However, its effective implementation needs to be established through a thorough investigation into the current practices and problems of its implementation. That is why this study is under taken.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The comments in one of the Ethiopian Education policy documents, ESDP III, are revealing with respect to the purpose for clusters in the Ethiopian Education System. This policy document highlights that clusters are for supporting teaching and learning. Similarly, Oromia Education Bureau also has adopted the cluster school system and has implemented in its 17 zones one of which is East Wollega Zone for the efficient and effective utilization of the available resources (human, material, financial) for the ultimate improvement of quality and equity in education. Accordingly, in East Wollega Zone the cluster school model has been adopted and implemented since 1995 E.C. (EWZEO, 2008).

Available documents (EWZEO, 2008) show that by now all the primary schools in all the 16 woredas of the zone have been organized into school clusters. There are a total of 85 school cluster resource centers in the zone. The Cluster Resource Centers have the minimum of one and the maximum of seven member schools organized under them. Overall, 311 satellite schools have been organized into 85 school clusters. Among these Cluster Resource Centers, 32.94% have three satellite schools, 31.76% have four satellite schools, 15.29% have 5 satellite schools, 12.94% have two satellite schools, 4.71% have 6 satellite schools, 1.81% has 7 satellite schools and 1.18% has only one member school. Based on this information it is obvious that only 79.99% of the clusters are organized as per the guide line (3-5 satellite schools).

The cluster schools are organized in such a way that the satellite schools are connected to central resource schools and all activities are at the resource centers. This indicates that the vertical/hierarchical model of school clustering is being practiced in the zonal education system. It is observed that the CRC is selected by the woreda education office using the level of the school and its centrality as the criteria of selection. The CRC heads/coordinators are simply assigned or nominated by the woreda education office to be the principals of the core schools (usually 1-8 level) that are selected as CRCs.

With respect to community involvement, the actual facts show that the practice does not accommodate the key bodies that should have been involved. The current practice focuses on the principals of the member schools only. Surprising is that even the individuals to be selected for the member of the cluster committee (the committee composition) has not been specified in the guideline of the implementation of organization and management of CRCs in the region in general and in the zone in particular.

In-service training is totally conducted at the CRC. It has been observed that the in-service trainings are most of the time arranged by the Woreda Education Office whenever an urgent issue emerged rather than as a regular activity of the CRCs. Particularly, teachers complain that the system of in-service training and teachers' professional development is not need-based, lack continuity, lack relevance, lack depth and width with regard to the content of training. Experience sharing is conducted only at the center (CRCs) in terms of sport festivals and sometime between the CRC heads and member schools' principals on individual bases and monthly meetings.

With regard to supervision at CRC level, until 2006/7 supervisors were not assigned for each CRC. The supervisory services were given by the woreda Education Office level supervisors only. It is obvious that some basic measures have been taken by the zone education offices and other stakeholders to realize and achieve the objectives of the introduction of school cluster model by implementing it in all of the Woredas in the zone.

However, there are many problems observed through the student researcher's observation and experience and from some implementation reports and comments from teachers at different occasions.

In the first place, there is a general evaluative suggestion that despite the efforts made to alleviate the problem of quality of education through the implementation of school cluster model the achievement has been found to be unsatisfactory. Some of the indicators of educational quality such as the teachers' qualification, pupil/teacher ratio and pupil/section ratio confirm this fact. The percentage of teachers with necessary qualification for levels (1-4) and (5-8) is 99.6% and 47% respectively (OEB, 2005/6). With regard to pupil/teacher ratio, it is found to be 76:1 and 49:1 respectively. With respect to pupil/section ratio, it is 70:1 for the level (1-8) indicating that the standard set has not yet been achieved. As regard to the efficiency, for example repetition, there is a great problem. The Oromia Regional State Education Bureau Statistics Annual Abstract (OEB, 2005/6) shows that East Wollega Zone is the worst in repetition rate recorded (46.3%) taking the second rank from the bottom among the then (2005/6) 14 Zones.

The other problem identified by referring the guidelines and the actual practice in organizing the school clusters is that while the guideline dictates that the number of member schools will be 3-5, the actual practice has indicated that the number of member schools so far organized under each CRC range from 1-7 members schools.

As could be observed from the guideline issued for the implementation of the cluster school model organization and management, there is no criteria and mechanism for the selection/assignment/ nomination of the cluster school coordinator.

The other problem in the management of CRCs in the zone is that there has never been practice of budget allocation for the implementation of the CRCs' programs. The CRCs themselves have no sufficient resources let alone to support themember schools under them which are organized based on the hierarchical model of organizational structure.

To solve the problem of implementing cluster school model in improving school performance through appropriate management, the researcher have had an access to only one research done on the management of CRC in Oromia.there Thus, this particular study attempts to improve some of the issues addressed in the previous study and also add some issues that were not addressed in the basic research questions of (Asnake, 2007) such as the issue of good governance on the part of both managers and implementers of the CRC model.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The study is conducted to attain the following general and specific objectives:

1.3.1. General Objective

The main objective of the study is to assess the Practices and Problems of the Management of Cluster Resource Centers in Primary Schools of East Wollega Zone.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

- To find out the extent to which the major identified purposes of school cluster model are being practiced in the clusters system.
- To examine the status of CRCs in practicing appropriate strategies for the implementation of school cluster model.
- To investigate the extent to which the major managerial functions are being practiced in managing the CRCs.
- To investigate the conduciveness of the existing governance to the a) management, and b) implementation of the school cluster model.
- To asses the degree to which the implementation of the cluster model has brought about the expected outcomes.
- To identify the major problems that has been hindering the effectiveness of the school Cluster Resource Center management system.

To achieve the above general and specific objectives, the following basic research questions were formulated:

1. To what extent are the major theoretically purposes of school cluster model being followed/practiced in the CRCs?
2. What strategies are being practiced in the CRCs?
3. To what extent are the major managerial functions (planning, organizing, staffing, monitoring and evaluation) being practiced by the cluster centers management systems?
4. To what extent is the existing governance in the cluster systems conducive for the effectiveness of the functions of the CRCs management system?
5. What is the status of the educational efficiency and quality outcomes expected in the implementation of the cluster model?
6. What are the major difficulties that have been hindering the effectiveness of the CRC management system?
7. Is there any significant relationship between the work positions and opinions of the respondents about the status of practices and problems of the a)purposes b)implementing strategies c)planning aspects d)status of good governance h)outcomes, and i) hindering factors of the CRC management systems?

1.4. Significance of the Study

The study may be significant for the following reasons:

- 1) It is important that all the stakeholders that are involved in the management and implementation of the school cluster model are knowledgeable about the theory, practice, objectives and strategies of the management of CRCs so that they will be capable of implementing the model efficiently and effectively. Thus, the study may help these bodies as a source of both theoretical and empirical evidences/information.
- 2) In the course of the study the current actual practices and the prevalent problems are identified and the gap to be bridged is also pointed out. Hence, the finding may be used by the responsible bodies to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the management system and design an appropriate strategy to improve and make

adjustments with regards to the organization and management of the cluster model in the future.

- 3) In the study both theoretically as well as practically appropriate strategies have been pointed out..Thus, the implementers at the CRCs can adopt these strategies for effective and efficient implementation of the model.
- 4) The study attempts to uncover the current status of the CRC management in primary schools of East Wollega Zone. The recommendations forwarded may help the responsible bodies to take consecutive measures to improve the CRC management system
- 5) Other prospective researchers can use the research findings as a step-stone for the replication they will conduct in this area. For example, it may be used as a source of secondary data in conducting a related study.

1.5. Delimitations of the Study

The study was primarily delimited to the assessment of the current management system of CRCs in primary schools of East Wollega Zone of Oromia Regional State and the identification of the current practices and problems. The research was confined to East Wollega Zone mainly due to:

- 1) the prevalence of managerial inefficiency and educational quality problem in the zone as was observed by the researcher during his transfer and working in almost one-third of the total woredas of the zone as a supervisor, education programs coordinator, Woreda Education Office Manger, TVET coordinator for about nine years
- 2) the importance to make the study manageable within the capacity of the researcher's financial, material and time resources.

The researcher selected primary schools for his study because primary schools are the base for the latter educational levels. If anything is good at this level, then it will be good at the next level in the educational systems structure. Moreover, it is now the global priority to expand quality primary education to attain Universal Primary Education by 2015. In addition to this, as the number of schools, teachers, students and parents at primary level is very large compared to the higher levels, the management process is also complex. The awareness and capacity is also limited at this level.

The study was also delimited to government primary schools due to the variation observed in financial and administrative capacity. The other reason is that the number of private schools in the zone is almost insignificant.

The research was also delimited to teachers, CRC committee members, officials, and experts at WEOs and ZEO because these individuals are the major front line actors and/or stakeholders of school clustering system, and they are also the major primary sources of data from whom relevant information can be obtained.

1.6. Limitations of the Study

The study had three major limitations. The first limitation was lack of adequate related literature which may be attributed to the fact that school cluster model is the recently introduced strategy to the education system. The second limitation was that the funding support that Addis Ababa University School of Graduate Studies provided, though gratifying, was not sufficient to employ assistant data collectors and statisticians as a result of which the researcher was forced to manage the problem by redesigning the study to manageable size of data sources. The third limitation was that the time when the data was collected was when schools were closed down for crop harvesting campaign and teachers and office workers were held with different meetings. As a result of this, it was difficult to conduct personal observations which could have been used to supplement the data obtained through questionnaire and interview.

1.7. Definition of Terms

Empowerment- the act of delegating power and authority to a subordinate so that the goals of manager can be accomplished (Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert, 2003).

Authority- a form of power often used more broadly to refer to people's ability to wield power as a result of qualities such as knowledge or titles such as judge (Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert, 2003).

Autonomy- a concept connected with trend to devolve power to lower administrative levels (Bush, 1994:231).

Efficiency- the ability to minimize the use of resources in achieving organizational objectives: "doing things right."

Effectiveness- the ability to determine appropriate objectives: “doing the right things.” (Bush, 1994)

Decision- Making - the process of identifying and selecting a course of action to solve a specific problem (Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert, 2003).

Cluster Resource Center- a school selected as a center of training, experience sharing, and instructional resources and the satellite schools organized under it (OEB, 2007:3)

School Cluster Model- a structural design employed to group schools that are located near one another in to a cluster under a center school in such a way that one benefit from the other in sharing experience and resources

School Clusters-“group of schools, for administrative and educational purposes.” (Bray, 1987:8)

CRC Principal- the Executive Head of the school cluster with core school as his administrative center (Samaranayake, 1983:27)

CRCs Stakeholders- organizations and individuals concerned directly or indirectly with the overall implementation of CRC programs. These include Education Bureau, Zonal Education Office, Teacher Training Colleges, Woreda Education Office, CRC principals, satellite school principals, supervisors, teachers and students (OEB, 2007)

Action Research- a practical way of looking at your practice in order to check whether it is as you feel it should be (McNiff and Whitehead, 2002:1)

Professional Development- the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience to examine his or her teaching systematically (Hussein and T.Nerille, 1994:5930).

Primary School-according to the 1994 education and training policy of Ethiopia, it is an educational level from grades 1-8 subdivided into cycles of basic (1-4) and general (5-8) education.

Zone-an administrative hierarchy below regional state, and above woreda

Woreda- basic administrative structure below zone, and above “kebele”

1.8. Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter deals with the problem and its approach. The second chapter deals with review of the related literature. Chapter three is concerned with the design and methodology of the study. In chapter four presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data are dealt with. The concern of chapter five is the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

2.1 Over View of School Clustering

Under the umbrella of the concept "school cluster", history of school clusters which offers explication of some related concepts and the current situation of school clustering in Ethiopia is provided. The chapter is structured as follows:

2.1.1 School Cluster Defined

Different scholars define school clusters in different ways. For example, (1987:31) defined school cluster as "grouping of schools in a geographical area educational purposes". The National Health Service Commission (NHSC) in 1991, is using school clusters to guide management of cluster schools as follows:

A school cluster is an aggregation of schools in a geographical area which is managing efforts which are shared together for the benefit of serving similar responsibilities to members of learning material. National and local authorities are expected to plan, implement and the educational quality of all schools within the cluster are improved.

The other definition by Lee (2004), is that a "School clustering is a process of grouping similar existing schools." (2004:2) reported that Education Research conducted from 2000 to 2002 defined it as "School cluster is the group of schools in a geographical area which is working together and are expected to work as a single school cluster". (2004:2) For Berhanegebrie (2003), "A school cluster is a group of schools in a geographical area which is working together for the purpose of better management and development." The other definition of school cluster is that was given by Leach as follows: "School Clustering is a process of grouping of several schools in a geographical area to enhance the management of

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter attempts to interpret the findings from a comprehensive review of the related literature conducted to explore the history, conceptualization, and present practice and problems of the management of primary school resource centers taking into both theoretical as well as empirical evidences from the available variety of literature.

2.1 Over View of School Clustering

Under this sub-section, definitions of the concept “school cluster”, history of school cluster, school cluster experiences of some selected countries, and the current situations of school clustering in Ethiopia in general and in Oromia in particular are treated.

2.1.1 School Cluster Defined

Different scholars defined school clusters in different contexts in different ways. Bray (1987:8) defined school clusters as “a grouping of schools for administrative and educational purposes”. The National Cluster School Committee, MOYES, in cambodia (1991), in its part defined school clusters (in its guide lines for cluster schools) as follows:

A school cluster is an organization of schools (6-9 schools) in the same vicinity or neighboring villages which are groped together for the benefit of sharing available resources such as teaching and learning material, facilities and staff so that the access for all children and the educational quality of all schools within the cluster are improved.

The other definition by Leu (2004), is read as: “School clustering is a localized in-service teachers training forum.” Oromia Regional State Education Bureau (translated from Afan Oromo Version) defined it as: “School cluster is the group of schools (3 to 5 in numbers) that are in vicinity to one another and are organized under a center school chosen by them.” (OEB, 2007:3). For Samaranayke (1983:7), “a school cluster is a group of 10 to 15 schools identified as one organizational unit for the purposes of both education and management.” The other definition of school cluster is one that was given by Linda as follows: “School Clustering is a system for networking of school within defined geographical area to facilitate the implementation of

teaching-learning process.” In this system a group of 3 to 5 near by schools are to be organized centering on the full-fledged primary school (1 to 8) where possible. Dykstra and Kucita (2003:16), on the other hand, defined school cluster as: “a group of 6 to 9 primary schools for administrative and educational purposes.”

The final analysis of the different definitions of school cluster indicates that there is a common element for all the definitions. This common element is that school cluster is a group of schools which are nearby to one another and grouped/organized for the purpose of education and management.

The difference with regard to the forwarded definitions is that the number of schools to be organized into school cluster differs. This is because the school clustering system may differ based on different contexts indicating the existence of flexibility in its organization: some of the definitions are relatively complex while others such as that of Bray (1987:8) previously cited are simple and are so inclusive that a significant portion of education system in the world can claim to have a cluster, make relatively large differences in the nature and purpose of the cluster system in disparate contexts. The nomenclature for cluster system is varied, with the term nucleons in Latin America, teacher resource centers or resource centers in Anglophone countries (Kahn, 1991; Knamiller, 1999), and complexes, zones, and school learning zones in various parts of the world.

2.1.2 History of School Cluster Model

Available evidences from literatures indicate that the introduction and adoption of the school cluster model occurred in different countries mainly at the early 1960s. According to Linda (1995:8), school cluster was pioneered in England in 1960 as a response to the shortage of subject expertise encountered small rural and urban schools. It was introduced to enable the small schools to enhance their educational provision and overcome the challenges by forming collaborative group of schools which are called clusters. In Sri Lanka the management of school clustering was started in 1961 on a piecemeal pilot basis to overcome the irrationalities in educational activities.

The first official documentation on school clustering practice in United Kingdom that was based on the findings of the Fish Committee was published in 1985. The committee purpose was to look into the benefit and possibilities for clusters in meeting the nation's school education

network (SEN). The committee took the view that secondary schools and their feeder primary schools in a locality should form themselves into 'clusters' and collaborate in meeting their pupils' SEN by sharing resources, ordinary schools could take joint responsibility for meeting greater levels of SEN among their pupils (Gibson, 2000:4) cited in Asnake (2007:18).

Samaranyke (1983:22) pointed out that the tradition in countries that expected school to be self-sufficient with little contact communication occurring between teachers and pupils beyond competitive games resulted in the following irrationalities

- i. Duplication, over lapping and wastage of resources that arise from uneconomic organization of schools as separate individuals;
- ii. Imbalances between the large urban schools and the poor sub-urban and rural schools in the allocation of education resources.
- iii. Irrational location of schools on extraneous grounds;
- iv. Inefficient utilization of resources (both material and personnel);
- v. Inefficient and inconsistent use of supervisory service in the schools;
- vi. Lack of recognition of small schools; and
- vii. Inefficient administration and management of schools.

2.1.3 School Clustering Experience of Some Countries

Even though the cluster model in different countries has many commonalities with regard to its purposes, the experiences may differ with respect to the contexts and organizing and implementation strategies. Thus, school clustering experiences of some countries are treated here under.

2.1.3.1 Clustered Schools in Sri Lanka

Due to the inefficiency of its schools system, Sri Lanka was compelled to take corrective measures. The educational reform committee of 1979 identified the following strategies to tackle the problem.

- i. Introducing the concept of school clustering model recognizing the key roles of head of schools;

- ii. Reducing the wide gap between the smaller and poorly equipped schools and the very large fully equipped schools; and
- iii. Fostering greater community participation in the management of schools.

In Sri Lanka organizing principles of school cluster resource centers such as focus on the entire system of instruction and learning; instructional change is a long and multi-stage process; shared expertise is the driver of change; talented people working together generate good idea; maintain a focus on system-wide improvement; set clear expectations; then decentralize responsibility and nurture a culture of collegiality, learning and respect among staff and cluster schools (Elmore, 1997). Sri Lanka determined the size of clusters based on the number of students served, with an appropriate range falling between 3,000 and 5,000 (Carron et al., 1989, Dittmar, et al., 2002; Mihretu et al., 2001)

2.1.3.2 School Cluster in Cambodia

According to Dykstra and Kucita (2003:16), in Cambodia the school clustering model was introduced in 1991 by UNICEF reform of education as a structure to implement new policies which promote the formation of parental-teacher relations (PTAs), retraining of supervisors in management of schools so that efficiency and learning increase, and systematic and ongoing training of teachers in methods and content which match the new curriculum and text books. As Dykstra and Kucita (2003:16) pointed out, cluster schools foster two-way learning process. This process is facilitated from both end of the administrative hierarchy and includes community members. In so doing, the national level staff gains lessons from local level and vice versa; improved resources, school facilities and teacher quality raise; parents understanding and expectations for greater learning and achievement for their children is enhanced. In the Cambodia, clusters are administered by committees and individuals. The executive head of the cluster is the cluster school head, who is selected by principals and teachers' representatives (Dykstra et al., 2002). This cluster head chairs the cluster school committee which includes the following members: Village chief, honorary chair, cluster school head, head masters, elected teacher representatives, representative of PTAs, head of cluster technical committee, and member of monks (if community wishes).

The Cambodia system, that depends on a relatively decentralization process to the school level, has been purported to have a variety of beneficial impacts, including increased participation in

school, higher academic achievements, sophisticated school and cluster level development planning, high quality and efficient ITPD provision, easier data collection as well as more developed data usage, and the development of libraries and resource centers (Geeves, 2000).

Cambodia engaged in foundational reforms of educational provision in the 1990s and made the decision to devolve power and educational provision to the local level through the cluster system. Part of this decision was due to the fact that there was a significant gap between the district and school level, with most districts having more than 100 schools. This made information flows (both down and up) quite difficult and inefficient as well. The Cambodia MOEYS (2002) argue that some of the major impacts of clusters have been improving local utilization of resources, improved planning and resource allocation, and collaborative planning between school directors.

There are many ways that clusters have been instrumental in decentralization in Cambodia. Among other benefits, the human resource (animators hired by MOEYS and donors), combined with significant commitment from the MOEYS, allowed the clusters decentralization scheme to be foundationally aligned with the purposes of educational improvement in Cambodia (Peccini, 2007:85)

2.1.3.3 School Clusters in Germany

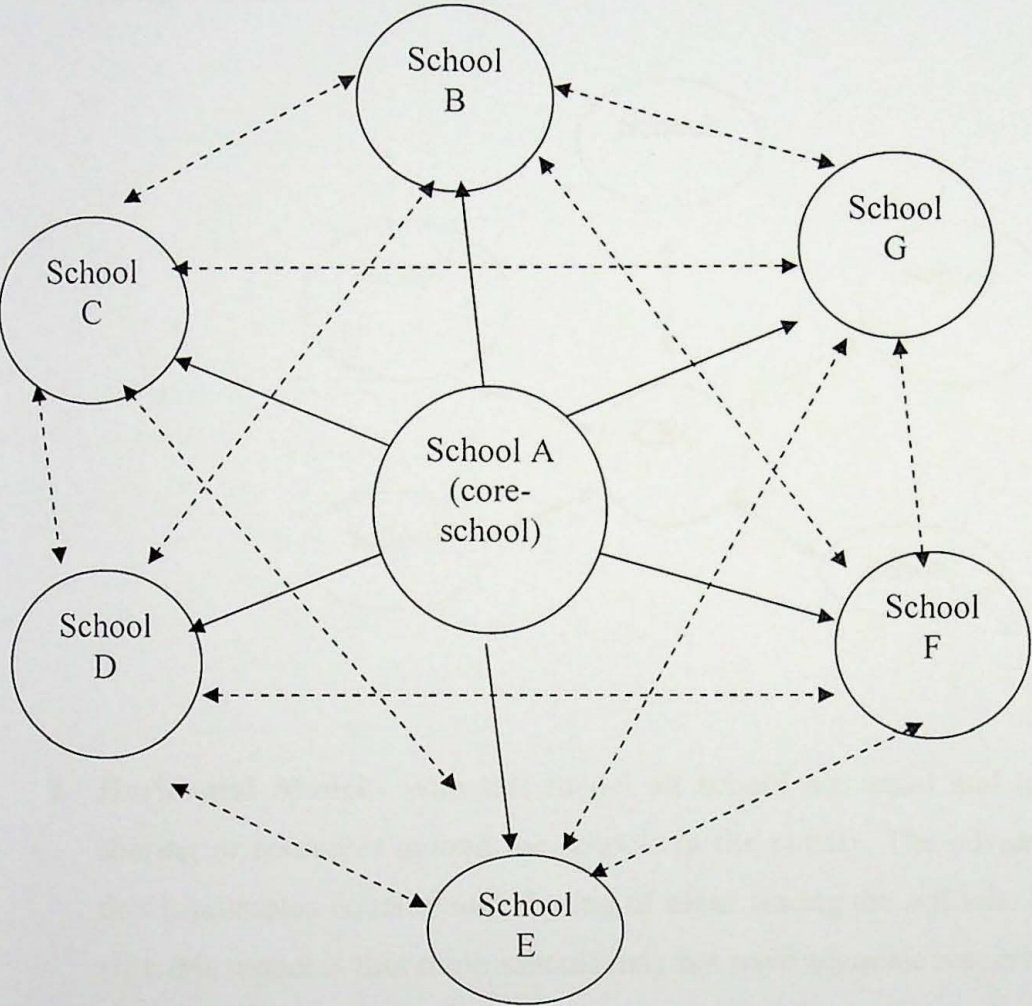
Cluster model schools partnership in Germany is traced back to 1995 with the aim of providing a test-bed for exploring the development of networked schools. The experience of the organization of school clusters of this country shows that clusters are organized by the collaboration of three levels of schools, i.e., elementary, junior and high schools are brought together to form a cluster over the course of three years (1995-1998). The four schools serve 1,500 students and have more than 500 networked computers and faculty knowledgeable of the technologies available to the. A cross-school planning team, on family and community involvement and a comprehensive professional development plan were some of the required supports and processes. The partnership of schools are guided by the following principles: professional development must extend a vision of technology as an empowering tools for teachers and students; stimulate reflective practice and be grounded in the context of teaching; exemplify our deepest beliefs about learning inquiry, collaboration and discourse; value and cultivate a culture provide

opportunities for meaningful teacher leadership roles to emerge; and enable teachers to shape their own leaning (Grant, 1998:3-4)

2.2 Cluster Models

There are several different organizational structures for clusters. The most basic and common one is Bray’s (1987) model which shows a simple connection between the coordinating linkage and this appears in many contexts. The relationships between the core school and satellite schools are much more established than those between the satellite schools and each other.

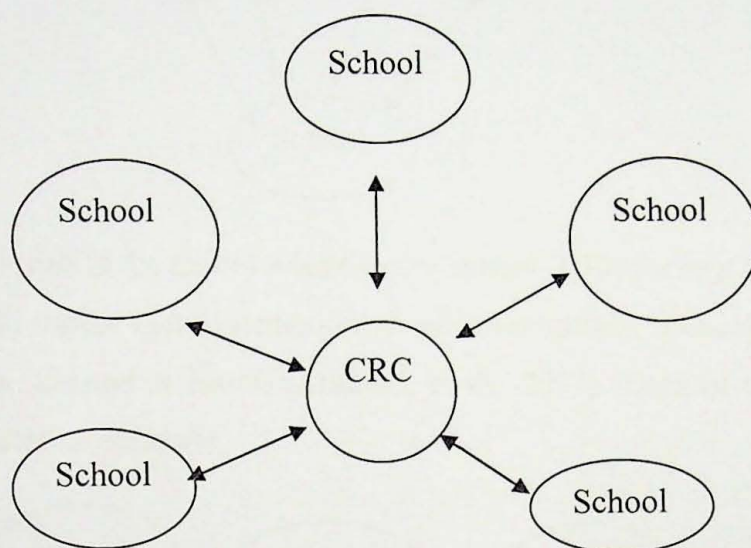
A pictorial representation for this model is depicted here under:



Note that, in the diagram, the solid connecting lines represent supervisory/controlling linkage while the broken connecting lines represent the coordination linkage.

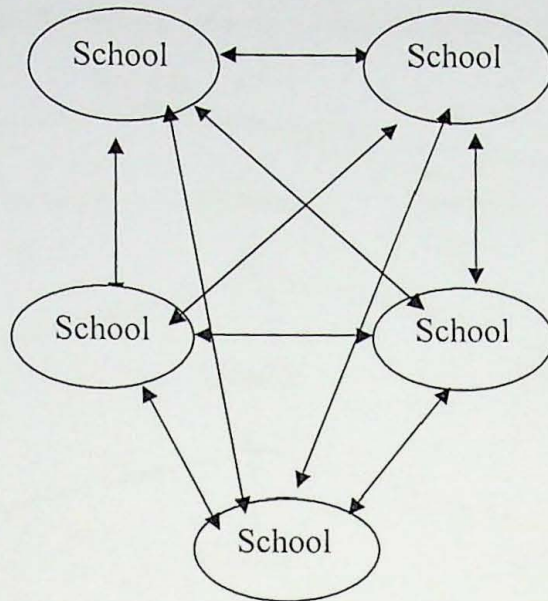
On the other hand, Mihretu et al., (2001:9) argue that there are three basic cluster models. These models are vertical/hierarchical, horizontal, and the hybrid model. A brief description of each of these models is presented here under (Mihretu et al., 2001).

1. **Vertical/Hierarchical Model:-** this is the model in which a number of satellites are connected to central resource school. The problem with the model, however, is that all activities are at the resource center and no experience sharing among satellites. Staff in the CRC might become disadvantaged with this model because they do not get a commensurate amount in return for the resources, time and energy they give to the satellite schools.

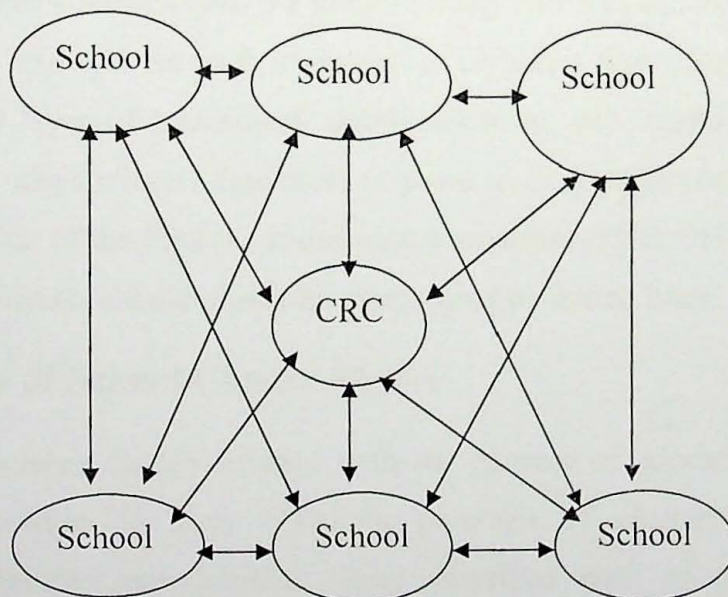


2. **Horizontal Model:-** with this model all school are equal and there is a pooling and sharing of resources among the schools in the cluster. The advantage of such model is that it promotes equality and sharing of ideas among the schools. However, the problem with this model is that some schools may not have adequate resources as a result of which

it becomes harder to coordinate them, and also there are transportation difficulties that would exist in connecting satellite schools with each other.



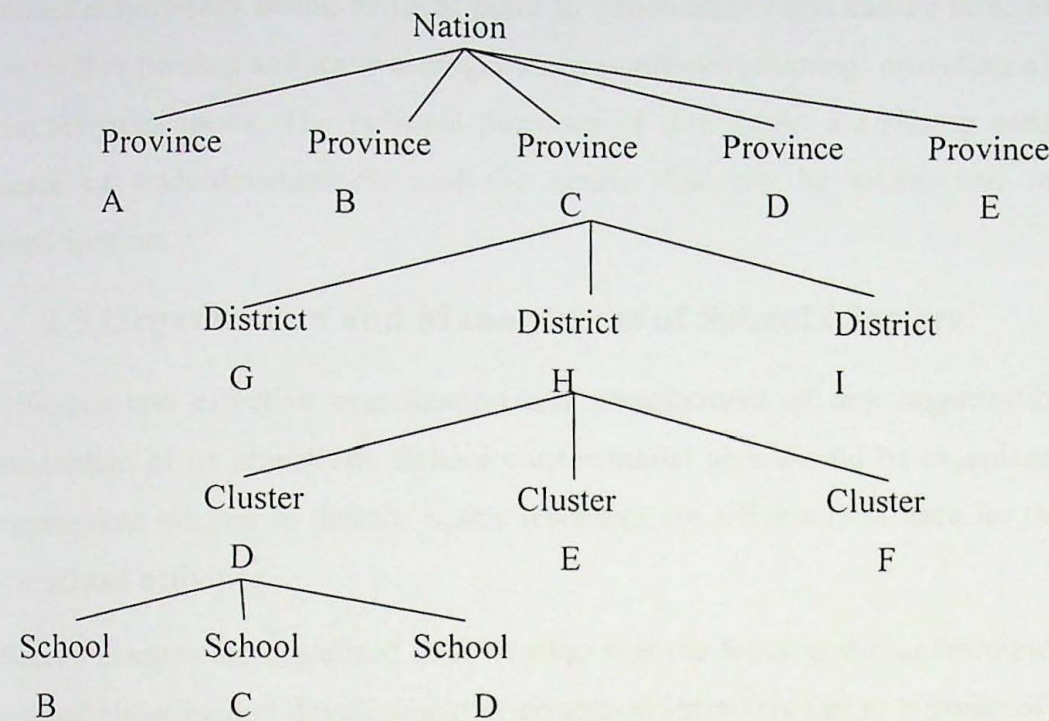
3. **Hybrid Model:-** this is the model where a core school (CRC) serves the cluster system as a center, but still independent interaction of satellite schools is encouraged. This model, in Ethiopia case, existed in Harari (Mihretu, et al., 2001). Each of the above models is pictorially depicted as follows:



Source: MOE (2003:12)

1.3Administrative Structure of Cluster System

Different contexts and countries implement the cluster system using slightly different administrative structures. However, according to Bray (1987), the primary method for inclusion of the cluster system into the formal education system may be pictorially depicted as follows:



In many countries, there are a few decentralization levels left off of this list. However, the basic idea is that the district connects with the school through the mechanism of the clusters. Ethiopia can be noted as an example for such a system. In countries like Cambodia, the cluster system served as a formal layer of educational decentralization, and information as well s finances passed through the cluster level. However, in practice, it appears that cluster systems operate some what to the side of the formal administrative structure (MOE 2006) and the links between the district and the cluster should at best be represented by dotted lines.

2.4. Purposes of School Cluster Model

School clusters are more closely aligned with the purpose of educational system, for quality improvement. According to Bray (1987:9), purposes of clusters are fourfold-economic, pedagogic, administrative and political. Bray described each of these as follows: school clustering model has economic purposes which include sharing of facilities; sharing of staff; bulk ordering of materials; fostering community financial support. The model is also concerned with

allowing schools to get extra resources; encouraging teacher professional development; promoting curriculum development; providing an environment for innovation; encouraging cooperation; encouraging pupil competition; integration of different levels of schooling; and integration of schools with non-formal education. As its administrative purposes, school cluster model emphasizes acting as focal point to which instruction can be sent; local decision-making on teacher posting and leave arrangements; improved planning; providing a better framework for teacher inspections. The political purposes of this model are raising consciousness about the cause of underdevelopment and the action that can be taken; and increased community participation.

2.5 Organization and Management of School Clusters

Efficient and effective organization and management of any organization is crucial for the attainment of its objectives. School cluster model also should be organized and managed in an appropriate manner so that the scarce resources are efficiently utilized for the ultimate success of the school activities.

School clusters are organized in such away that the focus is shifter from individual school as the unit of planning and development of education infrastructure to a group of schools in a specific geographical area and improve the teaching-learning environment and teaching methodology by cooperative efforts within the cluster to enable exchange of experiences creating an atmosphere where teachers could help each other in the different schools and ring uniformity in standards.

Clusters have been organized in a variety of ways in different contexts. Some scholars argue that school clusters are organized taking into account the optimum number of schools. Accordingly for example, Bray (1987) cites the number of schools in a cluster to range from 5 to 40. On the other hand, recent practice in a variety of contexts suggests that most cluster systems organized for teacher professional development have between 5 and 10 schools included in a single cluster (Carron et al., 1998; Dittmar et al., 2002). Some systems use the number of teachers as guideline, with no more than 50 teachers in a cluster.

Some other countries, including Sri Lanka, determine the size of clusters based on the number of students served, with an appropriate range falling between 3,000 and 5,000. This is different in contexts where clusters are used primarily for administrative purposes, rather than ITPD, because

the organizational needs of schools are given the expectation of far more limited impacts on pedagogy (Samaranayake, 1985).

There is no (so far) a clear cut actual distances between clusters and satellites. However, some studies (Bray, 1987, UNICEF, 2002) show that the distances should not exceed the minimum of 5kms and the maximum of 10kms (5-10kms being optimal). It is argued that there are some evidences that clusters are more effective in cities, partially because of the limited distances required for cluster schools to connect (Knamiller, 1999). As actual practices show the cluster systems in almost all contexts largely depend on cluster center-satellite relationships and ignore satellite-satellite connections.

Staffing of Clusters- the ways school clusters are organized are determined by the purposes that clusters were originally designed. Hence, this differs greatly between and within countries. In most contexts clusters are staffed by a cluster director and associated support staff. In most developing countries most clusters do not have a dedicated professional staff managing them as many clusters have to share resource persons done at three levels that are related to the relative wealth of the country and the type of cluster model employed (Bray, 1987:27). The first model is extreme model where cluster committees can determine budgets and recommend for promotions, and transfer of staff within the cluster (Sri Lanka and Thai Land). The second one is known as intermediate model in which schools are formally grouped, but controlling committees have little power. Director of the center organizes workshops and distributes materials around the schools (Indonesia, Malaysia, and Papua, New Guinea). The third model is the least extreme model where by schools groups themselves together, and can abandon the association if they wish. It depends on voluntary cooperation, and connections are informal. Among these, the intermediate model is most common and suggests the need for at least one dedicated staff, while the extreme model might be staffed by more than one professional and the least extreme model might not require a professional staff at all.

Clusters are most often administered by a variety of committees and individuals. According to Dykstra et al., (2002), the Cambodian experience shows that the executive head of the cluster is the cluster school head. He/she is elected by principals and teacher representatives and is responsible to chair the cluster school committee. The members of the committee include: village

chief, cluster school head, head masers, elected teacher representatives, representatives of PTAs, head of cluster school technical committee, member of monks, if community wishes.

Many cluster systems provide a resource person or supervisor who is responsible for much of the professional development provision and management. A resource person (supervisor) has some basic roles and requirements that he/she should fulfill. He/she arranges for instructional material support, short term training and identifies available trainings. He/she also works as a critical friend and provides counseling help to teachers on instruction; coordinate between school and community; and maintains cluster data base. A cluster resource person (supervisor) is also expected to fulfill some basic pre-requisites. He/she should be trained in pedagogy, methods and technology, training/resource center management, have good teaching experience, and be well-respected and have good provision for developing and disseminating instructional materials.

There are also some problems when the cluster model supervision is observed in actual practice. Many resource persons (supervisors) are fresh recruits and unable to manage the resource centers. On top of this, budgets for day to-day running of resource centers (RC) is too low (Carron et al., 1998).

2.6. Planning and Management of School Cluster Activities

It is crucial that the activities of educational organizations in general and that of schools in particular should be planned in advance if the performance of teaching-learning processes is to be efficient and effective. Stoner, Freeman and Jr (1995) defined the term planning as: "The process of establishing goals and suitable course of action for achieving those goals." School clusters also need to plan if they are to succeed in the course of organizing, coordinating, staffing, leading, controlling, budgeting and evaluating their activities. Stoner et al., (1995:265) state that:

Without plans, managers cannot know how to organize people and resources effectively. They may not even have a clear idea of what they need to organize. Without plan, they cannot lead with confidence or expect others to follow them. And, without plan, managers and their followers have little chance of achieving their goals on knowing when and where they stray from their path. Controlling becomes an exercise in futility. Too often faulty plans affect the future of the entire organization. Planning is crucial! (Stoner et al., 1995: 265)

In order to achieve the objectives of the new educational reform, quality improvement, school clusters should set goals and design suitable courses of actions for attaining those goals most preferably in advance. Any cost-effective school is expected to differ from effective school in its planning. Four stages characterize the conventional cycle of development planning for cost-effective school. These are (Hywel and Jane, 1996:4): the need for audit in order to review the school's current strengths and weaknesses in relation to its aims; identifying priorities which will allow the school to close the gap between its current position and its intended objectives; deciding up on the best means for implementing proposed changes; and ensuring that progress is being relatively evaluated.

Thus, since the introduction and adoption of the school cluster is meant for the ultimate improvement of the quality of education, its activities and programs should be planned in advance in line with the aforementioned spirit. Basic issues such as need assessment, deciding priorities, delivering training, and monitoring implementation should be taken into consideration (Cummings et al., 2004:2). In doing so, school clusters can achieve their objectives of ITPD, school-based supervision, experience sharing among satellite schools, practicing action research and the like.

2.7. Benefits of School Clusters

Based on the variety of purposes that countries have in implementing the cluster school model in their respective schools, Brunswick and Valerian (2004:58) identified different benefits. In its administrative benefit it helps to reduce number of contact with higher educational authorities and enables principals to assume more responsibilities. School cluster also has economic benefits in that it improves the allocation of human and material resources and optimizes their use. The other advantage of school cluster is its educational benefits in the improvement of a professional supervision of teachers and training of those without match training. The other benefits of school clusters are that they help schools integrate into their environment and mobilize community around the school; promote monitoring and support of teachers and performance evaluation; allow for better management training of principals for teachers and teaching; can simplify data collection for statistical purposes; and are helpful in the provision of support to poorer schools.

Another main advantage of the school cluster system, according to Ayalew (1998:119) is in the area of professional development, and for addressing access issues; for example, when a teacher

in one school is sick, or on a maternity leave, a cluster provides the framework for identifying teachers who can fill in a part or full time basis through rotation from a member school.

2.8. Factors Adversely Affecting the Implementation of School

Cluster System

Despite the aforementioned benefits of school cluster model, there are some factors that hinder its effective implementation. Samaranayke (1983:63-64) pointed out that the following factors adversely affect the implementation of school cluster system. Firstly, nomination and position of core principals particularly that is related to their qualifications, the grades and size of schools as well as the seniority and efficiency of the principals have often been ignored in the appointment of principals- as a result of which principals suffer from an inferiority complex which adversely affects the progress of clusters. Secondly, lack of clear instructions defining duties of cluster and satellite principals which jeopardizes their effectiveness in discharging their roles and responsibilities. Thirdly, resistance to change (particularly to adopt and implement the cluster model) on the part of some principals, teachers, parents and officials will create difficulties to cluster principal to assert his/her position. Fourthly, administrative and planning difficulties as a result of inadequacy of supervisors and administrative officials at different levels, and turn-over of cluster school and satellite school principals.

Brunswick and Valerian (2004) in their part argue that the major problems of implementing cluster system can be categorized into the following three areas: principals of school clusters were over loaded administratively; central school did not have sufficient resources for entire network; and costs incurred were high

These authors propose that the drawback with regard to administrative overload on the head teachers might be ameliorated with a decision to hire another professional to organize and lead the cluster, or increase the financial salary of cluster head teachers so that: the job be attractive one, and will lead to greater competition for it; and the pay encourages increased focus on clusters and their administration.

2.9. Some Major Activities of School Cluster Resource Centers Management

It has been mentioned some where in this research paper that the major purposes of school clustering model are of four major categories; economic purpose, pedagogic purpose,

administrative purpose, and political purpose. For the practicality of these purposes, activities such as in-service teacher professional development, cluster-based supervision, inter-satellite schools experience- sharing and action research need to be practiced in CRCs.

2.9.1. Cluster-Based In-service Teacher Professional Development

A changing world requires a changing style of education. To cope with the fast change in educational trends there is also an observation of the general trends of change in the role of teachers. Thus, for such a role a professionally qualified human resource is needed (Gamage, 2006:159). Accordingly, as Gobles and Porter (1997:12-14) pointed out, a Working paper of International Bureau of Education (IBE) identified the general trends of change in the role of the teacher and suggested that in order to exercise these new roles, teachers need to continuously update and develop their profession. Harris (2003:109) argues that “teacher leadership, and teacher development is the key to building the capacity for sustained school improvement.” Harris continues to state that research has shown that in order to achieve improvements in teaching and better learning outcomes for students, teachers need to be engaged in meaningful professional development that promotes inquiry, creativity and innovation (ibid:112).

It is generally argued that in-service professional development such as cluster based in-service teacher professional development is a cost-effective one and hence useful. The world Bank has reported that in-service training can have a positive impact on educational quality if it is appropriate, well organized, and competently delivered (World Bank, 1998 cited in Gaynor, 1998:22). ITPD is characterized by:

- **Continuity**-teacher learning must be life-long and even experienced master teachers should continue to develop (Craig et al., 1998; Elmore, 2002; Guskey, 2002). Elmore, 2002; Guskey, 2001 state that “if in service education is organized as one time workshop, particularly when teachers are faced with a new curriculum or reform, the one off workshops are unlikely to be remembered by teachers one year later, let alone influence classroom practice.”
- **Closeness**-quality PD does not take place away from the classroom. Long-term pedagogical change is best supported by ITPD close to classrooms (Craig et al., 1998; Leu, 2004).

- **Student-centered and use of active learning-** students and teachers, construct, create knowledge actively rather than receive knowledge from external sources. “Teachers must be actively involved in their learning and Professional Development should include active leaning strategies in its curriculum and delivery” (Craig et al., 1998).
- **Support for reflection and collaboration-** collaboration supports teacher leaning- likewise, the ability of teachers to be reflective practitioners that constantly re-evaluate their practices in order to improve them is a cornerstone of quality ITPD (Schon, 1983).

With regard to in-service training, four levels of operation are identified: in-service education functions response to national, regional, institutional and personal needs (Goble and Porter, 1977:159)

2.9.2. Cluster-Based Supervision

Scholars generally agree that there is no one accepted definition of the term “supervision.” To quote one of the several definitions of supervision, Rue and Byers (1989:6) give the following definition: “Supervision is the first level of management in the organization and is concerned with encouraging the members of a work unit to contribute positively toward accomplishing the organization’s goals and objectives.’ ‘This means that the supervision does not do the operative work but sees that it is accomplished through the efforts of others.” Harris (1985:10), on the other hand defines supervision as “a service which is an expert technical service primarily aimed at studying and improving cooperatively all factors which affect child growth and development.”

2.9.2.1. Functions of Supervision

The purpose of supervision is two fold: to monitor progress; and to resolve implementation constraints at the earliest possible time so as to help the implementation agencies maintain a speedy implementation process (ESDP III, 2005:71). Harris (1985:27) suggested the following operational and instruction-related functions of supervision: developing curriculum, organizing instruction, providing staff, providing facilities, providing materials, arranging for in-service education and/or training, orienting staff members, relating special pupils services, developing public relations, and evaluating instruction.

2.9.2.2. Characteristics of Successful Supervisors

Successful supervisors demonstrate many peculiar characteristics among which the most important ones are ability and willingness to delegate, proper use of authority, setting good example, recognizing the changing role of supervisor's desire for the job/supervision (Rue and Bayrs, 1989:9). Harris, 1963 in (Digafe, 2003:19) argued that if instruction is to be improved and teacher's initiative, responsibility, creativity, internal commitment and motivation are to be developed, local level supervision such as cluster-based one is crucial. It is also essential for the improving of quality of education and pupil growth.

2.9.2.3. Responsibilities of School Cluster Supervisor

Dykstra and Kucita (2003:8) identified responsibilities of cluster school supervisor such as the following supervising all teachers and head teacher; sets teacher training schedule with other members of the committee; assures that materials from the resource center, and teachers are supplied equally to all schools in the cluster; acts as a liaison to the community, the schools in the cluster and the district; and as an advocate for his cluster; and establishes a training calendar for teachers.

2.9.3. School Clusters and Action Research

One of the major purposes of the school clustering model is the cost-effective implementation of in-service teacher professional development. On the other hand, action research is one component of the ITPD. This is because, as McNiff and Whitehead (2002: 1) state: "action research involves learning in and through action and reflection. Action research is always to do with learning, and learning is to do with education and growth that is why many people regard it as a form of educational research." This implies that if educational quality is to be improved as the result of the professional development of teachers through the mechanism of school clustering system, the practice of action research should be incorporated into the cluster-based in-service teachers professional development programs.

Scholars defined action research in different ways. Elliott (1991:69) defined the concept as: "the study of social situation with a view to improving the quality of action with it." McNiff and Whitehead, on the other hand, defined the term as: "a practical way of looking at your practice in order to check whether it is as good as you feel it should be." There is still another definition of

action research read as follows: “Action research is a process in which participants examine their own educational practices systematically and carefully, using the techniques of research.” (Watts, 1985 in Eileen, 2007:7)

There are different types of action research: individual teacher research that usually focuses on a single issue in a single classroom; collaborative action research-that may include from two to a group of department issue; school-wide research-that focuses on issues common to all (e.g. lack of parental involvement in school activities); and district wide research (Eilun, 2000). Eileen (2000) identified the following benefits of action research. Action research focuses on school issue, problem, or area of collective interest; it is used as a form of teacher professional development. It fosters collegial interactions. Action research helps as a potential to impact school change and reflection on one’s own practice. It is instrumental to bring about improved communication team work.

In general action research with the aim of improving practice rather than producing knowledge, its target is to improve practice by developing the practitioner’s capacity for discrimination and judgment, in particular complex human situations. It unifies inquiry, the improvement of performance and the development of persons in our case, teachers in their professional role.

2.10. School Clusters and Decentralization

The current educational trends of the world indicates that restructuring in the education system is being undertaken emphasizing teachers’ empowerment, student and community participation, decentralization and localization (Alkin, 1992). Fiske (1996) on his part, states that:

Decentralization of schools is truly a global phenomenon. Nations as large as India and as tiny as Burkina Faso are doing it. Decentralization has been fostered by democratic governments in Australia and Spain and by an autocratic military regime in Argentina. It takes forms ranging from elected school boards in Chicago to school clusters in Cambodia to vouchers in Chile (Fiske, 1996).

Decentralization efforts and cluster systems are symbiotically related in their operation. The Cambodian MOEYS (2000) signifies this suggestion. It is argued that some of the major impacts of clusters have been improved localization of resources, improved planning and resource allocation and collaborative planning between impact on wastage rates (which have declined), an

increase in the participation of local actors in meetings, and decision-making, and school construction projects taken up by local communities (Dykstra et al., 2002).

Brown (1990: 79), cited in Sifellig (2007), listed the following beneficial activities of schools and local level education systems that are the results of the right way of management that plays a great role in exercising decentralization: autonomy, flexibility, responsiveness, planning by principal and school community, adoption of new role by principal, a participatory school environment, collaboration and collegiality among staff, and, a heightened sense of personal efficacy for principals and teachers.

A decentralized education system lends itself to building effective clustered schools-such a system encourages teachers and local education officials to actively participate in managing schools, developing learning materials, and in making decisions regarding curriculum and pedagogical methods. It also fosters independent learning and development of decision-making skills in teachers and local administrators (Thomas and Shaw, 1992:23)

According to Ayalew (2000:135), assignments and expectations in favor of more decentralization at the education system are categorized into four major categories: ideological, political, administrative and pedagogical. When implementing school cluster system as a form of decentralized organization and management of the education system, the related terms such as school empowerment, autonomy, accountability and capacity need to be given due consideration.

2.10.1. School Clustering and the Need for Empowerment

School empowerment is another aspect of the requirements of the educational decentralization to the grass root level for a better responsiveness. There is a great expectation from school leaders to draw together the very many different educational, managerial, and financial threads in the work of the school, as well as to stimulate and if possible, inspire the professionals to greater achievement. The evidence suggests that under devolved school management both the roles of chief executive and educational leader attain greater significance (Levacic, 1998).

Empowerment is defined as "the act of delegating power and authority to a subordinate so that the goals of a manager can be accomplished (Stoner et al, 2003). From this definition, it can be deduced that if cluster resource centers are to function properly and their managers are to be

effective in achieving the school cluster's goals and objectives they need to be empowered and given authority to wield the power.

According to Arnott (2000:70), the perspectives underlying this model might be either or both 'political' (in broader sense of dispersing power) and managerial, on the principle that decisions are best taken as close as possible to the point of action while in others the arrangement has also been couched in terms of freedom and choice.

Given the definition of empowerment and the above discussion, it is apparent that for the accomplishment of their tasks, school cluster resource centers are required to be empowered by the higher level administrative bodies in the hierarchy of the education system.

2.10.2. School Clusters and the Need for Autonomy

School autonomy is an essential element of the overall decentralization of the education system for the efficient and effective implementation of school affairs at the local and school level. The dictionary definition of the term autonomy is "self governing", and hence, "functioning independently without the control of others (West, 1992 cited in Bush and Burnham, 1994:187). In this case, the emphasis of West is the autonomy of consumers, 'who must be free to choose a better school and reject an inferior one', as well as the autonomy of schools. Chubb and Moe, 1990, as cited in Bush and Burnham (1994:188) defined autonomous schools as: "free to govern themselves as they want, specify their own goals, programs and methods." Bush and Burnham (1994:188) emphasize that "an increase in institutional autonomy is achieved through decentralization;" and suggest five domains of decision-making in autonomous schools. These are school organization, curriculum, staffing, financial and resource management, and external relations. At the school level, according to Gay nor (1998:7), the principal, often with the council or committee, is responsible for the hiring, promotion, discipline, dismissal, in-service training, and appraisal of teachers.

According to OECD, conclusion from research findings, autonomy of schools has the following impact:

Greater autonomy in schools—(leads) to greater effectiveness, through greater flexibility and therefore better use of resources; to professional development selected at school level; to more knowledgeable teachers, and parents, so to better financial decisions; to

whole school planning and implementation with priorities set on the basis of data about student (outcomes) and needs. (Quoted in Bush and Burnham, 1994:9)

Thus, the above discussion is also applicable for the cluster resource center management systems and its overall operation. Since school clustering is considered as the manifestation of the attempt to devolve authority to the local school community for cost-effective and efficient implementation of the system, the need for autonomy to CRCs is indispensable.

2.10.3. School Clustering and the Need for Capacity Building

For the effective implementation of the management of school cluster model, there must be competency and capacity on the part of the school management system at various levels. Hopkins and Jackson (2003:87-88) define school capacity as “the collective competency of the school as an entity to bring about effective change.” They suggest the following four components of school capacity: knowledge, skills and dispositions of individual members; a professional learning community in which staff work collaboratively to set clear goals for student learning, assess how well students are doing, develop action plans to increase student achievement whilst being engaged in inquiry and problem-solving; program coherence-the extent to which the school’s programs for students are coordinated, focused on clear learning goals and sustained over a period of time; and technical resources-high quality curriculum, instructional material, assessment instruments, technology, workspace, physical environment.

Blasé and Anderson (1995) argue that if the above components of school capacity are to be realized, the assertiveness of school should be stimulated. To this end, new programs in management training that target both school principals and local educational officials need to be developed. This in turn may encourage principals to take a more assertive role in school management, and may also encourage local official to allow schools more discretion (ibid: 89).

2.10.4. School Clustering and Accountability

If the objectives of school decentralization is to be attained there should be not only the devolution of responsibility, authority and power to the grassroots level but also there should be a system and sense of school accountability when implementing the decentralized activities

because accountability is one critical component of professionalism and is closely related to the principles of morality, ethics and legal obligations.

According to Hacker (1996), accountability is defined as: "The readiness to have one's actions, judgments, and failures to act to be questioned by responsible others; to explain why deviations from the reasonable expectations of responsible others may have occurred; and to respond responsibly when errors in behavior in judgment have been detected." For effective operation of SBM, school autonomy and school accountability need to be in place inseparably. With regard to this Wohlstetter and Sebring (2000:174) in Bush and Bel (2003:233) comment: "An underlying premise of SBM is that school-level participants trade increased autonomy for increased accountability."

"The expected consequence of accountability", according to Hanushek and Raymond (2004:1), "is students' performance." The research finding in USA, for example, indicates that accountability systems introduced in the country during the 1990s had a clear positive impact on student achievement (ibid:1). In USA school accountability activities are planned in advance indicating the emphasis given in such a system.

There are different forms of accountability. While the first two forms are contractual and responsive accountability, the other aspects of accountability are relevant to the governance models: Competitive Market (CM), School Empowerment (SE), Local Empowerment (LE) and Quality Control (QC), the third aspect of accountability is that related to the model and that concerns the purpose of performance measurement.

Contractual Accountability:- this is concerned with the degree to which educators are fulfilling the expectations of particular audiences in terms of standards, outcomes and results. It tends to be measurement-driven, with the factors to be measured-whether educational, financial or others selected by those audiences in line with their perceived preferences and requirements.

Responsive Accountability:- this refers to decision-making by educators after a process of taking into account the interests and wishes of relevant 'stakeholders.' It is more concerned with process than outcomes and with securing involvement and interaction to obtain decisions which meet a range of needs and preferences.

In the competitive market, the provision of schooling is analogous to a commercial service and so the predominant form of accountability is contractual. In the school empowerment model, with its focus on the school as a participatory community, the dimension of responsiveness is uppermost. In local empowerment model, the broader local community is the pivotal unit, so responsiveness to stakeholders is even more pronounced.

Finally, in the quality control (QC) model the contractual form will be the significant one, with the 'contract' being specified by governments or their agents rather than by parents or 'consumers' as in competitive market (CM).

2.11. Monitoring and Evaluation of School Cluster Activities

In order to take timely corrective actions and make some necessary adjustment, the implementation process and the outcomes of the cluster system management need to be monitored and evaluated. Such a system is important to judge whether the objectives are being attained as expected or not so that the necessary decisions are made about what should be done next.

In a decentralized education system where schools are empowered, and autonomous in decision making and implementation of the school activities, the system of self-evaluation is beneficial and is currently given due emphasis. A self-evaluation approach can be used to enable school communities to come to grips with some of the key issues that concern the following questions: How good is our school? How can we make it better? Are teachers' skills being put to good use? How good is learning and teaching in our school? And how do we know? (Riley and Mac Beath., 2000). According to Battery (2000); and Power (1997) in Bush and Bell (2003:235), the purpose of performance management and analysis differs based on the model of governance across the education system. In School Empowerment model the purpose is to provide management information to facilitate organizational improvement. In the Local Empowerment model, a key purpose of performance management and analysis will be to provide comparative 'bench-making' information across organizational units to promote local system enhancement. Under Quality Control (QC) model, the main purpose will be to seek to monitor, control and develop the system as a whole.

The school-self evaluation profile follows the principle that the outcomes of schooling need to be academic achievement, personal and social development, and pupil destinations. The processes

at grass-root level are time for learning, quality of learning and support for learning. Process at school level includes: school as learning place, school as social place; and school as professional place while environment includes school and home, school and community, and school and work (Riley and Mack Beath, 2000)

The success of school activities are measured based on pre-specified criteria and the criteria for measuring success may differ from one type of organization to another. It becomes more complex in the case of public organizations, particularly educational institutions.

Similarly, Fiske (1996: 442) argues that the relationship between the current trend to educational decentralization and evaluation is problematic for the following three reasons: a) Modern, pluralistic societies increasingly face a lack of consensus on the objectives of education, and hence on the criteria for evaluating the performance of educational systems; b) there is an objection to the country notwithstanding a very close and inevitable linkage between evaluation and control, which is difficult to reconcile with the basic premises of decentralization; and c) evaluation tends to be seen and used as a means of compensatory legitimization on its own right, that is, more for its legitimating than for its informative capacity (Fiske, 1996:442).

2.12. The Current Situation of School Cluster Model in Ethiopia

The introduction of the organization of schools into clusters in Ethiopia is traced back to 1995. This innovation was initiated by BESO I project which was concerned with the provision of support to CRCs (Asnake, 2007:3). This initiation has now been disseminated to other regions in the country. One of the purposes of the adoption of the model, according to ESDP III, 2005:33, is that the school cluster resource centers are expected to function as an agent of change in terms of school curriculum and pedagogy. Particularly, in this ESDP III, CRC system has been adopted as one of the strategies to enhance quality of education. Schools are organized into clusters with roughly 4-7 first cycle primary schools (1-4) and a complete primary school (1-8).

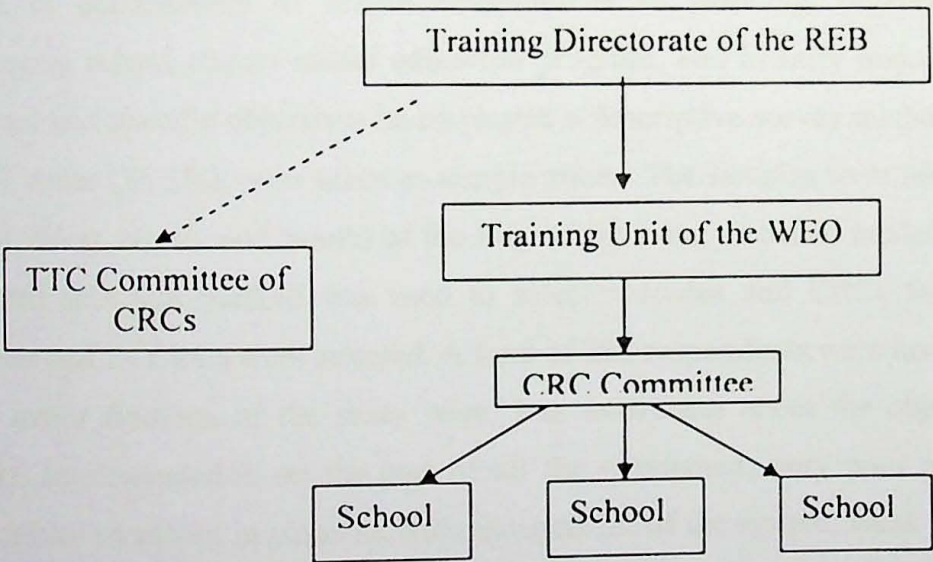
According to UNICEF (2002), some achievements have been observed since the adoption of the model in the country. Some of these achievements are the system was expanded and was successful. About 10,000 teachers have been trained in child-centered and participatory learning approach, and over 2,000 core teachers have been trained. More than 200 school clusters have been established covering 1,000 schools.

In one of the education policy document, ESDP III(2005) five yeas action plan, the need to strengthen and expand CRCs to provide in-service and regular training for both qualified and Para-qualified professional teachers has been given due emphasis.

2.13. The Current Situation of School Clustering in Oromia

Oromia Regional State Education Bureau defined the school clusters, in its guideline in 1999 E.C for implementing the school cluster system, as: “a group of schools (3-5 in number) which are found in neighborhood to each other and organized under a core school which they select..” Even though there is no written evidence about the time when the cluster system was introduced in the region, it may be possible to deduce that its introduction is traced back to 1999 as it was introduced in Ethiopia (Asnake, 2007:2). The major objectives of the introduction of the system in the region (as indicated in the guideline) are: educational quality improvement; efficient utilization of available resources and acquisition of new ones; and teachers’ professional development through cost-effective in-service training, supervision, experience-sharing and action research.

Available evidence shows that all elementary schools in the region have been organized into clusters. While the guideline specifies that clusters are organized with 3-5 school, the actual practices show that clusters are being organized with 2-10 schools. The organizational structure of the school clusters in the region is depicted below:



Source: OEB (1999 E.C)

As can be seen from the structure the model adopted seems to be hierarchical structure with no indication of the up-ward and horizontal interaction. The other shortcoming is that the zonal education is by passed in the structure.

The major problems observed from the current situation of implementation of the cluster model in the region are: the working guideline was not in place until 1999 E.C, almost 8 years after the adoption of the system; cluster-based supervisors were not assigned until the mid 1998 E.C; most of the CRC coordinators are not elected by the satellite school principals, but nominated\assigned by woreda officials; the cluster committees are organized with the membership of the principals of the satellites and core schools without involving other community representatives; and the organizational structure so far being used is hierarchical type.

2.14. Review of Empirical Research on the Management of CRC

A study was conducted by Asnake Waqjira (2007) on the management of school cluster Resource Centers in primary schools of Oromia Regional State. The general objective of the study was to assess the current status of the management of clustered primary school resource centers in the Region, and to find out whether efforts made in CRC have supported to improve quality of primary education. More specifically, it was intended to assess awareness of the zonal, woreda officials and school communities about the objectives of the school clustering model; level of participation of school communities in planning, organizing, implementing and managing school cluster model education program, and identify major problems. To attain the general and specific objectives he employed a descriptive survey method. Six zones of the total of 17 zones (35.3%), were taken as sample zones. The samples were taken from the four corners (East, West, North, and South) of the Region by using stratified random sampling technique. A random selection method was used to select woredas and CRCs for sample population. 18 woredas and 54 CRCs were selected. A total of 285 respondents were involved in the study.

The major findings of the study were: less awareness about the objectives of school cluster model implementation on the part of all the concerned; very poor participation of the CRC committee members in planning and management of the system; weak local capacity in terms of planning, organizing, managing and efficient utilization of resources; and unsatisfactory quality improvement in education.

Based on the findings; the researcher recommended the following measures:

- **Consensus building** - Creating sound organizational structure at zonal, woreda and school levels; the need for clear policy documents and books of cluster guideline or manual; developing sound mechanisms to monitor progresses.
- **Capacity building intervention:-** enhance the involvement of stakeholders for their financial, material, expertise contributions and empowering them in running the schools

Active participation:- taking all measures that foster the participation of concerned bodies in cluster system activities. These include: allocating funds for transport and lunch costs during training at CRC; explaining the role of cluster system to all concerned; developing regular communication system. Finally, the researcher recommended the need to undertake (by others interested) a study on the problem on a wider scope.

The review of this particular empirical study has revealed the following gaps. These are:

- i} it did not incorporate the major actors and beneficiaries of the school cluster model such as satellite school principals and teachers
- ii) It did not employ appropriate sampling technique even for those teachers who were taken from the CRCs only. It simply took 3 teachers from each CRC with no any justification. He should have employed random sampling technique and make the sample representative enough.
- iii) The study did not consider issues of good governance.

Thus, this study is conducted to bridge these gaps and to improve some of the issues addressed in the previous study.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

For effective accomplishment of the study the following research design and methodology were employed:

3.1. Research Method

As stated earlier, the study focused on the current practices and problems of management of school cluster resource centers in primary schools of East Wollega Zone. To this end, a descriptive survey method was employed on the assumption that such type of method enables us to gather a large variety of data related to the subject under consideration.

3.2. Sources of Data

To collect relevant data for the accomplishment of the study the following sources of data were used:

3.2.1. Primary Sources

Experts from Zone Education Office, Experts and officials from Woreda Education Offices, CRC committee members, key teachers and teachers were used as primary sources of data.

3.2.2. Secondary Sources

Government policies, guidelines, directives and statistical evidences were used as secondary sources of data.

3.3. Sample of Population and Sampling Technique

East Wollega Zone has 16 Woredas and one city administration. For the purpose of this study the woredas were categorized into three strata based on geographic and economic conditions as central (near the center of the zone), middle and remote woredas. To make the sample a good representative of the zone, from each stratum two woredas were selected on the basis of random sampling techniques by using lottery methods because they have common characteristics. Accordingly, Jimma Arjo and Numu Kumba from the remote; Sasiga and Digga from the

middle; and Waayu Tuka and Guuto Gidda from the center were selected. A total of 6 woredas (35.29%) were included in the sample.

With regard to CRCs, out of 33 CRCs in the sample woredas 10 CRCs (30%) of the CRCs in the sample woredas were selected on the basis of simple random sampling technique using lottery method. Accordingly, Nunnu Gaba Robi from Nunnu Kumba Woreda, Kumburo Belechu and Bilisumma argene from Sasiga Woreda, Andinnet and Arjo primary school from Jimma Arjo woreda, Gute from Wayyu Tuka woreda, Mulleta and Digga Kolobo from Digga woreda, and Lalissa and Qarssa from Goto Gida wereda CRCs were included in the study. With regard to satellite schools, among 39 satellite schools in the 10 CRCs, the total of 19 satellite schools were included as samples.

Sample woredas, sample CRCs and sample size of satellite schools to be included in the study are summarized as follows.

Table 3.1 Sample Woredas, CRCs and Satellite Schools.

NO	Sample Woredas	No. of CRCs in the sample Woredas	No. of CRCs Chosen as sample	No. of Satellite schools in the sample CRCs	No. of Satellite schools chosen
1	Nunnu Kumba	4	1	2	1
2	Jima Arjo	7	2	8	4
3	Sasiga	6	2	8	4
4	Digga	7	2	8	4
5	Wayyu Tuka	4	1	5	2
6	Guto Gidda	5	2	8	4
	Total	33	10	39	19(48.72%)

Source: EWEO, 2007/08

Based on this, for convenience and reasonable representation, a total of 153(27.57%) respondents (from a total of 555 populations) were taken as samples. Sample respondents, sampling techniques employed and the corresponding reasons to employ the techniques are summarized below

Zonal Education Office, Woreda Education Offices, CRCs and satellite schools were used as sample areas from which to select representatives of experts, officials, CRC committee members and teachers for the study.

Table 3.2: Sampling Areas and Sample Respondents, and their proportions

Sample Area	Respondents														
	Officials			Experts			CRC Committee Members			Teachers			Total		
	Pop.	Sample		Pop.	Sample		Pop.	Sample		Pop.	Sample		Pop.	Sample	
		N	%		N	%		N	%		N	%		N	%
CRCs and Schools	-	-	-	-	-	-	39	38	97.44	496	98	19.76	535	136	25.42
WEOs	6	5	83.33	12	11	91.67	-	-	-	-	-	-	18	16	88.89
ZEO	-	-	-	2	1	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	50
Total	6	5	83.33	14	12	85.71	39	38	97.44	496	98	19.76	555	153	27.57

Different sampling techniques were employed to get reasonable representatives of each of the sample areas/populations.

Table 3.3. Sample Respondents, Sampling Techniques Employed and the Corresponding Reasons

No	Samples	Sampling Technique Employed	Reason
1	Teachers	Simple Random Sampling	- To give equal chance to all the teachers to be selected - To get manageable number of respondents for the study
2	CRC Committee Members	Availability and Purposive	- Their number was manageable - Better information is expected to be obtained from these respondents because of their closer relation to the problem
3	WEO Officials	Availability and Purposive	- Their number is manageable for the study - Better first hand information is obtained by virtue of their position and relation to the issue
4	WEO Experts	Availability	Their number is manageable for the study and better information is expected from them
5	ZEO Experts	Availability and Purposive	- Their number is manageable - They are expected to have relevant information in this area by virtue of their closeness to this issue.

3.4. Data Collection Instruments and Procedure

Two instruments- questionnaire (to be filled out by teachers, CRC committee members, and WEO experts) and unstructured interview guide (to be responded to by WEO officials and ZEO experts) were employed for data collection. Both close- and open-ended items were included in the questionnaire to gather relevant information from CRC committee members, WEO experts, and CRCs and member schools teachers. The questionnaire incorporated issues that are related to personal characteristics, Purposes, strategies, planning, organization/ staffing. monitoring and evaluation, good governance, major outcomes and hindering factors in the management of

CRCs. A total of 90 items were presented in the questionnaire. the questions were presented in a multiple choice and Likert Scale form. At the end of each section of the questionnaire a question that invites the respondents to forward the missed important issue [if there is any] in each of the sections. The questionnaires were administered to each of the respondents in person and instructions were defined clearly to the respondents before they started filling out the questionnaire. Among 149 questionnaire that were distributed to the respondents, 147(98.87%) were returned. This was found to be sufficient to draw conclusion the findings.

Unstructured interview guide of five questions was also designed and conducted to gather data from sample Woredas Education Offices officials and Zonal Education Office experts. The interview guide consisted of five major questions. The questions were mainly concerned with the purposes/importance, strategies, major outcomes observed, the current financial, material, managerial, technical and professional capacities of the CRCs, major problems/factors that hinder the implementation of school cluster model, and the measures that should be taken to alleviate the problems.

To determine the validity and reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was conducted. For the determination of the validity of the instrument, five experienced experts who have worked on the area for relatively longer years, judged the structured questionnaire for its content validity (quality that enables it to measure what it is supposed to measure). Based on the feedback of the experts, the instrument was reassessed for further refinement before it was distributed to respondents. Accordingly, difficult terms were modified, irrelevant items were avoided, missed relevant questions and options were added. To establish the reliability of the questionnaire, the filled out questionnaires were collected back from 12 respondents (2 WEO experts,2 CRC coordinators,2 CRC supervisors,2 satellite school principals, and 4 teachers) and the reliability of the data was checked through split-half methodology. Reliability test calculation was done by applying the Spearman Brown prophecy formula to correct the problem of lower correlation that may arise from the reduction in size of items. The correlation between the two-halves was calculated. Accordingly, the reliability estimate for the pilot-test was found to be 0.92.Statistical literatures show that the more reliability test is nearer to 1the more the instrument is reliable and vice versa. Thus, the calculated estimate of the reliability test showed that the questionnaire was reliable (had internal consistency).After the instrument was checked for its validity and reliability; the structured questionnaires were distributed to 149 respondents. Among these

respondents. 147 respondents returned the completely filled out questionnaires. Since this is 98.87% of the total respondents it is assumed to be sufficient to draw conclusion for the study. Unstructured interview was also conducted to collect the required information from officials/heads of 5 sample Woredas and one Zonal Education Office expert. In this case, among the 8 intended respondents, 6(75%) responded to the interview.

3.5. Method of Data Analysis

The respondents were grouped into three categories (experts, CRC committee members and teachers) and their responses were tallied, counted and computed by applying percentage to see relative proportions. A non-parametric statistical test (chi-square) was also applied to find out the relationship between opinions and positions of the respondents, or to see if the opinions of the respondent groups were affected by their respective positions/work responsibilities. Chi-square test was found to be appropriate because the data were discrete, counted rather than measured. Furthermore, the open-ended or qualitative data were analyzed by narration. Based on the data analyzed, interpretations and conclusions were made. Different statistical tools were employed to analyze and interpret the data collected based on the basic questions of the study. Accordingly, the basic questions of the study, the statistical tools employed to analyze the data and the corresponding reasons are summarized in Table 3.4 below [next page].

Table 3.4: Basic Questions, Statistical Tools Employed and the Corresponding Reasons

No	Basic Question	Statistical Tools Employed	Reason
1	To what extent are the major theoretically identified/established purposes of school cluster model being followed/practiced in the CRCs?	Chi-square	To see if the opinions of respondents towards the extent to which school cluster purposes are practiced were affected by their respective positions
		Percentage	- To determine their frequency counts - To see relative standing
2	What strategies are being practiced in the CRCs?	Chi-Square	To see if there is systematic relationship between the opinions of the respondents towards the degree to which appropriate strategies were practiced and their respective positions
		Percentage	- To determine frequency counts - To determine relative standing
3	To what extent are the major managerial functions being practiced by the cluster centers management systems?	Chi-Square	To see if the opinions of respondents towards the status of the practices of major managerial functions were affected by their respective positions
		Percentage	- To determine frequency counts - To determine relative standing
4	To what extent is the existing governance in the cluster systems conducive for the effectiveness of the functions of the CRCs management system?	Chi-Square	To see if there is significant relationship between the positions and opinions of the respondents towards the extent to which the existing governance is conducive
		Percentage	- To determine their frequency counts - To see relative standing
5	What is the status of the outcomes expected in the implementation of the cluster model?	Chi-Square	To see if the opinions of respondents towards the status of the outcomes so far observed were affected by their respective positions
		Percentage	- To determine frequency counts - To determine relative standing
6	What are the major difficulties that have been hindering effectiveness of the CRC management system?	Chi-Square	To see if there is systematic relationship between the opinions of the respondents about the extent of the seriousness of the difficulties in managing CRCs and their respective positions
		Percentage	- To determine their frequency counts - To see relative standing
7	Is there any significant relationship between the work positions and opinions of the respondents about the status of practices and problems of the a)purposes b)implementing strategies c)planning aspects d)status of good governance e)outcomes, and f) hindering factors of the CRC management systems?	Chi-Square	To see if the opinions of respondents towards the status of a)purposes b)implementing strategies c)planning aspects d)status of good governance e)outcomes, and f) hindering factors of the CRC management systems were affected by their respective positions

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0. PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Under this chapter, the following issues are treated:

- 4.1: personal characteristics of the respondents in terms of their sex, age, work responsibility/position, educational level and year of service profile.
- 4.2: Presentation, analysis and interpretation of the extent to which the major identified purposes of school cluster model are being practiced in the CRCs
- 4.3: analysis of the current status of practice of the strategies of the implementation of school cluster model by the sample CRCs
- 4.4: analysis and interpretation of the degree to which different aspects of planning of school cluster resource centers activities are being practiced in managing the CRCs.
- 4.5: analysis and interpretation of the data gathered on the organization and staffing of CRCs.
- 4.6: analysis and interpretation of the responses of the respondents concerning monitoring and evaluation aspects of CRCs management systems
- 4.7: analysis and interpretation of data related to the issues of good governance in the CRC management system.
- 4.8: analysis and interpretation of the responses on the major achievements of the implementation of school cluster model
- 4.9: analysis and interpretation of factors that have been hindering the achievement of the CRC objectives
- 4.10: analysis and interpretation of responses of the interviewees

4.1. Characteristics of Respondents

The target of the study were 11 experts from six WEOs of the six sample woredas found in East Wollega zone, 38 CRC management committee members at CRC level and 98 teachers from sample schools and CRCs. As interview respondents, 1 Zonal Education Office (ZEO) expert and 5 Woreda Education) Offices officials were also involved in the study. A total of 147 copies of questionnaires were distributed to the experts, CRC committee members, and teachers. The composition of these respondents was 11 (7.48%) experts, 38 (25.58%) CRC management

committee members, and 98 (55.06%) teachers. Totally, 98.12% of the intended respondents returned the filled out questionnaire and responded to the interviewee guide.

4.1.1. Analysis of Respondents by Sex category

It can be seen from the following fig. 4.1 that in the three groups of respondents the largest proportion of the respondents were males. In the case of experts all the respondents (100%) were males. Only 27.21% of the total respondents were females.

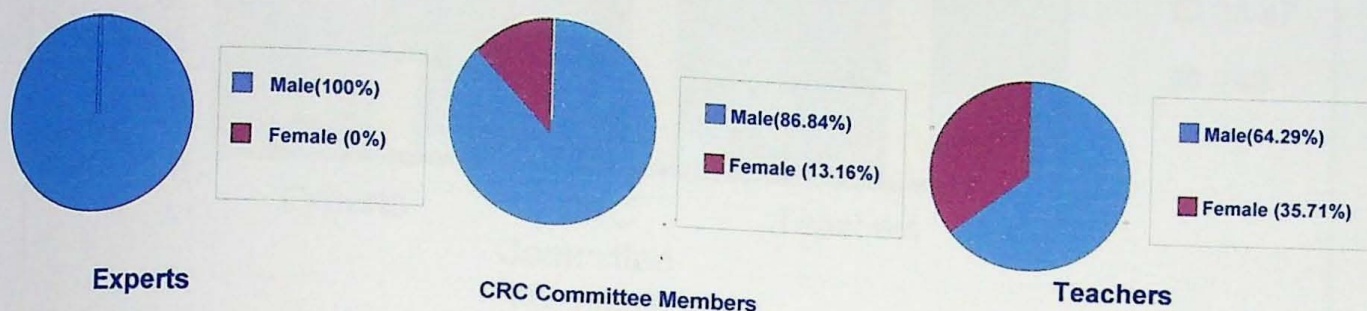


Fig 4.1 Graphic Representation of Respondents by Sex category

The relatively less number of female respondents may be attributed to the less proportion of the total female employees in the three positions. From this, it can be deduced that females' participation in different work positions is still by far less than that of males. The condition is even worse in the higher positions.

4.1.2. Analysis of the Respondents by Age Category

It can be observed from fig. 4.2 below that the largest portion (on average 52.76%) of the three groups of respondents was in the age range of 38 to 47. Even in case of experts, all were of age 38 years and above. This implies that experts from the woreda education offices were more aged than the CRC committee members and teachers. This mostly happens since personnel are usually selected for the upper positions based on their priority of experience which usually goes with age.

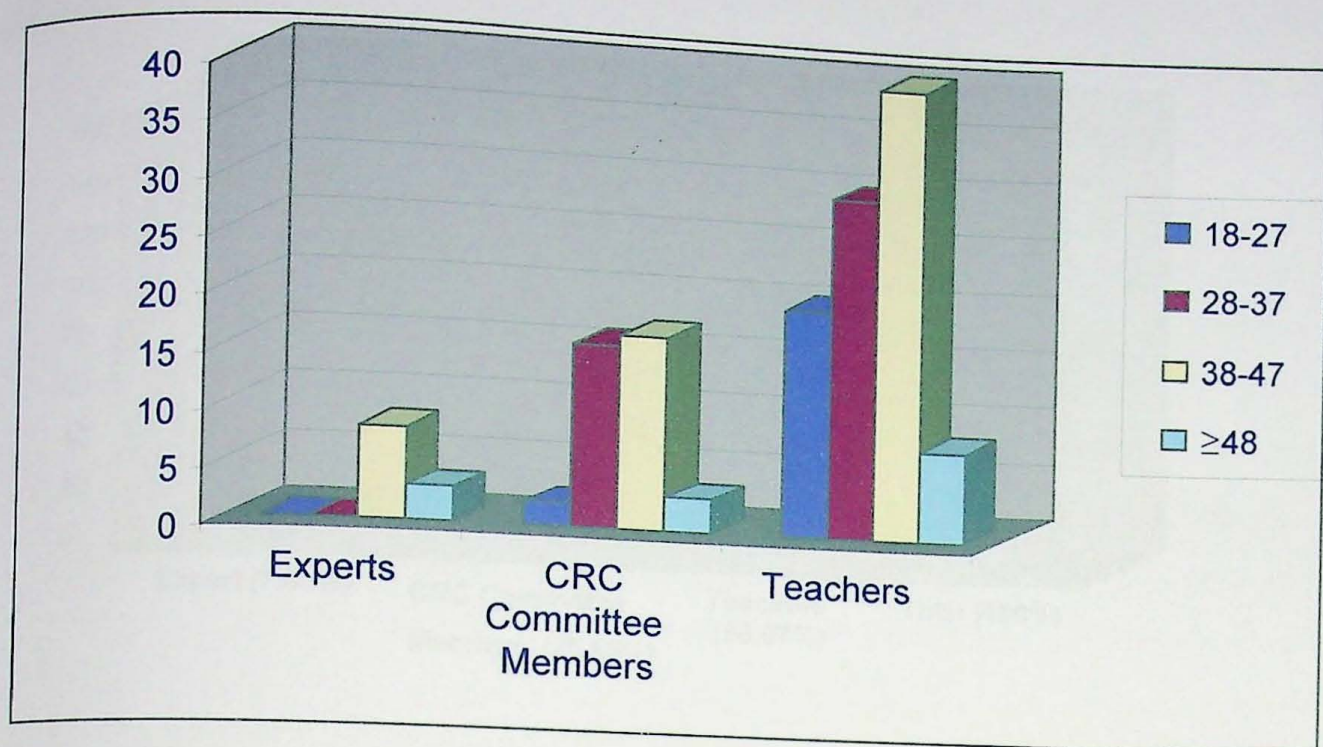


Fig. 4.2 Graphic Representation of Respondents by Age Category

From this, we can deduce that the respondents were in a position to provide the required information by virtue of their relatively matured ages.

4.1.3. Analysis of Respondents by their Job Responsibility\Position

As fig. 4.3 below shows the largest proportion of the respondents (66.67%) were teachers. This seems logical as they were drawn from the relatively largest population compared with the population of the CRC committee members and WEO experts. The experts and CRC management committee members together took a share of only 33.33% of the respondents.

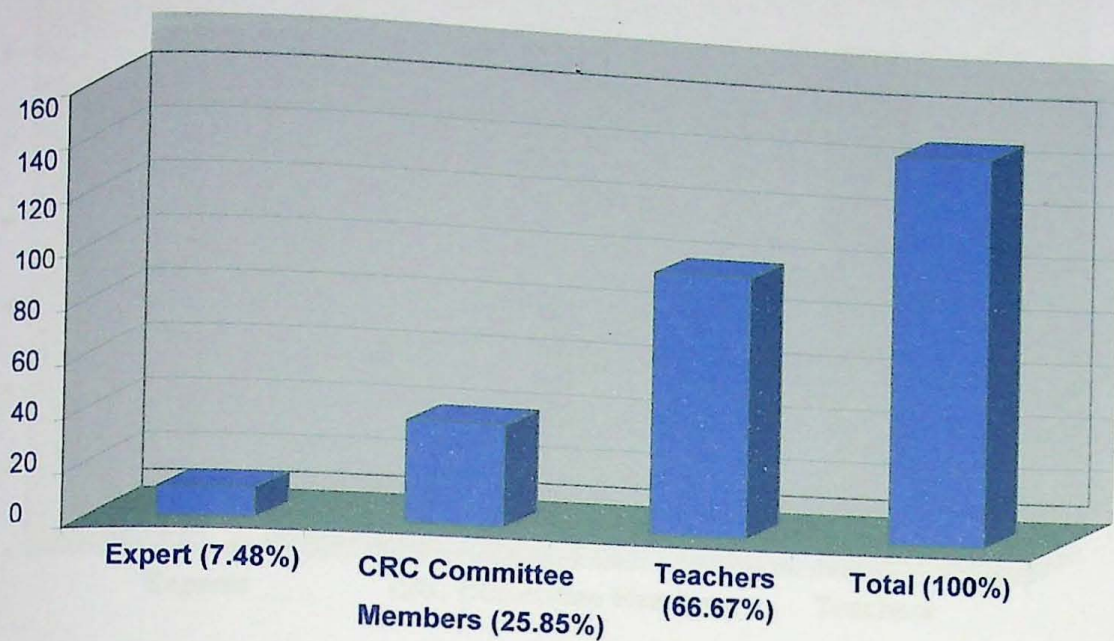


Fig 4.3 Graphic Representation of Respondents by Job Responsibility

From this it can be said that relevant data could be obtained because reasonable proportion of respondents from different positions were taken.

4.1.4. Analysis of Respondents by Education Level

As can be read from fig 4.4 below in average 79.74% of all the three group respondents were diploma or first degree holders. Considerable proportion (35.71%) of the teacher respondents were TTI graduates with certificate.

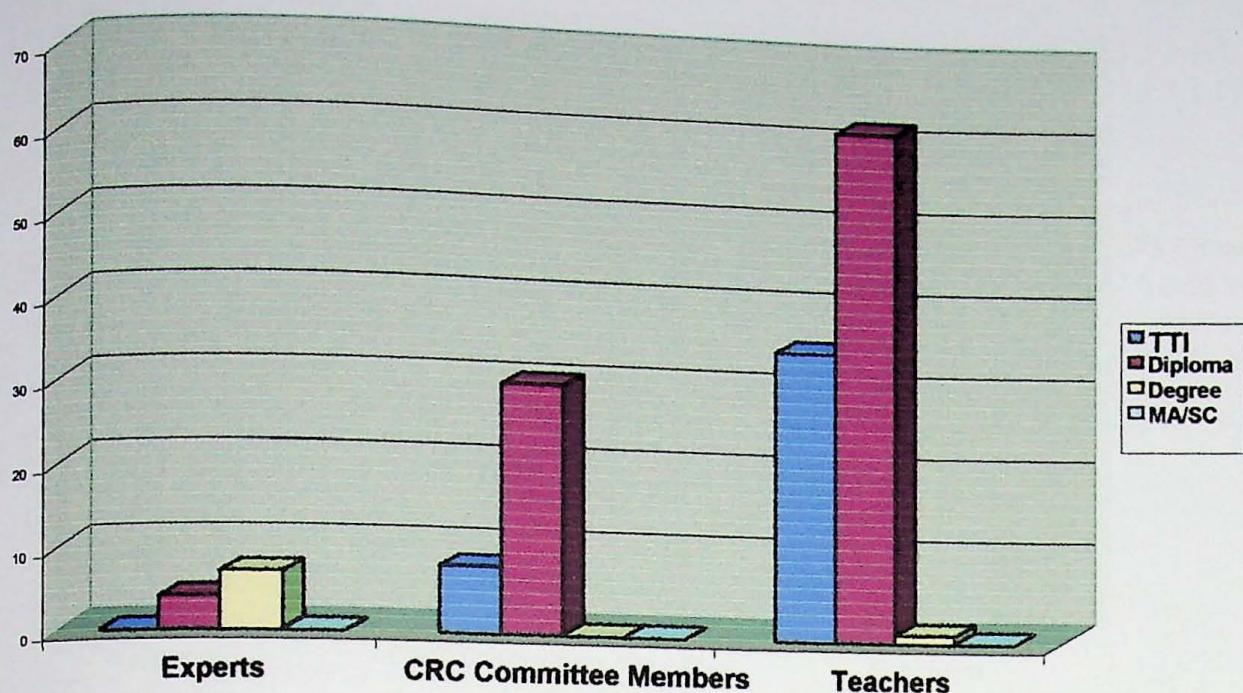


Figure 4.4 Graphic Representations of Respondents by Education Level

The expected and the observed fact with regard to education level of experts have been proved to be practical because all the experts were diploma or first degree holders. The relatively adequacy of their education level may have a positive implication on the efficiency of the management system.

4.1.5. Analysis of Respondents by Years of Service

To secure data about the service years the respondents were asked respond in two ways. One was concerning years of service in the current position and the other was their total years of service. The obtained data indicates that all the experts (100%) had 21 and above years of service. Of all the respondents, 78.24% had a total service of 11 years and above. From this it can be inferred that with regard to total years of service, the respondents were believed to have relatively rich information to provide for the study. With regards to years of service in the current position, the majority of the experts (81.82%) had worked in the position for 6-15 years. Considerable number of the CRC committee members also had worked for 6-10 years at the current position. Even the largest proportion of teachers (94.87%) had between 6 and 20 years of service and above. There were only 38.47%, 18.18% and 5.10% of CRC committee members, experts and teachers respectively who had less or equal to five years of service in the current position.

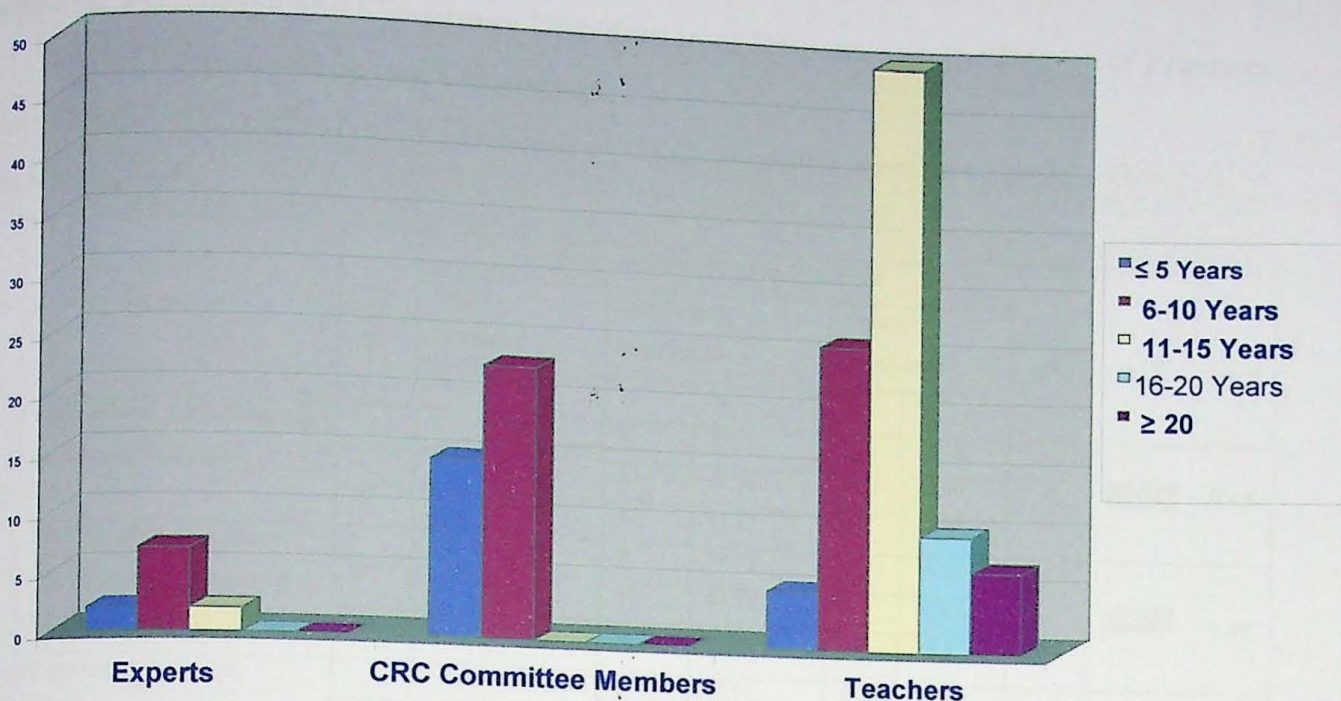


Fig. 4.5 Graphic Representation of Respondents by Service Year in the Current Positions

From this it can be said that the respondents had relevant experience in their respective current position to provide objective and reliable information for the study.

The relatively significant number of CRC committee members who had five or less than five years of service might be attributed to the turn-over of principals and supervisors that make up the CRC committee.

4.2. Issues Related to the Purposes of School Cluster Model

Nowadays, different purposes of school clustering have been identified. Different countries also implement the model in their respective school systems for different purposes based on their own peculiarity. The degree to which each of the purposes is practiced / implemented also differs according to the need and implementing capacity of a country/ school cluster system. Accordingly, to assess which purposes and to what extent the purposes are being practiced in concrete reality, 14 question items were presented in the questionnaire to be rated by the respondents as highly, moderately or poorly practiced purposes in each of the cluster systems. Table 4.1a depicts the responses of the respondents.

Table 4.1a. Percentage and Chi-square Distribution of Responses on the Degree of Practices of Purposes of School Clustering

(Key: Group-I = Experts (N=11) , Group-II = CRC committee members (N=38), Group-III = Teachers (N =98)

No	Purposes	Group	To what Extent it was Practiced						df*3	X ^{2*1}	CV*
			Highly practiced		Moderately practiced		Poorly practiced				
			N	%	N	%	N	%			
1	Facilities are shared among member schools fairly	I	1	9.09	8	72.72	2	18.18	4	29.33* ²	9.49
		II	1	2.63	12	31.58	25	68.79			
		III	2	2.04	11	11.22	85	86.73			
2	Staff members are shared among member schools to fill vacancies	I	1	9.09	8	72.72	2	18.18	4	42.48* ²	9.49
		II	1	2.63	17	44.73	20	52.63			
		III	1	1.02	9	9.18	88	89.8			
3	Community financial support is fostered	I	1	9.09	6	54.54	4	36.36	4	37.89* ²	9.49
		II	1	2.63	17	47.37	20	52.63			
		III	1	1.02	11	12.24	86	87.75			
4	Teachers professional development is encouraged	I	6	54.54	5	45.45	1	9.09	4	12.90* ²	9.49
		II	4	10.53	27	71.05	70	18.42			
		III	21	21.43	52	53.06	25	25.51			
5	Pupil competition is encouraged	I	5	45.45	4	36.36	2	18.18	4	7.74	9.49
		II	8	41.05	24	63.16	6	15.79			
		III	26	26.53	41	41.84	31	31.63			

X^{2*1} = Calculated chi- square value = $\sum (f_o - f_e)^2 / f_e$, df*3 = degree of freedom , *2= Significant at 0.05 level of significance , CV*4 = critical value

The respondents were asked to rate the degree to which the cluster center facilities were shared among member schools fairly. As is observed from Table 4.1a, the statistically significant calculated chi-square value (29.33) indicates that there is no consensus between the respondents of different positions about the degree of fairness of the sharing of CRC facilities among member schools. The majority of teachers (89.78%) and CRC committee members (68.79%) rated the extent to which the facilities were shared as poorly practiced purpose.. The WEO experts, on the other hand, confirmed that the CRC facilities were to some extent shared fairly with the proportion of 72.72% expert respondents. The proportion of the three groups of respondents that rated this item as high were only insignificant in number 1(9.09%), 1(2.63%) and 2(2.04%) of the experts, CRC committee members and teachers, respectively. This implies that adequate effort have not yet been made to ensure the practice of sharing facilities fairly for the realization of shared vision, and this may lead to unhealthy competition between member schools. This may

be due to the fact that the culture of mutual use of available scarce resources has not yet been developed or the tradition of individualism has not been fully avoided. One of the purposes of school cluster model is to allow for the sharing of available resources such as teaching and learning materials, facilities and staff so that the access for all children and the educational quality of all schools within the cluster are improved (MOYES, 1991:25)

One of the purposes of school clustering is to promote efficient utilization of scarce human resource in the cluster systems. In this regard, to check the status of mutual sharing of staff between member schools, a question that was concerned with the extent to which staff-sharing among member schools was practiced was presented on item 2. The implication of the statistically significant calculated chi-square value (42.48) is that the attitudes of the respondents towards the status of sharing of staff members between the member schools depended on, or were affected by the positions they held in the cluster system. The responses of the experts indicated (with 72.72%) that the sharing of staff was moderately practiced. The responses of teachers and CRC committee members, in contrary, confirmed (with 89.8% and 52.53% proportion, respectively) that it was poorly practiced. Thus, from this, it can be deduced that the issue of staff-sharing between member schools to fill vacancies was not yet adequately practiced at CRC level. One of the advantages of the school cluster system is in the area of addressing access issues. For example, when a teacher in one school is sick, or on a maternity leave, a cluster provides a framework for identifying teachers who can fill in a part or full time basis through rotation from a member school (Ayalew, 1998: 119; Bray, 1987: 9).

The third question was raised to find out the extent to which the community financially supported the CRCs. From the statistically significant value (37.89) of the calculated chi-square it can be deduced that the respondents were influenced by their respective positions to rate the status of practice of this purpose differently. The obtained data revealed that it was poorly practiced because the majority of teachers and CRC committee members confirmed this with the largest proportion (87.75% and 52.63%, respectively). The experts, however, responded that it was moderately practiced. But the concrete evidence shows that the awareness of the community about CRC is even at infancy let alone to support it financially. Their support for individual schools was, of course, encouraging.

In order to find out whether or not teachers' professional development program has brought about improvement on teachers profession, the respondents were asked to rate question number 4. The computed chi-square value is found to be statistically significant. This reveals that there is significant relationship between the position of the respondents and their respective opinions toward the degree of practice of the encouragement of teachers' professional development in the CRCs as one purpose of school cluster model. Such a lack of consensus among the respondents may result in a problem with regard to the necessary measures that should be taken to enhance teachers' professional development in the subsequent years. Thus, it is advisable to have commonly agreed upon standards of evaluation of the status of the issue. The responses of the respondents indicated the mix of moderate degree of practice by 72.72% of experts and poor degree of practice by 89.90% and 52.63% of teachers and CRC committee members respectively. This data/finding shows that the CRC management system has never brought the adequate improvement on teachers' professional development. This may be justified by the fact that the ultimate beneficiaries of professional development programs—teachers— with largest proportion (89.80%) denied the effectiveness of the system in this regard. From this, it can be deduced that the inquiry, creativity and innovation capacity of the teachers is not at the required level because they were not professionally well developed. It is believed that one of the emphases of school clustering system is continuous professional development for teachers (ESDP III, 2005: 14-15)

With regard to the encouragement of pupil competition as one purpose of school clustering, question number 5 was asked to be rated. As seen from the table the calculated chi-square value (7.74) is less than the critical value (9.49) at 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that there is no statistically significant relationship between the positions of the respondent groups and their attitudes towards the extent to which pupil competition was encouraged in the CRCs which in turn reveals that there is consensus among the respondent groups that pupil competition highly/moderately encouraged. The presence of such a consensus will have a positive implication on the subsequent actions that are likely to be taken and to contribute what is expected of each segment of the cluster systems. Large proportion of teachers (66.37%), CRC committee members (84.21%), and experts (81.81%) rated the realization of this particular purpose as moderate/high. This implies that encouragement of pupil completion is relatively the

one that has been given a better attention in the cluster systems. This, in fact, plays its role in improving students' academic performance.

Table 4.1b. Percentage and Chi-square Distribution of Responses on the Degree of Practices of Purposes of School Clustering

(Key: Group-I = Experts (N=11), Group-II = CRC committee members (N=38), Group-III = Teachers (N=98))

No	Purposes	Group	Degree of its Practice						df	X ²	CV
			Highly practiced		Moderately practiced		Poorly practiced				
			N	%	N	%	N	%			
1	Integration of different levels of schooling is encouraged	I	N	%	N	%	N	%	4	0.98	9.49
		II	8	21.05	22	57.89	8	21.05			
		III	28	28.57	54	55.10	16	16.33			
2	The CRC acts as a center for community involvement in education	I	2	18.18	4	36.36	2	45.45	4	24.00*	9.49
		II	5	13.16	15	39.47	18	47.39			
		III	4	4.08	15	15.31	79	80.61			
3	The CRC acts as a center for collection of information in enrollments	I	3	27.27	5	45.45	3	27.27	4	54.11*	9.49
		II	5	13.16	17	44.73	16	42.11			
		III	1	1.02	6	6.12	91	92.86			
4	Local decision is made on teacher posting	I	2	18.18	7	63.64	2	18.18	4	52.43*	9.49
		II	5	13.16	16	42.11	17	44.74			
		III	1	1.02	7	7.14	90	91.84			
5	Local decision is made on teacher leave arrangements	I	3	27.27	5	45.45	3	27.27	4	54.11*	9.49
		II	5	13.16	17	44.73	16	42.11			
		III	1	1.02	6	6.12	91	92.86			
6	A better framework is provided for teacher inspection	I	3	27.27	7	63.64	1	9.09	4	18.75*	9.49
		II	6	15.79	17	36.84	18	47.37			
		III	23	23.47	61	62.24	14	14.29			
7	Access issue with respect to teachers is addressed	I	4	36.36	4	36.36	3	27.27	4	33.24*	9.49
		II	3	7.89	13	34.21	22	57.89			
		III	6	36.73	7	7.14	85	86.73			

X² = Calculated chi-square value = $\sum (f_o - f_e)^2 / f_e$, df=3 = degree of freedom, * = Significant at 0.05 level of significance, CV = critical value

Question number 1 dealt with the status of integration of schools at different levels. The computed chi-square value is less than the critical value at 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that there is no statistically significant relationship between the positions and opinions of the respondent groups towards the practicality of integration of different levels of schooling in the CRC systems. This implies that there is a consensus among the three respondent groups with regard to this issue. This is the expected consensus because the concrete reality from

observations also shows that schools of different levels (elementary and junior levels) have now been integrated to form clusters in all schools of the zone. Such integration is helpful in experience-sharing and mutual support among the member schools. The obtained data revealed that the performance in this regard is moderate. This was confirmed by large proportions of experts and CRC committee members. The teachers, however, judged it as poorly practiced purpose. This may have come from the fact that primary schools make a cluster/integration with only primary schools; integration with secondary schools is not yet practiced. In fact, the CRC systems may also adopt the experiences of some countries in integrating primary schools with secondary schools. For example, in Germany, clusters are organized by the collaboration of three levels of schools, that is, elementary, junior and secondary.

One basic purpose of school clustering is to promote community participation in educational programs.. Question number 2 was forwarded to check the practicality of this issue. The computed chi-square value exceeded the critical chi-square value at .05 level of significance. This indicates that there is significant relationship between the positions of the respondents and their respective opinions about the degree of practice of the involvement of the community in education. This variation in opinions may negatively affect the decision that should be made and measures taken in addressing the problem because variation in evaluation may also result in variation in the level of seeking remedy for the problem. Thus, common understanding is highly required. The item was rated as medium almost by significant number of teachers, CRC committee members and experts (in average 56.52%). This implies that community participation in education, in general, is good. But, surprising is that this rate contradicts with the response these same respondents gave in the section that treats the major problems that hindere the implementation of cluster model. In that part, 72.11% and 23.13% of the total respondents rated the absence of community participation as "very serious" and "serious" respectively. This inconsistency may have arisen from the confusion of the respondents about the community support to a particular school in separation and the support that the community is expected to render to the cluster resource centers. It may be also attributed to the way the question was presented in these two sections. This implies that clear awareness creation is needed to avoid such confusion and to design a strategy to involve the community in cluster affairs in addition to in individual schools' affairs.

Another purpose of CRC is to facilitate the collection of information from the cluster systems one of which is information with regard to students participation rate.. Question/item number 3 dealt with this issue. As is observed from the table above, the calculated chi-square value is found to be statistically significant. This reveals that the opinions of the respondent groups were systematically affected by their respective positions in the cluster systems. This difference may be attributed to the fact that: i) the three groups may not have equal and similar information about the status of the issue or ii) the bias of the managing bodies and the subordinators toward the opposite extremes. As the response indicated, this task was being moderately done. Particularly, CRC committee members confirmed this with 63.16% of the member respondents. WEO experts seem to be even more satisfied in this regard because 45.45% of them rated it as highly practiced purpose. This implies that the work burden of the WEO and the delay that was likely to encounter in getting timely information on this issue is now being addressed. In addition to this, the collected information may be used as a base to forecast/project the future trend and accordingly to plan for the necessary educational input requirements.

School cluster, as one strategy for the decentralization of responsibilities to lower echelons of the educational organization and management system, is expected to allow some rights to decision-making. Some two aspects of such responsibilities were presented on number 4 and 5 with regard to the decision-making on teacher posting and leave arrangements. The collected data indicated that these issues were not adequately practiced. From this it can be deduced that such "heavy" responsibilities have not yet been devolved to the CRC level. However, if to adequately devolve responsibilities to the cluster center level, clusters should at least have a say in the teachers' posting and leave arrangements, of course, with necessary capacity building interventions to discharge such responsibilities.

With regard to the status of teacher inspection, respondents were asked to rate item number 6. As observed from the table above, the calculated chi-square value is statistically significant because it is greater than the critical chi-square value. This indicates that the respondents have different opinions towards the extent to which teachers' inspection has been improved as a result of their different positions. Such a variation may have a negative impact on the designing level of the subsequent strategy to even promote the services. Thus, consensus, common standard and understanding should be developed among the actors. The obtained data indicated that the cluster model implementation had improved the work of teacher's inspection. This may be the case

because currently each CRC has its own supervisor who is responsible for all the provision of supervisory services to schools in each cluster system and there are also key teachers in the CRC systems that have been working in support of the supervisors in class observations, experience-sharing and short-trainings. The supervisory/inspection services teachers get from the supervisors and each other will have a positive impact on the development of teachers' professional skills and creativity.

One of the purposes and benefits of school clustering is to address the problem of access of teachers. Question number 7 dealt with the practicality of such an issue. The greater computed chi-square value than the critical chi-square value indicates that the attitudes of the respondent groups about the extent to which access issue with respect to teachers was addressed depended on the positions they held in the CRC systems. The majority of teachers and CRC committee members (86.73% and 57.89%, respectively) believed that the problem of access of teachers was not addressed. The experts, however, believed (with 36.36% and 36.36% proportion) that the access of teachers has been improved highly and moderately, respectively. Here, as usual, there is contradiction of opinion between the school actors and those who deliver support at WEO level. This difference may be attributed to the bias that may exist among the respondent groups. The one that seems satisfactory to one group may seem unsatisfactory to the other. This may be due to the difference in expectations and standards of each group. One of the advantages of school cluster system is in the area of addressing access issues. For example, when a teacher in one school is sick, or on a maternity leave teachers who can fill the vacancy through rotation from member schools are identified (Ayalew, 1998: 119).

In general, the finding of the study has showed that i) there was a significant difference between the responses of the experts, CRC committee members, and teachers in most (83.33%) of the items that were concerned with practices of the presented purposes of school clustering, ii) except items number 4 and 5, in Table 4.2a, and number 1 and 6 in Table 4.2b, all the rest ones (66.67%) were poorly practiced in the CRCs. From this it can be concluded that the major theoretically established purposes of school clustering systems have not been adequately practiced in the CRC systems. This situation may hinder the realization of the quality and efficiency of education in the cluster systems.

4.3. Strategies of the Implementation of School Cluster Model

Relevant and appropriate strategies should be there if the objectives of the school cluster model are to be attained. To investigate the practicality of the identified possible strategies on the ground, 16 question items were presented in the questionnaire to be responded to by experts, CRC management committee members and teachers.

Table 4.2a Percentage and Chi-Square Distribution of Responses on the Strategies of Implementation of School Cluster Model

(Key: Group-I = experts (N = 11), Group-II = CRC committee members (N = 38), Group-III = teachers (N = 98))

Table 1: Data on the implementation of the cluster resource center management committee at CRC level (N = 36), Group-I = teachers (N = 98)											
No	Strategies	Group	Rating scales						df*3	X ² [†]	CV [‡]
			High		Medium		Low				
			N	%	N	%	N	%			
1	Clear vision is established	I	7	63.64	3	27.27	1	9.09	4	35.82 [‡]	9.49
		II	8	21.05	22	57.89	8	21.05			
		III	7	7.14	39	39.80	52	53.05			
2	Clear objectives are established	I	7	63.64	3	27.27	1	9.09	4	35.44 [‡]	9.49
		II	5	13.16	17	44.74	16	42.11			
		III	7	7.14	39	39.81	52	53.06			
3	Clear strategies are established	I	4	36.36	5	45.45	2	18.18	4	14.04 [‡]	9.49
		II	5	13.16	21	55.26	12	31.58			
		III	8	8.16	42	42.86	48	48.98			
4	Budget allocated for implementation	I	1	9.09	6	54.54	4	36.36	4	30.85 [‡]	9.49
		II	1	2.63	4	10.52	33	86.84			
		III	18	18.37	45	45.92	35	35.71			
5	Basic materials allocated for implementation	I	2	18.18	6	54.54	3	27.27	4	34.79 [‡]	9.49
		II	1	2.63	3	7.89	34	89.47			
		III	2	2.04	13	13.27	83	84.69			
6	Observed competency of teachers as a result of in-service professional development	I	5	45.45	4	36.36	2	18.18	4	25.58 [‡]	9.49
		II	5	13.16	23	60.53	10	26.31			
		III	5	5.10	37	37.76	56	57.14			
7	Flexibility of cluster management	I	2	18.18	6	54.54	3	27.27	4	9.53 [‡]	9.49
		II	2	5.26	19	50.00	17	44.74			
		III	25	25.51	49	50.00	24	24.49			
8	Responsiveness of the cluster management	I	4	36.36	5	45.45	2	18.18	4	8.69	9.49
		II	5	13.16	19	50.00	14	36.84			
		III	22	22.45	60	61.22	16	15.31			
9	The status of capacity development of cluster resource center management committee at CRC level	I	3	27.27	6	54.55	2	18.18	4	14.86 [‡]	9.49
		II	5	13.16	16	42.11	17	44.74			
		III	3	3.06	36	36.73	59	60.20			

X²† = Calculated chi-square value = $\sum (f_o - f_e)^2 / f_e$, df*3 = degree of freedom, *2 = Significant at 0.05 level of significance, CV** = critical value.

It can be read from Table 4.2a that the three groups of respondents were asked to respond to question number 1 about whether or not the establishment of clear vision was practiced as a strategy. The statistically significant calculated chi-square value (35.82) indicates that there is statistically significant relationship between the positions of the respondent groups and their respective opinions towards the status of the establishment of clear vision. This in turn implies that there is no consensus among the three groups with regard to this particular issue. The majority of the experts, CRC committee members and teachers rated it as high, medium and low respectively. This implies that there was no consensus on what was really happening in this regard. This may be due to the fact that the vision was kept only with higher bodies without being communicated to teachers or the teachers were not involved in the establishment of the vision. From this it can be deduced that there is a gap in having common vision or communication of the large CRC community. As the data shows, it seems that the attitudes of the respondents toward the degree of this issue starts as "high" with the higher bodies and goes down decreasing to "low" by the teachers.

As regard to the establishment of clear objectives, the respondents were asked to respond to question number 2. The calculated chi-square value is found to be greater than the critical value. This indicates that the positions and opinions of the respondents are significantly related. This implies that the respondents lack consensus with regard to the degree to which clear objectives have been established as strategies. The responses indicated the mix of high medium and low rate by experts, CRC committee members and teachers respectively. The majority of experts (with 63.64%) and teachers (53.06%) were the two opposite extremes in rating it as high and low respectively, and the CRC committee members (57.89%) rated it as medium. The indication is that, again, there is no consensus among the three groups of respondents on the practice of having clear objectives for the effective implementation of the cluster programs and this may be attributed to the lack of involvement, communication, or consensus among the three groups on the issue.

The third question was presented to find out the extent of the practice of establishment of clear strategy for the cluster model implementation. The computed chi-square value exceeds the critical chi-square value. From this, it can be deduced that the opinion of the respondents about the extent to which clear strategies were established for the implementation of cluster programs depended on their respective positions which in turn implies that there is lack of consensus

among the respondent groups about this issue. The three respondent groups gave different responses. The largest percentage (63.64%) of the experts believed that the establishment of clear strategy is was highly practiced while the other extreme respondents (teachers) denied this and rated it as low with the proportion of 53.06% of the teacher respondents. The considerable number (44.74) of CRC committee members, however, confirmed that the practice is in between the two opposite extremes. Here, again, the implication is that there is absence of consensus on the judgment the degree of the practice of establishment of clear strategy. From this we can deduce that the major implementers of the CRC program (teachers) were not adequately acquainted with such a strategy which may hinder them from releasing their potential in the work field. Judgment in favor of the effectiveness of the issue seems to incline to those at higher level in the CRCs hierarchy-experts, and decreases when comes down to the lower hierarchy-teachers. This shows us that those at higher level talk of strengths and positive things while those at the lower hierarchy talk of the opposite-the problems and weaknesses. This creates a difficulty in designing commonly agreed upon strategies in the future. Thus, consensus building is important.

As regard to the allocation of budget for the implementation of cluster activities, a question was presented to find out the extent to which this issue was practiced. It is observed that the computed chi-square value is statistically significant. This indicates that there is statistically significant relationship between the work positions and opinions of the respondents. This means that there is no consensus among them with regard to the degree to which allocation of budget for the implementation of the cluster programs is practiced. The majority of CRC committee members (86.84) confirmed its lowness while significant number of the experts and teachers responded in favor of medium rate of the practice. This is in contradiction with the responses of the officials of WEOs and the ZEO who confirmed that budget allocation in the name of clusters has not yet been practiced. Thus, from this it can be deduced that the teachers and experts might have been confused with the budget that was annually allocated for individual schools separately and specifically. From this, it can be said that a strategy of allocating budget for CRCs is not yet practiced. To neglect to allocate budget to the CRCs means that their programs and strategies are handicapped.

With respect to allocation of basic materials, question number 5 was posed. The statistically significant value of the calculated chi-square value indicates that the opinions of the respondents were affected by their respective positions as a result of which they lacked consensus on the

status of the issue. The largest proportion of teachers and the CRC committee members (84.65% and 89.47%, respectively) confirmed that basic materials allocation was not well practiced. But, considerable proportion of experts believed that basic materials were being allocated to the medium degree. Generally seen, the implication of such problems will have negative effect on the implementation of the cluster program. In the absence of basic materials such as pedagogic equipment, library books, science kits and training materials, the cluster systems will never be effective in achieving their objectives.

In order to find out the extent to which an appropriate strategy was practiced in enhancing teachers' competency through professional development programs, the respondents were asked to rate its implementation. The calculated chi-square value was found to be statistically significant implying that there is no consensus among the respondent groups about the extent to which teachers' professional development was improved as a result of their respective positions. The largest portion of the experts confirmed its high degree of practice while (57.14%) of the ultimate beneficiaries and the front line owners of the business (teachers) rated it as low. These two responses seem to be like "you are competent" and "I am not competent" controversy. Apart from this, the other groups of respondents-CRC committee members-rated the issue as moderate one with 60.53% share. From the point of view of the responses of the teachers, the balance of the conclusion for this issue is more likely to incline to that of the teachers: competency is not adequately improved. This implies that enhancing teachers competency through professional development programs, as a strategy, has never been adequately practiced in the CRCs. This may have a negative implication on the improvement of educational quality.

Question number 7 and 8 were concerned with the flexibility and responsiveness of school cluster management system. The calculated chi-square value, in case of flexibility, is found to be statistically significant showing that there is significant relationship between the positions and opinions of the respondent groups about the status of the flexibility of the CRC management. This reveals that there was no consensus among the respondent groups about the extent to which the cluster management was flexible. As the table above shows, CRC committee members and teachers confirmed that the two issues were practiced moderately. From this it can be deduced that the strategy employed in this regard is believed to make a difference. With regard to the extent to which cluster management has been responsive, the calculated chi-square value was found to be less than the critical chi-square value at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that

the opinions and positions of the respondents were not significantly related. One of the characteristics of school cluster system of high quality is the flexibility of its management (Knamiller, 1999: 83; Lackney et al., 2004:9).

Question number 9 was concerned with the extent to which a strategy of enhancing capacity of CRC committee at CRC level was practiced. For this particular strategy the computed chi-square value is found to be greater than the critical chi-square value at .05 level of significance. This indicates that the opinion of the respondents toward the status of the development of capacity of the cluster committee at CRC level was affected by their respective positions, and hence they lacked consensus in this regard. The obtained response from the majority of teachers and significant proportion of CRC committee members indicated that the capacity of the committee was not adequate. The majority of the experts, however, believed that the capacity was at medium level. Unless otherwise the managerial capacity of the cluster committee is enhanced they will never be able to discharge their responsibilities, and exercise their authorities efficiently and effectively in managing their programs and activities. Thus, the committee members need even more support to develop their capacity.

Table 4.2b Percentage and Chi-Square Distribution of Responses on the Strategies of Implementation of School Cluster Model

(Key: Group-I = experts (N = 11), Group-II = CRC committee members (N = 38), Group-III = teachers (N = 98))

No.	Strategies	Group	Rating scales						df ³	X ² ¹	CV ⁴
			High		Medium		Low				
			N	%	N	%	N	%			
1	Decentralizing responsibility to cluster level	I	4	36.36	5	45.45	2	18.18	4	30.00 ²	9.49
		II	5	13.16	23	60.53	10	26.32			
		III	5	5.10	37	37.76	56	57.14			
2	The status of community involvement in cluster management	I	2	18.18	5	45.45	4	36.36	4	33.01 ²	9.49
		II	4	10.53	17	44.74	17	44.74			
		III	3	3.06	10	10.20	85	86.73			
3	Community material support	I	3	27.27	6	54.54	2	18.18	4	47.28 ²	9.49
		II	2	5.26	9	23.68	27	71.05			
		III	1	1.02	6	6.12	91	92.86			
4	Community financial support	I	3	27.27	5	45.45	3	27.27	4	31.19 ²	9.49
		II	4	10.53	6	15.79	28	73.68			
		III	1	1.02	8	8.16	89	90.82			
5	Community labor support	I	4	36.36	4	36.36	3	27.27	4	38.05 ²	9.49
		II	5	13.16	17	44.74	16	42.11			
		III	4	24.08	11	11.22	83	84.69			
6	Mutual sharing of experience among teacher	I	3	27.27	6	54.54	2	18.18	4	14.38 ²	9.49
		II	10	26.32	21	55.26	7	18.42			
		III	10	10.20	41	41.84	47	47.96			
7	Mutual sharing of experience among member schools	I	3	27.27	6	54.54	2	18.18	4	2.30	9.49
		II	7	18.42	21	55.26	10	26.32			
		III	14	14.29	51	52.04	33	33.67			

X² = Calculated chi-square value = $\sum (f_o - f_e)^2 / f_e$, df³ = degree of freedom, *2 = Significant at 0.05 level of significance, CV⁴ = critical value.

Question number 1 was concerned with the extent to which a strategy of decentralizing responsibility to cluster level was practiced. As is observed from Table 4.3b, The calculated chi-square value is found to be greater than the critical chi-square value at 0.05 level of significance. This shows that there is statistically significant relationship between the positions of the respondent groups and their respective opinions about the extent to which the responsibility has been decentralized to cluster level. That means, there is no consensus among the respondents with regard to this particular issue. This lack of consensus affects the cooperative efforts of the CRC actors in an endeavor to tackle the problem in the future. The majority of CRC committee members and experts agreed that responsibility was already decentralized to cluster level partially, and they rated it medium. But the majority of teachers seem to be not satisfied, and

they rated it low. In both cases, but, it can be deduced that the responsibility was not adequately decentralized to the cluster level. For example, the CRCs have no responsibility to share staff among member schools and to propose or conduct teachers' transfer. This affects the issue of addressing access of teachers to schools in the cluster systems. As literatures show, in most contexts, one or more supported staff is hired to support the work of a cluster director/a resource person (Bray, 1987).

Questions number 2, 3, 4 and 5 dealt with the extent to which community is involved in the management, material, financial, and labor support of their respective cluster systems. The computed chi-square values for items number 2, 3, 4 and 5 are found to be greater than their respective critical chi-square values at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that there is statistically significant relationship between the positions and opinions of the respondents on the status of community involvement in cluster management, material, financial and labor support. This difference might have arisen from confusion with the involvement of the community in the management and support of individual schools separately and the involvement they should have at the CRC level in the name of the CRCs. The responses of the majority of the teachers and the significant proportion of CRC committee members confirmed that the support of the community in the mentioned four areas is nearly insignificant. The responses of the significant proportion of the experts, however, indicated that the community involvement lies in the medium rate. From the responses of the closest groups to the place of concern and the actual observation, it can be concluded that participation of the community in the management and support of the CRC programs is almost insignificant. One concrete examples is that there is no a single member of CRC committee that is represented from the community. However, in case of participation in management, for example, the Cambodian experience shows that individuals like elected teacher representatives, representatives of PTAs and village chiefs are incorporated in the cluster management committee (Dykstra et al., 2002).

In order to find out the practice of programmed mutual sharing of experience among teachers and schools, two consecutive questions were presented in number 6 and 7. As the table shows the calculated chi-square values is statistically significant because it is greater than the critical chi-square value. From this, it can be deduced that the opinions of the respondent groups on the degree of mutual sharing of experience among teachers depended on their respective positions. With regard to mutual sharing of experience among member schools, the computed chi-square

value (2.30) is not statistically significant. This implies that there is no consensus among the respondent groups about what standard and criteria are to be used to establish the status of the experience-sharing among teachers. This shows that positions and opinions of the respondents were not systematically related in this regard. The majority of the three respondent groups (experts, CRC committee members and teachers) rated it as medium with the proportion of 54.54%, 55.26%, and 41.84% respectively for item 6, and with the proportion of 54.54%, 55.26% and 52.04% respectively for item 7. From this we can infer that there is an encouraging effort in this regard. And this may have a positive effect on the professional development of teachers which in turn contributes to the quality of education.

From the observation of the preceding findings in tables 4.3a and 4.3b, it may be concluded that except professional development of teachers, pupils' competition, integration of different levels of schooling, and provision of better framework for teachers' inspection, the rest (66.67%) of the purposes of school clustering were poorly practiced in the CRCs. Thus, it can be concluded that the CRCs' management systems have not been effective in realizing the purposes of the school cluster model.

4.4. Issues Related to the Planning Aspects of CRC Management

It is believed that planning is a crucial managerial function for the CRC management because without plan managers and their followers have little chance of knowing what to do and how to do what they are supposed to do in achieving their organizational goals. There is an expectation that school cluster resource centers plan for both long and short term activities. Formal need assessment is also need to be made before planning. The planning process should be participatory. Particularly, teachers', PTAs, KETBs and CRC committee members' involvement is crucial. Based on this, to find out the status of planning of the CRCs, 7 questions were presented to be rated by the respondents based on the extent to which they were being practiced in concrete reality in the CRC system. In this section of the questionnaire, issues such as the extent to which the school cluster resource centers have given due attention to planning for both long as well as short- term activities, formal need assessment before planning; teachers' PTA members; KETB members' and CRC committee members' representatives involvement in planning.

Table 4.3 Percentage and Chi-Square Distribution of the Responses of Respondents on Planning Aspects of CRC Management

(Key: Group-I = experts (N = 11), Group-II = CRC committee members (N = 38), Group-III = teachers (N = 98))

No	Planning Aspects	Group	Degree to which it was practiced								df*3	X ² **	CV**
			Highly Practiced		Moderately Practiced		Poorly Practiced		Not Practiced at all				
			N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
1	The school cluster plans for long term activity	I	1	9.09	6	54.54	2	18.18	2	18.18	6	46.11*	12.59
		II	4	10.53	9	23.68	11	28.95	14	36.84			
		III	7	7.14	6	6.12	4	4.08	81	82.65			
2	The school cluster plans for short-term activity	I	4	36.36	5	45.45	1	9.09	1	9.09	6	23.93*	12.59
		II	5	13.16	19	50.00	11	28.95	3	7.89			
		III	6	6.12	22	22.45	67	68.37	3	3.06			
3	Formal need assessment before planning	I	1	9.09	5	45.45	4	36.36	1	9.09	6	32.13*	12.59
		II	4	10.53	15	39.47	15	39.47	4	10.53			
		III	2	2.04	8	8.16	80	81.63	8	8.16			
4	Teachers' involvement in planning	I	1	9.09	6	54.55	3	36.36	1	9.09	6	60.80*	12.59
		II	4	10.53	16	42.11	12	31.58	6	15.79			
		III	6	6.12	4	4.08	8	8.16	80	81.63			
5	PTA members involvement in planning	I	1	9.09	3	27.27	6	54.55	1	9.09	6	53.81*	12.59
		II	3	7.89	12	31.58	13	34.21	10	26.32			
		III	4	4.08	4	4.08	11	11.22	79	80.61			
6	KETB members involvement in planning	I	1	9.09	3	27.27	6	54.55	1	9.09	6	55.60*	12.59
		II	3	7.89	11	28.95	11	28.95	13	34.21			
		III	4	4.08	3	3.06	8	8.16	83	84.69			
7	CRC committee members involvement in planning	I	1	9.09	4	36.36	5	45.45	1	9.09	6	57.95*	12.59
		II	4	10.52	15	39.47	15	39.47	4	10.53			
		III	66	67.35	26	26.53	5	5.10	1	1.02			

X²* = Calculated chi-square value = $\sum (f_o - f_e)^2 / f_e$, df*3 = degree of freedom, ** = Significant at 0.05 level of significance, CV** = critical value.

Question number 1 was concerned with whether or not the CRCs planned for long term activities. As the table above shows, the calculated chi-square value is statistically significant. This indicates that the positions and the opinions of the respondents about the practice of planning for long term activities are significantly related. This means that there is no consensus among the respondent groups about the status of this planning aspect. Table 4.3 Illustrates that, on the average, the majority of the three groups of respondents (45.89) indicated that planning for long-term activities was not practiced at all. Particularly, the largest proportion of teachers (82.63%) confirmed this fact. Also, significant proportion of CRC committee members rated it as poorly practiced or not practiced activity in the cluster system. To the contrary, however, the majority (54.54%) of the experts indicated that planning for long-term activities was moderately

practiced. From the responses of the teachers and CRC management committee members, it is safe to deduce that the CRC management systems did not give adequate attention to the long-term plans because these two groups are the ones that are closer to and the front-lin actors of the day-to-day activities of the system than the experts at WEO level. Administrative and planning difficulties are observed as a result of inadequacy of supervisors at different levels (Samaranayake, 1983: 63-64).

The second question was concerned with the extent to which the CRC systems planned for short term activities. The statistically significant chi-square value (23.93) indicates that the opinions of the respondent groups about the extent to which the school clusters planned for short-term activities depended upon the positions they held. The responses of significant proportion of experts and the majority of the CRC committee members indicated that the CRC systems planned for short-term activities of the center. Unlike these groups, the teacher respondents confirmed (with 63.37% proportion) that the short-term planning was poorly practiced. This difference implies that there was lack of common understanding or consensus, or the teachers and the first two groups judged the practice from their own perspectives/standards/judgments. Without plan, managers cannot know how to organize people and resources effectively; what they need to organize; and can not lead with confidence. Controlling also becomes an exercise in futility (Stoner et al., 1995:265).

Question number 3 was concerned with the status of need assessment before planning. The computed chi-square value is observed to be statistically significant indicating that the opinion difference of the respondents about the extent to which need assessment was made before planning depended on their respective positions. This variation may be attributed to lack of communication or participation of every actor in the process of need assessment as the result of which the information possessed by them may vary. As the table above shows, the responses of the significant proportions of experts and CRC committee members confirmed that there was the mix of moderate and poor degree of practice in conducting formal need assessment before planning. However, the major actors and beneficiaries of the need assessment-teachers-confirmed (with the proportion of 81.63%) that the task of assessing needs before panning was poorly practiced. Thus, from these responses it can be deduced that formal need assessment was not adequately practiced. One of the stages of the conventional cycle of development planning

for cost effective school, however, is the need to audit in order to review the schools' current strength and weaknesses in relation to its aims before planning (Howell and Jane, 1996: 4).

The intention of question number 4 was to determine the status of teacher's involvement in planning. As observed from the table above, the computed chi-square value exceeds the critical value. This indicates that the responses of the respondents depended on/affected by their respective work positions in the system. This lack of consensus may be attributed to the fact that there is no consensus between the managing bodies and the implementers (teachers). The responses of the majority of the experts and the significant number of CRC committee members indicated that they were involved to the medium extent. But teachers (with the largest proportion) confirmed that they were not involved in the planning process at all. Since, relatively, it is sound to consider the information that come from the "horse's mouth" (primary source) it may be safe to infer that teachers' involvement in planning was not practiced well. This situation adversely affects the moral, commitment and performance of the teachers in the implementation process because of lack of belongingness and sense of ownership in the planning process.

The fifth and sixth questions were concerned with the involvement of PTA and KETB members in planning. The calculated chi-square value is found to be statistically significant. This indicates that the opinions of the respondents were affected by their respective positions. The majority of the three respondent groups indicated that PTA and KETB members' participation in planning CRC activities is almost insignificant. This indicates that the cluster management has not given due attention to make the planning process participatory. The major stakeholders (PTA and KETB) are excluded from the planning process means that the total performances of the cluster systems are handicapped.

Question number 7 was concerned with the participation of the CRC management committee in planning. The calculated chi-square value for this item was found to be greater than the critical chi-square value. This indicates that the opinions of the respondent groups depended upon their respective positions in the CRC management systems. The observed difference may have come from the fact that the managing committees exaggerate the degree of their involvement while the teachers undermine it or they evaluate the status from their own standards. The responses of significant proportion of the experts and CRC committee members confirmed that the extent of

involvement was the mix of moderate and poor while the majority of the teacher respondents indicated that CRC committee members (CRC supervisors, CRC principals and satellite schools principals) participation was high.

From the findings observed in table 4.4 it may be safe to conclude that the planning process has never been participatory in that it has not incorporated the key actors of the CRCs (PTAs, KETBs and representatives of teachers). The CRCs focused only on the short-term planning, and long-term plans have not given adequate attention. Thus, the planning aspects of the CRCs have not been adequately practiced in the CRCs.

4.5. Issues Related to the Organization and Staffing of CRCs

The way an organization is organized and staffed affects (positively or negatively) the ultimate success in achieving the established objectives. Bearing this in mind the student researcher designed a questionnaire of 11 items to find out the status of organization and staffing of the CRCs. In this section issues such as the availability, utilization and clarity of CRC guidelines, awareness of the respondents of the criteria of selection of CRCs, involvement of the respondents in the selection of CRCs, assignment of key teachers to the CRCs, provision of additional staff for the CRCs, and selection of CRC coordinators were incorporated to assess the status of the organizing and staffing of the CRCs.

Table 4.4a. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Responses on the Status of Organization and Staffing of CRCs

(Key: Group-I = Experts, Group-II = CRC Committee members, Group-III = Teachers)

No	Organizing/Staffing Aspects	Group	Responses					
			Positively responded		Negatively responded		Undecided	
			N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Availability of CRC guidelines in the schools	I (N = 11)	6	54.54	4	36.36	1	9.09
		II (N = 38)	13	31.21	25	65.79	0	0
		III (N = 98)	29	29.59	59	60.20	10	10.20
2	Availability of CRC guidelines in CRCs	I (N = 11)	7	63.64	3	27.27	1	9.09
		II (N = 38)	15	39.47	18	47.37	5	13.16
		III (N = 98)	29	29.59	57	58.16	12	12.24
3	Reading of guidelines by the respondents	I (N = 7)	6	85.81	1	14.26	0	0
		II (N = 18)	16	88.89	2	11.11	0	0
		III (N = 33)	22	66.67	11	33.33	0	0
4	Clarity of the guidelines	I (N = 6)	5	83.33	1	16.67	0	0
		II (N = 18)	17	94.44	1	5.56	0	0
		III (N = 22)	20	90.91	2	9.09	0	0
5	Knowledge of the respondents about the selection criteria of CRCs	I (N = 11)	9	81.82	2	18.18	0	0
		II (N = 38)	30	81.08	8	21.05	0	0
		III (N = 98)	37	37.76	61	32.24	0	0
6	Involvement of the respondents in the selection of CRC	I (N = 11)	7	63.64	4	36.36	0	0
		II (N = 38)	7	18.42	31	81.58	0	0
		III (N = 98)	19	19.39	79	80.60	0	0
7	Involvement of the school director/representative of the school in the selection of CRC	I (N = 11)	1	9.09	9	81.82	1	9.09
		II (N = 38)	6	15.79	28	73.68	4	10.52
		III (N = 98)	22	22.44	53	54.08	23	23.47
8	Key teacher(s) is/are assigned for the CRCs	I (N = 11)	8	72.72	3	27.27	0	0
		II (N = 38)	26	68.42	10	26.32	2	5.26
		III (N = 98)	55	56.12	31	31.63	12	12.24

As table 4.4a shows, question number 1 and 2 were concerned with the availability of relevant school cluster guideline in schools and/or cluster resource centers. The data indicated that the majority of the expert respondents confirmed that there were guidelines in both schools and cluster resource centers. The majority of CRC committee members and teachers on the other hand, responded that there were no guidelines in this area in both schools and CRCs. From this it can be inferred that the commitment in this regard was weak. Hence, it can be concluded that the CRC systems have been simply operating without any guideline and the actors may have been functioning without clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the system. This

may have a negative implication on the smooth functioning of the cluster programs in that the actors will not have knowledge of what roles and responsibilities they have in the cluster systems.

Question number 3 was the continuation of questions number 1 and 2. It was presented for those who confirmed the presence of guidelines in their schools and/or CRCs and it was concerned with whether or not they had read it. The responses of the majority of the experts, CRC committee members and teachers indicated that they had read it. There was also considerable proportion of these respondents (especially teachers) who had never read it. From this it can be concluded that in spite of the availability and awareness of the availability of the guidelines there were some school actors who have not had chance of reading it. This on the other hand, may be attributed to the laissez-fairness of the respondents, or the management systems had never facilitated the condition for them. It is obvious that the availability of the guidelines alone does not make sense unless otherwise the actors are given chance to read them.

Question number 4 dealt with the clarity of the guidelines and it was presented for respondents who said that they had read it. The obtained data indicated that the largest proportions of the three respondent groups found it clear. This impels that for those who read the guideline/though relatively small in proportion compared to the whole respondents there were opportunities of understanding the whole procedure of the cluster system management activities.

Question/item number 5 was concerned with the knowledge of the respondents about what criteria were used to select a school to act as cluster resource center. As the data indicates, the majority of the experts and CRC committee members confirmed that they knew the criteria. The majority of the teacher respondents, on the other hand, responded that they had no knowledge of the criteria used for this issue. From these contradictory findings, it can be deduced that the criteria used was not communicated down to the ultimate implementers of the CRC strategies and programs-teachers- and it seems to be kept with the WEO officials. This indicates that the criteria employed were not communicated down to the ultimate actors of the cluster systems. This may have a negative impact on the moral and sense of ownership of the CRC actors.

The main objectives of questions number 6 and 7 were to find out whether or not the selection process of the CRCs was participatory. The obtained information from the expert respondents indicated that they (experts) were involved in the selection process. But, the data obtained from

CRC committee members and teachers confirmed (with the largest proportion of the respondents) that they had never taken part in the selection process. This indicates that somebody else selected it for them other than these who are closer actors of the CRC system. From this it can be deduced that the decision made on the issue of selection of cluster center was not participatory. This will have a discouraging impact on the right of the actors of the CRCs to participate in the selection process, and this in turn affects a sense of ownership and belongingness of them which ultimately may hamper their contribution.

Question number 8 was presented so as to find out whether or not key teachers/kore teachers who play role in the in-service professional development of teachers were assigned for each of the CRCs. The majority of the three respondent groups' responses were positive. This implies that, if properly used, the benefit that could be gained from these teachers is likely to be exploited.

Table 4.4b Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Responses on the Status of Organization and Staffing of CRCs

(Key: Group-I = Experts, Group-II = CRC Committee members, Group-III = Teachers)								
No	Organization/Staffing Aspects	Group	Responses					
			Positively responded		Negatively responded		Undecided	
			N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Provision of additional staff for the CRC management	I(N = 11)	5	45.45	5	45.45	1	9.09
		II(N = 38)	10	26.32	27	71.05	1	2.63
		III(N = 98)	19	19.32	70	71.43	9	9.18
	Organization/Staffing Aspects		Respondents					
			Experts (N=10)		CRC Committee Members (N=33)		Teachers (N=72)	
2	Cluster Centers were selected by: a. WEO b. WEO and Woreda Cabinet c. Undecided	N		%	N	%	N	%
		8	88.89	22	66.67	44	61.11	
		1	11.11	6	18.18	20	27.78	
		0	0	5	15.15	8	11.11	
	Organization/Staffing Aspects		Respondents					
			Experts (N=11)		CRC Committee Members (N=38)		Teachers (N=98)	
3	The CRC coordinators were: a. Elected by satellite schools principals b. Nominated by higher officials c. Through competition	4	36.36	3	7.89	13	13.27	
		7	63.64	28	73.68	78	79.59	
		0	0	7	18.44	7	7.14	

To check if additional staffs other than the school principals and teachers were assigned, question number 1 was posed. As the data in the table above shows the experts on one hand and the CRC committee members and teachers on the other hand replied to this question differently. While significant number of experts responded in a mix of “assigned” and “not assigned”, the majority of the CRC and school actors (CRC committee members and teachers) confirmed that no additional staffs were assigned to the CRCs. From this data and other observations, it can be deduced that additional staffs (except the supervisors) were not assigned to the cluster centers. This has a negative implication on the cluster management in that the teachers and principals who are always held with the teaching responsibilities will be frustrated by the work-load, and consequently the CRC performance will be jeopardized. Unfortunately, it is observed that the function of staffing is not given adequate attention in the cluster systems. The conclusion may be that the staffing process is not well done at CRC level. In most contexts, clusters are staffed by additional associated support staff (Bray, 1987: 27).

Question number 2 was presented for those who answered question number 7 and/or 8 negatively and it was concerned with who was the selector of the school to act as CRC. The collected data indicated that the majority of the three respondent groups replied that it was selected by WEO and the Woreda cabinet. This is a contradictory trend to what has already been stated in the guideline of CRC set by Oromia Regional State Education Bureau in 1999 E.C which defines school cluster as “...the group of schools (3-5 in number) that are in vicinity to one another and are organized under a central school chosen by them” (highlight added) (OEB. 2007:3). This violation may have a negative implication on the sense of ownership and right of participation of the schools in this issue. From the above information and discussion it can be deduced that the major stakeholders’ participation in the selection of the center was not exercised.

The last question related to the organization and staffing of CRCs was concerned with the manner in which the CRC coordinator was assigned. Among the alternatives provided, the majority of the three respondent groups (experts, CRC committee members and teachers) confirmed that the CRC coordinators were assigned by higher officials at woreda level. This may have a negative impact in that the subordinate will lack confidence in him/her and may not be cooperative with the coordinator.. In addition to this, they may be discontented due to the fact that they are deprived of the right to select their coordinators. This, again, is in violation of some relevant and useful experiences of some countries. For example, in Cambodia the executive

head of the cluster is the cluster school head, who is elected by principals and teachers' representatives (highlight added) (Dykstra et al, 2002). In general, it can be concluded from the preceding findings that, despite an encouraging performance in the case of key teacher's assignment, the processes of organizing and staffing the CRCs lacked adequate involvement of the cluster communities, and clear and adequate guidelines/instructions of school cluster systems. This implies that the organizing and staffing principles have not been adequately followed in the cluster systems, and this may affect effective performance of the CRCs.

4.6. Issues Related to Monitoring and Evaluation of School Cluster Activities

The programs and activities of school cluster centers should be monitored and evaluated to make timely adjustments and to establish to what extent the designed objectives have been achieved and to ultimately determine what corrective actions need to be taken in the subsequent cycle. It is believed that it is difficult to determine whether or not the CRCs are on a right track and achieving their intended objectives unless otherwise there is appropriate system of monitoring and evaluation. Based on this spirit, to investigate the status of monitoring and evaluation in the cluster management system, 7 question items were presented to be answered by the respondents. In this section the questions were mainly concerned with issues such as to what extent the CRCs planned for monitoring and evaluation, the evaluation system was participatory, based on objective results, reported to higher bodies, transparent; and to what extent feed back about the evaluation results were provided timely.

Table 4.5 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Responses on the Monitoring and Evaluation Aspects of CRC Management

(Key: Group-I = experts (N = 11), Group-II = CRC committee members (N = 38), Group-III = teachers (N = 98))

No	Monitoring and Evaluation Aspects	Group	How often it was done							
			Always		sometimes		Never		Do not know	
			N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	The CRC committee has plan for monitoring the cluster program	I	0	0	7	63.63	3	27.27	1	9.09
		II	6	15.79	20	52.63	9	23.68	3	7.89
		III	3	3.06	77	78.57	16	16.33	2	2.04
2	The CRC committee has a plan for evaluating the cluster program	I	2	18.18	6	54.55	2	18.18	1	9.09
		II	4	10.53	24	63.16	9	23.68	1	2.63
		III	4	4.08	60	61.22	31	31.63	3	3.06
3	The Evaluation System is participatory	I	1	9.09	9	81.82	0	0	1	9.09
		II	4	10.53	20	52.63	12	31.58	2	5.26
		III	3	3.06	48	48.98	45	45.92	2	2.04
4	The evaluation system is based on objective results	I	2	18.18	8	72.72	1	9.09	0	0
		II	3	7.89	25	65.79	9	23.68	1	2.63
		III	15	15.31	52	53.06	27	27.55	4	4.08
5	The evaluation results are reported to higher bodies	I	3	27.27	7	63.64	1	63.64	0	0
		II	5	13.16	25	65.79	7	18.42	1	2.63
		III	17	17.35	65	66.33	13	13.27	3	3.06
6	The evaluation system is transparent	I	3	27.27	7	63.64	1	9.09	0	0
		II	2	5.26	26	68.42	9	23.68	1	2.63
		III	23	23.47	59	60.20	14	14.29	2	2.04
7	Feedback about the evaluation results is provided timely	I	2	18.18	7	63.64	2	18.18	0	0
		II	0	0	16	42.11	22	57.89	0	0
		III	2	1.02	8	8.16	84	85.71	5	5.10

The main objective of the first question was to find out whether or not the cluster systems planned for monitoring the cluster programs. The majority of the three respondent groups (experts, CRC committee members and teachers) responded to the question by confirming that the cluster committee planned only sometimes for monitoring the programs. The proportion of those who said that the committee always planned, never planned and undecided were almost relatively small. The existence of some respondents who do not know whether the system planned for monitoring or not indicates that these individuals were not in a position to closely follow what is and what is not happening in the cluster systems in this regard. In general, from the findings and discussions above, it may be deduced that the cluster systems usually planned but the planning was not regular and always. It is obvious, however, that the absence of proper

and adequate planning negatively affects the materialization of the other managerial functions of the cluster systems.

The second question was concerned with how often the cluster committee planned for evaluating the cluster programs. As the data in Table 4.5 indicates, the majority of the experts, CRC committee members and teachers responded that it planned only some times. There was also considerable proportion of the respondents who denied that the committee planned for the programs evaluation. Again, the existence of about 3% of the total respondents who do not know the status of planning of the CRCs indicates that there were individuals who do not know and tell about what was really happening in their work place/organization. From the whole information we can infer that the cluster committee did not perform the task of planning for evaluating the CRC programs as its regular activity, but it did it only sometimes. This may have a negative impact on the overall performance of the system because there will not be another mechanism to determine whether or not objectives of the CRCs' plans are being achieved as expected, and to determine measures to be taken in the subsequent cycles.

In order to assess if the evaluation system was participatory, question number 3 was forwarded. The responses of the majority of experts and CRC committee members indicated that it was only sometimes participatory. The significant proportion of the teachers also confirmed that it was only sometimes participatory or was not participatory at all (with the proportion of 48.98% and 45.92% respectively). From this, it can be concluded that the evaluation system did not adequately and regularly involved the concerned bodies. This in turn would have a negative implication on the implementation stage of the cluster programs.

The fourth question item dealt with the extent to which the evaluation system was based on objective results. The three respondent groups (with the largest proportion of experts, larger proportion of CRC committee members and large proportion of teachers) indicated that the evaluation system was only sometimes objective. This implies that there were times when the system was subjective rather than objective in evaluating the results. This violates the current trend of principle of result-oriented system of evaluation. It is believed that if an evaluation system is not based on objective results, then the motivation system may miss the right track and the CRCs' future plans will be misled.

The fifth question item was concerned with about how often the evaluation results were reported to the higher bodies. With regard to this, as the table shows, the majority of the experts, CRC committee members and teacher respondents confirmed that it was reported only sometimes. From this it may be deduced that there was no adequate reporting system to communicate with higher bodies and this may have a negative implication for the support and corrective measures that could have been obtained from the higher bodies. The likely communication network also will be hampered. The monitoring and evaluation system also may lack the necessary information that can be obtained from the reports.

A question the objective of which was to find out to what extent the evaluation system was transparent was presented in number six. The responses of respondents of the majority of the total respondents confirmed that the evaluation system was only sometimes transparent. Here, the conclusion may be that the status of the issue of transparency was inadequately practiced in the system which would have a negative implication on the materialization of the principle of good governance.

The last question item was concerned with the extent to which the feedback about the evaluation results was provided timely. The responses of the majority of the expert respondents indicated that the feedback was provided only sometimes. The data obtained from the responses of the CRC committee members and teachers, on the other hand, confirmed that the provision of feedback with respect to the evaluation results was not practiced at all. This situation may have a negative impact on the evaluated bodies/individuals in that they will not have way of identifying where their strengths and weaknesses lie, and also cannot determine what to correct in the future.

In general, from the findings and discussions above, it can be concluded that almost all the identified aspects of monitoring and evaluation are only partly practiced, and lack continuity/regularity. Thus, this may imply that there is hardly way of establishing to what extent the CRCs are achieving their goals. Also, it would be difficult to determine what measures to take in the future.

4.7. Issues of Good Governance in Managing School CRCs.

It is believed that good governance is very important for the smooth functioning of the cluster management system, and ultimately for the effectiveness of the cluster programs. Based on this

spirit a questionnaire of 13 question items was presented in order to determine the status of good governance in the cluster management system.

Table 4.6a Percentage and Chi-Square Distribution of Responses on the Status of Good Governance in Managing the CRCs

(Key: Group-I = experts (N = 11), Group-II = CRC committee members (N = 38); Group-III = teachers (N = 98))

No	Aspects of Good Governance	Group	The extent to which it was practiced						df ³	X ² ¹	CV ⁴
			Highly practiced		Moderately practiced		Poorly Practiced				
			N	%	N	%	N	%			
1	The cluster center management system is empowered by the higher officials	I	3	27.7	5	45.45	3	27.27	4	11.49 ²	9.49
		II	3	7.89	28	73.68	7	18.42			
		III	3	3.06	70	71.43	25	25.51			
2	The CRC management system is autonomous in deciding upon its affairs	I	1	9.09	7	63.64	3	27.27	4	14.54 ²	9.49
		II	6	15.79	21	55.26	11	28.95			
		III	10	10.20	26	26.53	62	63.27			
3	The practice of accountability in CRC management system	I	3	27.27	5	45.45	3	27.27	4	4.70	9.49
		II	6	15.79	27	71.05	5	13.16			
		III	23	23.47	51	52.04	24	24.49			
4	The responsibilities of different parties of the system is defined clearly	I	1	9.09	8	72.72	2	18.18	4	28.67 ²	9.49
		II	6	15.79	21	55.26	11	28.95			
		III	3	3.06	26	26.53	69	70.41			
5	The authority of different parties of the system is clearly defined	I	1	9.09	7	63.64	3	27.27	4	27.60 ²	9.49
		II	2	5.26	25	65.79	11	28.95			
		III	3	3.06	23	23.47	72	73.47			
6	The accountability of different parties of the system is clearly defined	I	1	9.09	7	63.64	3	27.27	4	27.60 ²	9.49
		II	4	10.53	22	57.89	12	31.58			
		III	3	3.06	25	25.51	70	71.43			
7	Super ordinates provide support for the subordinates(in CRC system)	I	1	9.09	7	63.64	3	27.27	4	24.32 ²	9.49
		II	1	2.63	29	76.32	8	21.05			
		III	1	1.02	35	35.71	62	63.27			
8	Decision-making is participatory	I	1	9.09	9	81.82	1	9.09	4	10.06 ²	9.49
		II	6	15.79	24	63.16	8	21.05			
		III	21	21.43	46	46.94	31	31.63			

X²¹ = Calculated chi-square value = $\sum (f_o - f_e)^2 / f_e$, df³ = degree of freedom, *2 = Significant at 0.05 level of significance, CV⁴ = critical value

Question number 1 was concerned with the extent to which the cluster center management system was empowered. The statically significance of the calculated chi-square value (11.49) implies that the opinions of the respondent groups toward the status of empowerment of the CRC management systems were significantly related with their respective positions in the CRC

management systems. This situation might be the result of lack of common understanding of an acceptable level of the required/expected empowerment among these respondents. As the table shows the majority of the teachers and CRC committee members indicated that the act in this regard was moderately practiced. A significant proportion of the expert respondents also responded that the CRC management systems were moderately empowered by the higher bodies. There were even a few respondents who believed that the act of empowering the CRC management systems was poorly practiced. The absence of adequate empowerment of the managing bodies implies that the goals of the managers or the CRC will be impeded from being accomplished effectively. With regard to this, Stoner et al. (2003) assert that power and authority should be delegated to lower level echelons if the goals and objectives of the managers are to be accomplished. From the findings above it can be concluded that the CRCs are not yet fully empowered and given authority to be effective in achieving their organizational objectives.

The second question item was presented to find out the degree to which the cluster management system was autonomous in deciding up on its affairs. As is observed from the table above, the calculated chi-square value is greater than the critical one. The indication of this finding may be that there has been a systematic relationship between the responses of the respondents about the status of the autonomy of the cluster management system and their respective positions. In responding to this, the majority of the experts and CRC management committee members confirmed that the autonomies of the cluster management systems were at moderate level. The majority of the teacher respondents, on the contrary, indicated that the autonomy of the management system was poor. In combination, the total response indicated that the status of the management system in governing themselves as they want particularly in school organization, curriculum, staffing, and external relations, was at moderate and/or poor level. From this it can be inferred that the autonomies of the CRC management systems were not adequately practiced in the cluster systems. Such a condition negatively affects the freedom of the actors in responding to the local demands as fast as possible. Greater autonomy in schools leads to greater effectiveness through greater flexibility and better use of resources (Bush and Burnham, 1994:9).

The third question item in this section was concerned with the extent to which accountability was practiced in the CRCs management system. As the table above shows, the computed chi-square value (4.70) is less than the critical chi-square value. This implies that there is no significant opinion difference between the respondents of different positions. This means that their opinions

about the status of practice of accountability system were not affected by their difference in their positions. Table 4.6a above illustrates that the majority of the teachers and CRC committee members indicated that the system of accountability was moderately practiced. Significant proportion of the expert respondents also responded that the accountability system was moderately practiced. This implies that, as accountability was not fully (highly) practiced, this will ultimately affect students performance because the better the accountability status the better students' performance and vice versa. In support of this, Hanushek and Raymond (2004: 1) stated that "the expected consequence of accountability is students' performance."

In order to investigate into the extent to which responsibilities of different parties in the cluster systems were defined clearly; question item number 4 was forwarded. As the table shows, the largest proportion of the experts and CRC committee members indicated that the responsibilities were moderately clearly defined. The responses of the majority of the teachers, however, indicated that the work so far done to clearly define the responsibilities was poor. This contradiction in opinion between teachers and the first two respondent groups may be judged in the fact that in section 4 (organization of CRCs), the absence of school cluster guidelines in both schools and CRCs was confirmed by the majority of the three respondent groups. Absence of guidelines means that the CRC and school actors have no access to their defined responsibilities because responsibilities are naturally defined in guidelines. Then, how one can talk about the clear definition of responsibilities in the absence of guidelines? From this, despite the responses of experts and CRC committee members, one can deduce that the CRCs management systems had no access to clearly defined responsibilities for the CRCs and school actors which implies that the actors may not know who is responsible for what that in turn leads to confusion. Samaranyke (1983: 63-64), pointed out that lack of clear instruction defining duties of cluster and satellite principals is one of the factors that negatively affects the effective management of CRCs.

Question item number 5 dealt with the status of definition of the authority of different parties of the cluster management systems. The calculated chi-square value for this particular item is found to be statistically significant from this, it can be deduced that the responses/opinions of the respondents about the degree to which the authorities were clearly defined were dependent upon the positions they held in the cluster systems. A look into the table indicates that the majority of the experts and CRC committee members confirmed that the clear definition of

authority of the cluster management system was moderately practiced. The majority of the teachers, however, indicated that the authority was not clearly defined. This variation between the teachers' and the first two groups of respondents' opinions may have arisen from the fact that the first group of respondents might have read or heard what authority they have had from some where that they did not communicate to the teachers as a result of which the issue has come to be alien to the teachers, or they did not exercise the authority so that the teachers could not observe it in practice. However, the general finding may enable us to conclude that the authority of the CRC management system was not adequately defined. This may be confirmed by the absence of guidelines in the cluster systems in which the definition of authority is expected to be found. This implies that the CRC management systems did not have adequate power or right to command and enforce obedience.

So as to find out the degree to which the system of accountability was practiced in the cluster management system, question number 6 was presented. It is observed from Table 4.6a that the computed chi-square value is statistically significant. This indicates that the responses of the respondents about the status of accountability depended upon their different positions they held in the systems. This implies that there is a lack of consensus among the respondent groups. As the table shows, the largest proportion of the experts and CRC committee members responded to the question in such a way that the definition of system of accountability was more or less at a reasonable level. The largest proportion of the teacher respondents, however, indicated that the definition of accountability system was poorly practiced in the cluster management systems. From these findings it may be deduced that the accountability expected from the cluster community at large was not adequately and comprehensively defined. This implies that the school cluster actors may be in a confusion about who is supposed to be ready to explain why deviations from the reasonable expectations of responsible others may have occurred, and to respond responsibly when errors in behavior in actions and judgments have been detected (Hacker, 1996).

The seventh question item forwarded to respondents was concerned with the degree of provision (by super ordinates) of support to the subordinates in the CRC systems. The computed chi-square value exceeded the critical chi-square value at 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that the responses of the respondent groups about the degree to which support was provided for subordinates were practiced are not significantly related with the positions of the respondent

groups. The response of the majority of the experts and CRC committee members indicated that the support provision was more or less at an acceptable level. The teacher respondents (with the largest proportion), however, confirmed that the provision of support by subordinates was poorly practiced in the cluster systems. The conclusion may be that the provided support was not inclusive and comprehensive enough. This may be harmful particularly for teachers, who need continuous support in their daily activities.

Question number 8 was forwarded for the purpose of investigating the status of participation of the cluster community in decision-making. The computed chi-square value is statistically significant. This implies that the respondent groups' opinions are significantly related with their respective positions. The data obtained from the largest proportion of the experts and CRC committee members indicated that the decision-making system was to some extent (moderately) participatory. In the same manner, the significant proportion of the teacher respondents also confirmed that participatory decision making was more or less practiced. From this we can deduce that there is an encouraging trend in the system of decision-making, and this implies that there will be little problem at the implementation stage because the implementers see the decisions as their own.

Table 4.6b Percentage and Chi-Square Distribution of Responses on the Status of Good Governance in Managing the CRCs

(Key: Group-I = experts (N = 11), Group-II = CRC committee members (N = 38), Group-III = teachers (N = 98))

No	Aspects of Good Governance	Group	The extent to which it was practiced						df ³	X ² ¹	CV ⁴
			Highly practiced		Moderately practiced		Poorly Practiced				
			N	%	N	%	N	%			
1	The CRC management is efficient in managing the system	I	1	9.09	7	63.64	3	27.27	4	0.79	9.49
		II	3	7.89	22	57.89	13	34.21			
		III	6	6.12	54	55.10	38	38.78			
2	The CRC is effective in implementing the school cluster model	I	1	9.09	9	81.82	1	9.09	4	26.73 ²	9.49
		II	3	7.89	21	55.26	14	36.84			
		III	3	3.06	28	28.57	67	68.37			
3	There is a consensus on the plans of the cluster center activities	I	1	9.09	9	81.82	1	9.09	4	6.02	9.49
		II	4	10.53	26	68.42	8	21.05			
		III	31	31.63	51	50.04	16	16.33			
4	Consensus on the programs of the cluster center activities	I	1	9.09	9	81.82	1	9.09	4	8.17	9.49
		II	5	15.16	22	57.89	11	28.95			
		III	29	29.59	52	53.06	17	17.35			
5	Transparency of the management system of the CRC	I	3	27.27	6	54.55	2	18.18	4	13.79 ²	9.49
		II	7	18.42	20	52.63	11	28.95			
		III	33	33.67	59	60.20	6	6.12			

X²¹ = Calculated chi-square value = $\sum (E_o - E_e)^2 / E_e$, df³ = degree of freedom, *2 = Significant at 0.05 level of significance, CV⁴ = critical value

Question number 1 was concerned about the status of efficiency of the CRC management systems. As the table above shows the calculated chi-square value is less than the critical value at 0.05 level of significance, that is, it is not significant. This implies that the respondent groups' opinions about the efficiency of the CRC management systems are not significantly related with their respective positions. From this, it can be deduced that there is consensus among the respondent groups of different positions about the degree of efficiency of the CRC management systems. The responses of the majority of the experts, CRC committee members and teachers indicated that the management systems were moderately efficient. From this, it can be deduced that the efficiency of the systems was at satisfactory level. This implies that the management activities of the cluster systems were relatively on a right track toward the achievement of the cluster centers goals.

To find out the extent to which the management systems of the cluster resource centers were effective in achieving the objectives of the cluster centers, question number 2 was forwarded to the respondents. As is observed from the above table, since the calculated chi-square value is

greater than the critical value at .05 level of significance, it can be deduced that the responses of the respondent groups are dependent upon or affected by their respective positions/work responsibilities, and hence lack consensus about the degree to which the systems have been effective. The obtained data from the majority of the experts and the CRC committee members indicated that the systems were at satisfactory level in bringing about the required/expected results. The majority of the teacher respondents, however, confirmed that the management system was not effective as expected. Considerable proportion of the CRC committee members also shared the opinion of the teachers. From this, it may be inferred that even though the so far observed effectiveness of the systems was encouraging a lot remains to be done.

Questions number 3 and 4 were concerned about the degree of consensus on the plans and programs of the cluster systems respectively. For the above two consecutive items, the computed chi-square values are less than the corresponding critical values, that is, they are not significant at .05 level of significance. This implies that there is consensus among the respondents of different positions about the consensus of the CRC community on the plans and programs of the cluster systems. This in turn implies that there is no significant relationship between the opinions and the positions of the respondents. In both cases the majority of the experts, CRC committee members and teachers confirmed that the status of consensus on these two issues were satisfactory/moderate. From this it can be said that the processes of planning and programming were more or less based on agreement among the cluster communities. This may have a positive implication in that the implementation stage will win the cooperation of the implementers.

The last question on the elements of good governance dealt with the status of transparency in the process of the management of the cluster systems. In case of this particular issue, the calculated chi-square value is observed to be statistically significant. This tells us that the respondent groups were affected by their respective positions in responding to/rating the item. This lack of consensus may be attributed to the lack of common standard and/or criteria on which base to evaluate the level of performance in this issue. There should be agreed upon standard during the planning stage so that there will be agreement during the evaluation of the degree of transparency as an outcome. The data in Table 4.6b indicates that transparency in the systems was at moderate level because the majority of the three respondent groups rated it as moderately practiced principle of good governance in the systems. From this information it may be deduced that the school cluster systems' actors were aware of what was done, for what purpose and who

was involved in it. This has a positive impact on the smooth functioning of the CRC management and implementation system.

From the findings so far observed it may be deduced that the observed performances in case of good governance are found to be the mix of moderate and poor. This may imply that a lot remains to be done to promote good governance in the CRCs so that smooth functioning of the systems is ensured.

4.8. Issues Related to the Outcomes of the Implementation of School Cluster Model

Implementation of school cluster model targets at the improvement of quality, access, efficiency and equity in schools. Thus, it is expected that school cluster centers bring about improvement in students' participation rate in education, promotion rate, retention rate; teachers' professional development, material and financial provision/support, pedagogical supervisory services, cost-effective training and experience-sharing system for teachers, and participatory decision-making. Based on this, to find out the extent to which the expected outcomes have been achieved, 12 questions were presented to the respondents. The Questions were presented in such a way that the respondents are to rate the actual practices/outcomes observed in the CRC systems as high, medium on low

Table 4.7. Percentage and Chi-Square Distribution of Responses on the Outcomes of the Implementation of School Cluster Model

(Key: Group-I = experts (N= 11), Group-II = CRC committee members (N= 38), Group-III = teachers (N= 98))

No	Outcomes Observed	Group	Degree of the Outcomes						df	χ^2	CV
			High		Moderate		Low				
			N	%	N	%	N	%			
1	Increment of students participation rate	I	1	9.09	9	81.82	1	9.09	4	12.06	9.49
		II	16	42.11	16	42.11	6	15.79			
		III	52	53.06	41	41.84	5	5.10			
2	Improvement of promotion rate of students	I	0	0	7	63.64	4	36.36	4	14.86	9.49
		II	5	13.16	21	55.26	12	31.58			
		III	35	35.71	32	32.65	31	31.63			
3	Improvement of students retention rate	I	1	9.09	9	81.82	1	9.09	4	34.34	9.49
		II	5	13.16	22	57.89	11	28.95			
		III	50	51.02	41	41.84	7	7.14			
4	Changes observed in teachers' professional skills	I	2	18.18	8	72.72	1	9.09	4	3.61	9.49
		II	11	28.95	23	60.53	4	10.53			
		III	37	37.76	47	47.96	14	14.29			
5	Status of organization of pedagogical centers with equipment	I	1	9.09	6	54.54	4	36.36	4	63.59	9.49
		II	2	5.26	23	60.53	13	34.21			
		III	1	1.02	4	4.08	93	94.90			
6	Status of provision of library books	I	1	9.09	5	45.46	5	45.45	4	36.76	9.49
		II	1	2.63	13	31.21	24	63.16			
		III	2	2.04	3	3.06	93	94.90			
7	Improvement in the provision of pedagogical supervisory services	I	2	18.18	8	72.72	1	9.09	4	24.28	9.49
		II	5	13.16	16	42.11	17	44.74			
		III	26	26.53	63	64.29	9	9.18			
8	Improvement observed with regard to financial support	I	1	9.09	4	36.36	6	54.54	4	26.45	9.49
		II	1	2.63	10	26.32	27	71.05			
		III	1	9.09	3	3.06	94	95.92			
9	Status of increment of income generation	I	1	9.09	5	45.45	5	45.45	4	32.46	9.49
		II	1	2.63	11	28.95	26	68.42			
		III	1	1.02	3	3.06	97	95.92			
10	Status of improvement of experience sharing	I	2	18.18	8	72.72	1	9.09	4	29.14	9.49
		II	3	7.89	21	55.26	14	36.84			
		III	2	2.04	23	23.47	73	74.49			
11	Status of improvement of participatory decision making	I	2	18.18	6	54.54	3	27.27	4	1.15	9.49
		II	5	13.16	24	63.16	9	23.68			
		III	17	17.35	52	53.06	29	29.59			
12	Degree of provision of cost effective in -service training	I	1	9.09	8	72.72	2	18.18	4	7.25	9.49
		II	7	18.42	17	44.74	14	36.44			
		III	12	12.24	67	68.37	19	19.39			

Calculated chi-square value = $\sum (E_o - E_e)^2 / E_e$, df = 3 = degree of freedom, * = Significant at 0.05 level of significance, CV = critical value

The first question of this section was concerned about the extent to which the adoption and implementation of school cluster model increased participation rate of students. The significant calculated chi-square value (12.06) indicates that there was significant relationship between the work responsibilities/positions and responses of the respondent groups about the degree of increment of students' participation rate. This indicates that there was no consensus among the respondent groups about this particular issue. This difference may be attributed to the fact that the respondent groups have different information about the status of the participation rate, or they judged the status of the issue from their own perspectives. This may affect the uniformity of the likely measures and commitment that are expected of the managing bodies and the

implementers. The observation of the above table makes it clear that the majority of the CRC committee members believed that the participation rate increased highly or moderately. The largest proportion of the experts and significant proportion of the teachers also indicated that the achievement in this regard was at between high and low level. In general, from this it can be deduced that the implementation of the cluster model have played an encouraging role in enhancing students' participation rate. This implies that the cluster model has served as one strategy of universalizing primary education. As Bray (1987:9) stated, one of the administrative purposes of school cluster model is to collect information on student enrollments.

The second question item was forwarded for the purpose of finding out to what extent the cluster model implementation has helped to bring about increment in students' promotion rate. It is observed that the calculated chi-square value exceeds the critical value and, hence, is statistically significant. This indicates that the opinions of the respondent groups (experts, CRC committee members and teachers) were systematically affected by their respective work positions in the cluster systems. This may be due to the likely difference in the information each of them has about this issue, or their perspectives of judging the issue, or their expectations and standard differ from one another. This may have a negative implication with regard to having a prospective commonly agreed upon measures/strategies to deal with the issue. Two different responses were obtained. On the one hand, the two respondent groups (experts had CRC committee members) confirmed that the increment of promotion rate was more or less at moderate level. On the other had, the teachers responded differently. Their judgment was almost equally distributed among the three rating scales: high, moderate and low. This indicates that there is even more diversified judgments and opinions among teachers about the status of the increment of promotion rate. From the general observation of the finding, however, it may be deduced that the school cluster model implementation has helped (to some extent) in increasing students' participation rate.

The third question dealt with the degree to which students' retention rate was increased as a result of the implementation of school cluster model. The data in Table 4.7 reveals that the calculated chi-square value is found to be statistically significant (34.34). This is an indication of the dependence of the responses of the experts, CRC committee members and teachers about the extent to which students' retention rate improved on their respective positions in the cluster systems. The difference may be due to the difference in the information they have had, or the

standard of their judgment of the improvement of students' retention rate. All of the experts indicated that retention rate increased moderately. The CRC committee members (57-89%) also confirmed that it was moderately increased. Even the majority of the teachers responded that retention rate increased highly. From this finding, it can be deduced that the retention increased at an encouraging rate, and this implies that an educational wastage has been, to some extent, addressed. This may be attributed to the fact that each individual teacher has now become responsible for the case of drop-outs in the class he is a homeroom teacher, and even the student researcher has observed many occasions where each teacher was evaluated on the status of dropout rate in his classroom. This trend has a positive implication in addressing the problem of high dropout rate due to various reasons and consequently plays its role in minimizing educational wastage and promoting educational efficiency.

The fourth question/item was presented to investigate how far teachers' professional skills were improved. As the computed chi-square value is less than the critical chi-square value, it can be deduced that there is no statistically significant relationship between the positions and the responses of the respondent groups. This indicates that there is a consensus among the respondent groups about the status of the improvement of teachers' professional development. This helps the experts, CRC committee members and teachers in developing common understanding of the requirements, and how to proceed with them in the future to even improve teachers' professional skills in a better way. Large proportion of the experts, CRC committee members and teachers indicated that the improvement observed in teachers' professional skill was satisfactory and even above. Thus, from this we can deduce that the implementation of school cluster model has played its own role in improving teachers' professional skills, and this is expected to have a positive implication for the improvement of quality of education in the cluster system.

The fifth question item aimed at finding out the extent to which the organization of pedagogical centers improved. As observed from the table above, the calculated chi square value is statistically significant (63.59). This indicates that the opinion difference of the respondents about the extent to which equipment of pedagogical centers improved was due to the difference in their respective positions. Unlike the managing bodies, the teachers rated it as low/unsatisfactory improvement. The majority of the experts and the CRC committee members indicated that the equipment was moderately improved. The largest proportion of teachers

(94.90%) however, confirmed that the improvement observed in this area was low. A considerable proportion of the experts and CRC committee members also shared teachers' opinions, and they rated the improvement as low. From this it can be deduced that the improvement that the implementation of school cluster model has brought in the equipment of pedagogical center was not satisfactory. This indicates that little attention was given by the CRC management systems to equip the pedagogical centers with necessary equipment. This may have a negative implication for the quality of education because it may be difficult to make the instruction concert in the absence of rich pedagogical centers.

So as to assess the degree to which provision of library books were improved as a result of the implementation of school cluster model, question number 6 was forwarded. The majority and significant proportion of the experts indicated that the status was moderate and low, respectively. The largest proportion of the teachers, on the other hand, confirmed that there was no improvement in the supply of library books was observed. This indicates that there was poor performance with regard to acquisition as well as utilization of library books in the cluster systems. This implies that the quality of education is being affected due to absence of this vital educational input for quality improvement which in turn may hinder the overall achievements of the cluster centers goals. Such a condition will have a negative implication on the quality of education because absence of these vital educational inputs may hinder the realization of quality education as one goal of school cluster centers. One of the benefits of school clustering is the development of libraries (Geeves, 2000:3).

In order to find out the status of the provision of pedagogical supervisory services, question number 7 was presented to the respondents. The above table indicated that the calculated chi square value is statistically significant. This indicates that the responses of the respondent groups were affected by their respective work positions in the school cluster system. This may be attributed to the fact that the respondents judged the issue based on their own standard/criteria of judgment, and lack of consensus and common understanding about on what criteria and standard to base their judgments and evaluation of the performance in this particular issue. As the data obtained from the majority of the experts and teachers indicates, pedagogical supervisory services were satisfactorily/moderately improved. The CRC committee members indicated (with the proportion of 42.11%, and 44.74%) that the services were moderately and poorly improved respectively. From the responses of the total respondents it can be deduced that the provision of

pedagogical supervisory services are at an encouraging level. This implies that the teachers in the CRC systems are and will be benefited more in developing their pedagogical skills and ultimately in addressing the pedagogic problems of students.

To determine how far the cluster model implementation enabled the cluster system get improved financial support from different sources, question number 8 was forwarded to the respondents. The calculated chi square value is found to be statistically significant. This is an indication of the fact that the responses forwarded by the respondents about the status of the community financial support were affected by their respective positions in the cluster systems. This variation in judgment might be attributed to either the lack of common base of standards on which to base their evaluation of the performance, or due to variation of information/evidence they already have had or the likely role conflict. The majority of all respondents in the three respondent groups confirmed that the support gained was low. This implies that there is no adequate commitment from bodies at higher hierarchical levels, the community and NGOs to financially support the cluster systems. We know that, as Bray (1987:9) states, one of the school clustering purposes is to foster community financial support. The absence of financial support has a negative effect/implication on the fulfillment of material and human power inputs that in turn affects the quality of education.

So as to find out the extent to which the cluster systems were effective in generating their own incomes, question number 9 was forwarded. The calculated chi-square value (32.46) is found to exceed the critical chi-square value at .05 level of significance. This indicates that the responses of the respondent groups depended upon their respective positions in the cluster management system. This lack of consensus and common understanding about the status of income-generation may create a problem to the subsequent actions that are to be taken to enhance the capacity of the CRC systems to generate their own incomes. As the obtained data shows, the largest proportion of the CRC committee members and teachers did not agree that income generation was increased in the cluster systems. This indicates that the cluster systems were not applying the strategy of generating one's own income. This implies that the culture of always waiting for financial budget from government is not yet avoided, and this in turn may result in a financial/budget deficit in accomplishing the cluster activities.

Question item number 10 was concerned with the extent to which experience-sharing was improved in the cluster system. As observed from the table above the calculated chi-square value

is found to be statistically significant. From this it can be inferred that the responses of the respondent groups were affected by their work positions in the cluster systems. It can also be said that the respondent groups have no consensus on the status of this particular issue. The reason for this may be that they have no commonly agreed upon standard and/or criteria to evaluate/judge the extent of the performance. This also may have a negative impact on the future planning cycle of the CRC experience-sharing. The majority of the experts and the CRC committee members indicated that experience-sharing was moderately improved. On the contrary, the responses of the majority of teacher respondents indicated that they were not satisfied with the performance of experience-sharing, and rated it as low. Considerable number of CRC committee members (36.84%) shared the opinion of the teachers. Thus, from the evidence of the respondents, it can be inferred that despite an encouraging result so far observed, the task has not been to the expected level. This implies that teachers were not in a position to get adequate new experience of the other schools and teachers to enrich the experience they already have had and to develop new ones.

Question number 11 was concerned with the status of participatory decision-making in the cluster system. As the table above shows, the calculated chi-square value has been very much less than the critical chi-square value showing that there is no significant relationship between the positions and responses of the respondents on the extent of improvement of participatory decision making. This implies that there is consensus among the respondent groups with regard to the status of this particular outcome. The experts, CRC committee members and teachers with larger proportion indicated that participation of the cluster community in decision-making was at good and acceptable level. As the table shows they rated it as moderate one. This implies that the cluster systems are developing the culture of participatory decision-making in managing the cluster programs. This will have a positive implication for effective implementation of the CRC programs because the community will develop a sense of ownership.

The last question dealt with the status of in-service training through cost-effective way. As Table 4.7 shows the calculated chi-square value is less than the critical chi-square value. This shows that the three respondent groups were not affected by their respective positions in the cluster system in responding to this particular item. This consensus will help the cluster management system to have a common vision and standards of acceptable achievements and commitment of each part of the system in proceeding with cost effective in-service training. The responses of the

majority of the teachers, CRC committee members and experts indicated that the cost-effective in-service training was more or less satisfactory because they rated it as moderate. Considerable proportion of CRC committee members, however, rated it as low. From this it can be deduced that the outcome observed in this area was encouraging even though it still needs improvement. A conclusion may be drawn from the above findings that the degree of outcomes of the implementation of the school cluster model is found to be a mix of moderate and low. There seems also to be no consensus among the respondent groups about the degree of the so far achieved outcomes.

4.9. Issues Related to Major Difficulties in Implementing School Cluster Model

In the preceding sections of chapter 4 several responses of the respondents indicated that most of the requirements objectives and strategies of the school cluster model were not successfully achieved as expected. From these one may suspect that there may be sum possible factors that are likely to affect the success. Based on this, so as to find out the extent to which these factors contributed to less achievement of the cluster programs, 12 questions were prepared and presented to the respondents in Table 4.8 below In this section, questions related to the extent of work loads of CRC coordinators, key teachers and supervisors; lack of budget, skilled man power awareness, guidelines, community support and facilities; turn over of CRC coordinators and supervisors in affecting the implementation of the CRCs were incorporated.

Table 4.8 Percentage and Chi-Square Distribution of Responses on Factors that Negatively Affect the Effectiveness of School Cluster Management

(Key: Group-I = experts (N = 11), Group-II = CRC committee members (N = 38), Group-III = teachers (N = 98))

No	Difficulties	Group	Degree of difficulty						d.f	X ²	CV [*]
			Very serious		Serious		Not serious				
			N	%	N	%	N	%			
1	Work load of cluster center coordinator	I	5	45.45	5	45.45	1	9.09	4	8.81	9.49
		II	9	23.68	22	57.80	7	18.42			
		III	20	20.40	42	42.86	36	36.73			
2	Work load of key teachers	I	4	36.36	5	45.45	2	18.18	4	12.06	9.49
		II	10	26.32	23	60.53	5	13.16			
		III	28	28.57	32	32.65	38	38.78			
3	Word load of cluster center supervisors	I	5	45.45	2	18.18	4	10.53	4	13.34	9.49
		II	8	21.05	16	42.11	14	36.84			
		III	8	8.16	42	42.86	48	48.98			
4	Lack of budget	I	8	72.73	2	18.18	1	9.09	4	21.27	9.49
		II	31	81.58	6	15.79	1	2.63			
		III	91	92.86	4	4.08	3	3.06			
5	Lack of skilled man power	I	3	27.27	5	45.45	3	27.27	4	6.54	9.49
		II	15	39.47	16	42.11	7	18.42			
		III	43	43.88	48	48.98	7	7.14			
6	Lack of awareness about the purpose of school cluster model	I	3	27.27	6	54.54	2	18.18	4	14.08	9.49
		II	13	34.21	16	42.11	9	23.68			
		III	39	39.80	55	56.12	4	4.08			
7	Lack of awareness about the implementation strategies of school cluster model	I	3	27.27	6	54.54	2	18.18	4	4.46	9.49
		II	11	28.95	24	63.16	3	7.89			
		III	37	37.76	57	58.16	4	4.08			
8	Lack of clear school cluster guidelines	I	5	45.45	4	36.36	2	18.18	4	8.22	9.49
		II	12	31.58	23	60.53	3	7.89			
		III	47	47.96	48	48.98	3	3.06			
9	Turn over of coordinators of CRC	I	8	72.72	2	18.18	1	9.09	4	14.01	9.49
		II	6	15.79	29	76.32	3	7.89			
		III	33	33.67	55	56.12	10	10.20			
10	Turn over of CRC supervisors	I	7	63.64	1	9.02	3	27.27	4	25.92	9.49
		II	4	10.53	26	68.42	8	21.05			
		III	31	31.63	37	37.76	30	30.61			
11	Lack of community participation/support	I	5	45.45	4	36.36	2	18.18	4	19.59	9.49
		II	13	34.21	22	57.89	3	7.89			
		III	88	89.80	8	8.16	2	2.04			
12	Lack of facilities	I	8	72.72	1	9.09	2	18.18	4	24.02	9.49
		II	20	52.63	17	44.74	1	2.63			
		III	91	92.86	4	4.08	3	3.06			

X² = Calculated chi-square value = $\sum (f_o - f_e)^2 / f_e$, df = 3 = degree of freedom, *2 = Significant at 0.05 level of significance, CV = critical value

The first question was concerned with the extent to which the work load of CRC coordinators was serious in affecting the discharging of their responsibility of coordinating the cluster center activities. Since the calculated chi-square value is less than the critical chi-square value, it can be deduced that there is no statistically significant relationship between the work responsibility of the respondents and their opinions on the status of work-load of cluster center coordinators in affecting the effectiveness of CRC management systems. As the table above shows the responses of the majority of all the respondents indicated that the work-burden of the coordinators was

serious/very serious in negatively affecting discharging of their responsibilities and, hence, hindering the effectiveness of school cluster center programs. Also, considerable proportion of teacher respondents indicated that the problem was not serious. From relatively the largest proportion of the respondents in favor of very seriousness/ seriousness of the problem, it can be inferred that CRC coordinators were unable to discharge the responsibility of coordinating the CRC activities as a result of additional duty they have had in acting as a school principal. This, in fact, has a negative implication on the effectiveness of CRC programs. That is to say, since they carry double responsibilities, they may find it difficult to efficiently and effectively coordinate the programs of the CRC because they, as experiences show, will incline more toward giving priority to their own particular school activities than to that of the CRCs.

The concern of question number 2 was to find out how much the work-burden of the key teachers was serious in affecting their performance in discharging their responsibilities. The calculated chi-square value is found to be statistically significant showing that there is a systematic/ significant relationship between the work positions of the group of respondents and their respective attitudes toward the degree of seriousness of the workload of the key teachers. The obtained data from the significant proportion of teachers indicated that the work-load was not as such serious. The majority of the experts and CRC committee members, however, confirmed that the key teachers were seriously burdened with double responsibility they were held with-teaching responsibilities and working for the CRC in arranging training and experience-sharing programs.. From this evidence it may be deduced that the CRC programs that were related with the key teachers' roles and responsibility were not adequately performed. This implies that the effectiveness of the CRC programs is being jeopardized as a result of the work-burden of the key teachers that hinder them from effectively discharging their roles and responsibilities. This may have a negative effect on the provision of experience-sharing and training for teachers in that the key teachers will not have enough time to accomplish their roles in this regard.

In order to find out to what extent the work-load of CRC supervisors affected the implementation of the CRC programs; question/ item number 3 was forwarded to the respondents. As can be observed from the above table, the computed chi-square value exceeds the critical chi-square

value. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between the positions and responses of the respondent groups about the extent to which work-load of CRC supervisors was hindering the effectiveness of the CRC management system. This implies that there is no consensus among the respondents on the status of work-load of CRC supervisors. Significant proportion of teachers and CRC committee members indicated that the problem was serious. The majority of the experts even confirmed that the problem was very serious. Then, based on these evidences, it can be deduced that the CRC supervisors were burdened to discharge their responsibilities. This, from the observations, may be justified by the fact that one supervisor is supervising up to/above five schools and this, in fact, can be beyond his/her capacity to deliver continuous and regular supervisory services.

The major intention of question/item number 4 was to find out the extent to which lack of budget contributed to the ineffectiveness of the CRCs. As can be observed from the above table, the computed chi-square value exceeds the critical chi-square value. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between the positions and responses of the respondent groups about the extent to which lack of budget has been hindering the effectiveness of the CRC management system. The responses of the largest proportions of each of the three respondent groups (experts, CRC committee members and teachers) confirmed that the problem of lack of budget for the running of the cluster programs was very serious. From this evidence it will be safe to deduce that the cluster management systems have been suffering from shortage of budget which may be seen as a life blood for the implementation of cluster programs. This in turn implies that the cluster center activities were in a danger of lagging behind in bringing about the expected outcomes as a result of little commitment of WEOs in allocating necessary budget to the CRCs. Carron et al. (1998: 75) also stated that one of the factors that hinder effectiveness of school cluster management is that budget for day to day running of resource centers is too low.

The fifth question/ item dealt with the degree of the problem observed with regard to shortage of skilled man power for the CRC management. The calculated chi-square value is found to be less than the critical chi-square value; that is, it is not statistically significant. This indicates that there is a consensus among the respondent groups on the fact that the CRCs have been in short of skilled man power. As can be observed from the table, the majority of the total respondents confirmed the very

seriousness/ seriousness of the problem that was encountered in this regard. This may be because, as the actual field observation also shows, no single person in the management committee of the CRCs was trained in the management or supervision of the cluster resource centers. On top of this, evidences show that no additional technical staff has been assigned. This finding implies that the CRCs were not staffed adequately and properly. This in turn negatively affects the efficiency and effectiveness of the CRC management system because the available staff alone cannot manage the cluster activities.

The intentions of items number 6 and 7 were to determine the extent of lack of awareness of cluster model purposes and implementing strategies among the cluster community. As the table above shows, in case of item number 6, the calculated chi-square value is statistically significant. This indicates that there is opinion difference between the respondent groups toward the extent of awareness about the purposes of school cluster model and their positions in the cluster systems. The reason may be due to the fact that the management bodies most of the time talk about positive things while the subordinates talk about the negative things. In case of item number 7, on the other hand, the calculated chi-square value is not statistically significant. This indicates that there is no significant relationship between the opinions of the respondents about the extent of lack of awareness about the strategies of implementation of school cluster model and their respective work positions. This may have a positive implication in an effort to have common understanding about the status of the strategies and what is to be done about this issue to bring about better results. The majority (the largest proportion) of teachers, CRC committee members and experts confirmed that the problems were serious/very serious. This indicates that the cluster community was not acquainted with the necessary awareness of the purposes and implementing strategies of the school cluster model. This may imply that the management bodies at different levels of the CRCs, WEOs, EWZEOs, and OEB have not given due attention to build awareness of the CRC community by arranging adequate training and workshops at different levels of the CRCs systems. This in turn may negatively affect the capacity, commitment and devotion the CRC actors can have to implement the cluster programs because they will not have an opportunity to know what advantages it will have in the teaching-learning process and how they can maximize their contribution in this

regard. And also they may be in short of the knowledge of what mechanisms and methods to employ to attain the objective of the cluster centers. This findings in agreement with the finding of Asnake (2007) that there is less awareness about the objectives of school cluster on the part of all concerned in the CRC system.

Question number 8 was concerned with the degree of the problem of absence of school cluster guidelines in schools and CRCs. The data in the table above shows that the calculated chi-square value is not statistically significant. This may indicate that the work positions and opinions of the respondents toward the status of lack of clear school cluster guidelines are not systematically related. In other words, there is consensus among the respondents about the seriousness of the lack of the guidelines. As can be observed from the data in the table above the largest proportion of each of the respondent groups indicated that the problem in this respect was serious/very serious. This indicates that the school clusters resource centers management systems and the cluster community have been in a great difficulty with regard to the knowledge of the what, why, how and by whom to accomplish school cluster tasks which in turn might have led them to a haphazard ways of doing things which may be the result of the fact that the WEOs and OEB did not provide adequate guidelines to the CRC and schools. The implication of this may be that the development, distribution, and fair and optimum utilization of the guidelines have not been given due attention by the higher bodies in the education/cluster system.

Questions number 9 and 10 targeted at the investigation of the degree of the seriousness of the problem of turn-over of the cluster centers' coordinators and supervisors. As can be observed from Table 4.8, the calculated chi square values for items number 9 and 10 are found to be statistically significant. This indicates that the respondents' opinions about the status of turnover of CRC coordinators and supervisors were affected by the positions they held in the cluster system. The data obtained from the largest proportion of the experts, CRC committee members and teachers confirmed that the problem in the two cases was very serious/serious. In particular, the experts indicated the problem as very serious one. This implies that there is no stability in the assignment/posting of CRC coordinators and supervisors in the CRC management system. This may have a negative effect on the effectiveness of the management and provision of supervisory services in the CRCs because coordinators and supervisors who have already developed some experiences in the

position will not have adequate opportunity to stay there, and the newly assigned ones take some time to develop necessary experiences to manage the system efficiently and effectively. This implies that the CRC systems have not been effective in stabilizing the assignment and efficient utilization of individuals in these positions. This will have a negative impact in that: (i) the experienced person leaves the position when he/she is expected to contribute to better performance, and (ii) the fresh recruit takes some time to develop experience. One of the problems with the supervision of clusters, as Carron et al. (1998:71) states, is that many supervisors are fresh recruits and are unable to manage the resource centers. Sammaranyke, (1983: 63-64) also pointed out that turnover of cluster school and satellite school principals are the hindering factors for CRCs effectiveness.

Question number 11 was forwarded to find out to what extent lack of community support/participation was serious. The calculated chi-square value has been found to be statistically significant. This implies that there is no consensus among the respondent groups about the extent of lack of community support because the calculated chi-square value is statistically significant showing that there is significant relationship between the responses and positions of the respondents. The reason for this difference may be due to the fact that there is no agreed upon standard and requirements among the respondents about the community support that the CRCs are expected to get. The responses of the majority of each of the respondent groups indicated that the problem was serious and/or very serious. The largest proportion of teacher respondents (89.80%) in particular confirmed that lack of community support was very serious. This lack of community support may be attributed to the lack of awareness and mobilization about the role and responsibility they would have in managing and implementing the cluster activities. It is obvious from observation that the community actively participate in the support of its respective individual schools in separation. Here, the problem seems to be the fact that the community had not yet developed the culture of seeing the school cluster system as an organizational unit that demands their support.. This implies that one of the causes for less effectiveness of the cluster center in their performance was lack of community participation in the management and implementation of the cluster programs.

The last question item of this particular section was concerned with the degree to which lack of facilities was serious in affecting the effectiveness of the cluster programs. The calculated chi-square value is found to be statistically significant. This shows that the responses of the

respondents were systematically affected by their respective work positions in the cluster systems, and as the result of this they lacked consensus on the degree of lack of facilities in the CRCs. The largest, the larger and large proportion of the teachers, experts and CRC committee members, respectively, confirmed that the problem encountered with regard to this particular issue was very serious. Lack of facilities such as pedagogical centers, training rooms/halls, separate CRC offices, libraries and the like may negatively affect the capacity of the CRCs to enhance professional development of teachers, improve quality of education, and efficiently manage the systems' programs.

From the so far observed findings, it can be concluded that workload of coordinators, supervisors, and key teachers; lack of budget, skilled manpower, awareness, guidelines/instructions, community participation and facilities; and turn-over of coordinators and supervisors have been serious/very serious problems that hinder the effectiveness of the CRC management systems. The respondents are also found to lack consensus on the degree of the problems in responding to about 66.67% of the problems identified.

4.10. Analysis of the Responses of the Interviewees

In addition to the questionnaire that was prepared to be responded by the 147 respondents, five WEOs officials and one ZEO expert were interviewed on the issues related to the purposes, strategies, achievements, current capacity, outcomes and problems of the cluster model in their respective CRCs and they were also asked to forward the possible policy strategies as solutions to tackle the problems.

As the obtained data shows the major and agreed upon purposes of the school cluster model implementation in the woredas were to: 1) enhance professional experience of teachers through arranged experience-sharing programs 2) to develop a healthy competition among member schools of each CRC 3) to create a better framework for teachers' supervisory services/professional assistance. This implies that the purposes of the cluster model adopted in the sample CRCs were not comprehensive enough to encompass pedagogic, administrative economic and political purposes identified in literature by Bray (1987:9)

With regard to strategies of implementation, the respondents forwarded very few strategies that were being followed in the CRCs. These were 1) assigning a supervisor to each CRC 2) establishing CRC coordinating committee. A close look into the above information indicates that

the school cluster systems were not exhaustively employing comprehensive implementing strategies for the realization of the multifaceted task of CRC management system. This may adversely affect the effectiveness of the cluster centers' management system. The appropriate theoretically established strategies of the implementation of school cluster model should have been adequately adopted by the CRCs. Important strategies from other countries should have been employed. With out this, effectiveness of the CRCs will remain a dream.

The third question forwarded in the interview was concerned with the status of the expected outcomes of the cluster model implementation. The responses of the interviewees were not specific enough. Rather they were relatively general and the outcomes they achieved were 1) experience-sharing was improved 2) supervisory services improved, and 3) students' academic performance increased. Achievements in the administrative, economic and political areas were not pointed out by the respondents. This indicates that the achieved outcomes of the CRCs were restricted to only a bit portion of the expected overall pedagogic, administrative, economic and political outcomes of the implementation of the cluster model. From this, it can be deduced that the cluster systems have not been as effective as expected in bringing about comprehensive outcomes in achieving the multifaceted purposes of school cluster model.

The fourth question of the interview guide was about the current status of the CRCs with respect to financial, material and skilled manpower capacities. The responses of the interviewees indicated that all the CRCs were financially, materially, and in the provision of skilled man power very weak. This indicates that little or no attention has been given by the WEOs to build the financial, material and skilled man power capacities of the CRCs. This ultimately hampers the performances of the management systems in achieving their objectives efficiently and effectively. Unless otherwise corrective measures are taken by collective efforts of every echelon of the educational management systems and stakeholders in the zone to address the serious problems of financial budget, basic materials and skilled man power of the CRCs, designing programs alone will remain a futile exercise.

The fifth question dealt with the problems that hinder the effectiveness of the CRC management systems. The respondents highlighted lack/shortage of budget, basic materials, cluster guidelines and skilled manpower as very serious problems. This information shows that the CRCs are not organized and staffed to the level required, and this in turn jeopardizes the achievement of the objectives of the cluster systems in bringing about improvements in the teaching-learning performances of the cluster systems.

Finally, the respondents suggested the need to: 1) give incentives to CRC supervisors at remote areas 2) allocate financial budget and basic materials 3) provide continuous and sufficient relevant training for the cluster communities as policy solutions to alleviate the problems.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter consists of three sections. Section 5.1 presents summary of the major findings of the study. Section 5.2 deals with the conclusion drawn from the findings of the study. In section 5.3, recommendations of the possible measures are forwarded.

5.1. Summary

School cluster model is adopted and implemented to ensure the economic, pedagogic, administrative and political purposes of education systems. The ultimate intention of cluster model is also to realize access, efficiency and quality of education. Accordingly, school clustering has been implemented in East Wollega Zone education system for, nearly, the same purpose.

From this point of view, the purpose of this study is to assess the practices and problems of the management of primary school cluster resource centers in East Wollega Zone. More specifically the following specific objectives were designed for the study:

- To find out the extent to which the major identified purposes of school cluster model are being practiced in the clusters system.
- To examine the status of CRCs in practicing appropriate strategies for the implementation of school cluster model.
- To investigate the extent to which the major managerial functions are being practiced in managing the CRCs.
- To investigate the conduciveness of the existing governance to the management and implementation of the school cluster model.
- To asses the degree to which the implementation of the cluster model has brought about the expected outcomes.
- To identify the major problems that has been hindering the effectiveness of the school cluster resource center management system.

To attain the general and specific objectives mentioned above, the following guiding basic research questions were formulated

1. To what extent are the major theoretically identified/established purposes of school cluster model being followed/practiced in the CRCs?
2. What strategies are being practiced in the CRCs?
3. To what extent are the major managerial functions being practiced by the cluster centers management systems?
4. To what extent is the existing governance in the cluster systems conducive for the smooth functioning of the CRCs management system?
5. What is the status of the so far observed outcomes of the implementation of the cluster model?
6. What are the major difficulties that have been hindering the effectiveness of the CRC management system?
7. Is there any significant relationship between the work positions of the respondents and their respective opinions toward the status of the practices and problems of the :
a)purposes b)implementing strategies c)planning aspects d)status of good governance
e)outcomes, and f) hindering factors of the CRC management system?

A descriptive survey method was employed for the study. Accordingly, 6 woredas out of 17 woredas in the zone (35.71%) were randomly selected. From these woredas 10 CRCs (33.30%) and 19 satellite schools (59.38%) were randomly selected. A total of 153 respondents (with representatives from ZEO experts, WEO experts, CRC coordinators and supervisors, satellite schools principals and teachers) were involved in the study.

Questionnaire and interview were employed for the study as data gathering tools. Percentage and chi-square test were used as statistical tools for data analysis and interpretation. Accordingly, the following major findings were identified from the study.

5.1.1. Characteristics of the Respondents

The majority of the respondents (72.79%) were males indicating that females have had less opportunity for both responsibilities and other positions. Concerning the age profile of the respondents, it was found out that the majority (75.51%) were within the age range of 28-47 years. This indicates that they were matured enough to provide relevant information for the study. The educational levels of the respondents range from TTI to B.A/B.Sc/BEd. However, the majority (65.31%) were diploma holders. This indicates that there is an encouraging trend in this regard. The majority of the respondents were teachers and principals of primary schools whose requirement is TTI and diploma level of education. It was also observed that the majority of the respondents were teachers. This is so because their population was relatively larger than that of others and they were the ultimate beneficiaries of the CRC management services. With regard to years of service, the respondents have relatively adequate experience in both the current and other positions.

5.1.2. Status of the Practices of Cluster Model Purposes

It is generally agreed that the implementation of school cluster model is to achieve economic, pedagogic, administrative and political purposes that ultimately aimed at the improvement of education quality. As the findings of the study indicated,

- There is no consensus among the respondents on the status of mutual and fair sharing of resources among member schools.
- There is no consensus among the respondent groups on the extent to which community has involved in management and support of CRCs.
- The responses of the majority of the respondents revealed that the system has brought about a better framework for teacher inspection.
- The majority of the respondents believed that integration of different levels of schooling was adequately practiced.
- There was consensus among the respondent groups on that the CRCs did not act as centers for community involvement.
- There was no consensus among the respondents on the extent to which the CRCs:
 - acted as centers for collection of information in enrollments
 - made decisions locally on teachers' posting and leave arrangements.

- addressed access issues with regard to teachers
- The finding indicated that a better framework was provided for teacher inspection.
- the finding also indicated that pupil competition was adequately encouraged

5.1.3. Strategy of Implementation of Cluster Model

Appropriate and feasible strategies should be employed if the school cluster purposes are to be achieved. The gathered data indicates that, however,

- There is no consensus among the experts, CRC committee members and teachers with regard to the extent to which clear vision, objectives and strategies were established to achieve CRC purposes. They rated these issues as highly, moderately and poorly practiced ones respectively.
- Allocation of financial budget and basic materials for the running of cluster tasks is not given attention and this implies that the cluster programmes are probably handicapped by this situation.
- No attention was given to the development of cluster committee capacity to improve their managerial competency. This makes the coordinating capacity of the committee questionable.
- Community involvement in managerial, financial, labour and material support is not practiced as one strategy of implementing the cluster model.
- Experience-sharing among schools and teachers is encouraging.

5.1.3. Planning of School Cluster Activities

- Even though the cluster systems have plans for short-term activities, they have not adopted the system of planning for long terms activities.
- The findings of the study indicated that the culture of involving the major stakeholders (teachers, PTA members and KETB members) in the planning process has been very weak.

5.1.4. Organization and Staffing of School Cluster Resource Centers

The extent to which the CRCs are organized and staffed determines the ultimate effectiveness of the system's objectives. The evidence from the respondents, however, showed that:

- Conditions were not facilitated for the CRC cluster community with regard to the provision of cluster guidelines that would have been used as a reference to be guided with in an effort to be aware of one's responsibility, authority and accountability in the cluster management system.
- The organizing/staffing process did not adequately involve the cluster community, for example, in the selection of CRC, selection of CRC coordinators/principals. These activities were done by WEOs and Woreda cabinet. CRCs have been suffering from understaffed management system.

5.1.5. Monitoring and Evaluation of School Cluster Activities

To take timely corrective measures the programs of CRCs need to be monitored and evaluated. However, as the responses of the majority of the respondents indicates:

- The CRCs have no adequate and regular plan for monitoring and evaluation of the cluster programs and the process did not adequately involve the major stakeholders (teachers, PTA and KETB members).
- The finding indicated that the evaluation process was not transparent enough and the results were not reported to higher bodies regularly.

5.1.6. Good Governance in the CRC Management System

Good governance plays significant role in the smooth functioning of CRC management system and its effectiveness in achieving its objectives. However, the finding showed that:

- The majority of the respondents confirmed that responsibilities, authorities and accountability of each segment of the cluster system were not clearly defined. The management system was not adequately empowered, given adequate autonomy in decision-making on its own affairs.
- The majority of the respondents revealed that the cluster systems were only partly efficient, and there effectiveness was relatively unsatisfactory.

5.1.7. Outcomes Observed as a Result of the Implementation of School Cluster Model

As previously pointed out, the major intention of implementation of school cluster model is to improve quality, efficiency and access in the provision of education to the beneficiaries. The findings of the study with regard to this issue indicated that:

- The majority of the respondents confirmed that an improvement was observed in the area of students' participation rate, retention rates, teachers' pedagogical supervisory services, experience-sharing, participatory decision-making and teachers' in-service training through cost-effective way.
- The result observed in the area of repetition rate, teachers' professional development, provision of books, financial support and income generation was not satisfactory.

5.1.8. Factors that Have Been Hindering Effective Implementation of School Cluster Model

The preceding sections have showed that the CRC management system was not effective in bringing about the expected results and realizing the objectives of school cluster model. This problem is attributed to different factors. The findings with regard to this are summarized as follows:

- Work-load of CRC coordinators and supervisors, lack of financial budget, lack of community support, and shortage of facilities were very serious in hindering the effective accomplishment of the cluster activities. Other difficulties such as shortage of skilled man-power, lack of awareness about the purposes and implementing strategies of the school cluster model, lack of important school cluster guidelines and turn-over of the CRC coordinators and supervisors were also indicated as serious problems.

5.1.9. Solutions Suggested by the Respondents

- Allocating financial budget to run the CRC management activities.
- Providing continuous and relevant training for the cluster community to build their capacities.
- Giving incentives to CRC supervisors who work at remote areas.
- Providing basic materials for the CRC management activities.

5.2. Conclusion

From the preceding findings, the following conclusions may be drawn:

1. In Ethiopia, school clustering has been employed as a strategy to decentralize educational organization and management to ultimately improve quality and efficiency of education. To achieve this objective fulfillment of economic, pedagogic, administrative and political requirements is crucial. To this end, the development of vision to proceed fast enough in setting up a pro-active and efficient management, and to build the financial, material and staff capacities needs to be given due attention.
2. The implementation of school cluster model in primary schools of East Wollega Zone has not been given due attention. The observation shows that, in the first place, there is no adequate overall awareness about the purposes and implementing strategies of the cluster model on the part of both the management bodies and the implementers of the system. The majority of the major theoretically identified purposes and strategies of CRC management system are not properly materialized in the cluster systems. This implies that the cluster systems did not have comprehensive vision in managing the CRCs.
3. The major managerial functions are not well practiced and the major stakeholders/CRC community was not made the participants of the management system. The cluster management system could not ensure the proper organization and staffing of the system. The CRCs are under capacity with regard to financial budget, facilities, basic materials and skilled manpower without which the system will be handicapped in an effort to discharge its responsibilities efficiently and effectively. It is not enough to decentralize responsibilities to the cluster center level. It requires material, financial and technical assistance at least to start with. Unless and otherwise, it will be like "giving meat without knife".
4. The cluster centers' management system has not been participatory in its processes of planning, organizing and implementing. The most important stakeholders/actors of the system-PTAs, KETBs and teachers' representatives have not been incorporated in the CRC management committee. It should be recognized that the CRCs cannot go ahead even a step in isolation from the participation of the local community.

5. There seems to be no consensus and commonly agreed upon of standards, expectations and criteria of judgment/evaluation of the status of achievements and fulfillment of requirements among the managing bodies and implementers (experts and CRC committee members on the one hand, and teachers on the other) with regard to the purposes, strategies, planning, good governance, outcomes and hindering factors of the effective management and implementation of school cluster model. Among 87 items for which chi-square values were calculated by cross-tabulating the responses/opinions of the respondents groups with their respective positions, 72 (82.76%) chi-square values were found to be statistically significant indicating that most of the responses of the respondents about the status of the practices of purposes, strategies, planning, good governance, outcomes and hindering, factors in managing and implementing cluster programs were systematically/significantly affected by their respective positions in the cluster systems.

These observed gaps, really call for the attention of the management bodies at regional, zonal and woreda levels to revisit the overall organization and management of the school cluster systems in the zone understudy.

5.3. Recommendations

In the preceding section various difficulties that have been hindering the efficiency and effectiveness of the CRCs management system have been witnessed. In this section some possible policy measures are recommended.

5.3.1. Awareness and consensus Building

- ❖ School cluster model is a recently introduced strategy in Ethiopia. In order to be acquainted with the why and how of the implementation of this strategy, each of the parts and stakeholders of the CRCs need to build adequate awareness so that they will be ready to contribute what is expected of them. Thus, the REB, ZEO and WEOs and CRCs should arrange workshops and short trainings to build the awareness, consensus among the cluster communities about the purposes, requirements and strategies to be followed in implementation process.
- ❖ Consensus should be built among the managing bodies and implementers at different levels of the cluster system about what standards and requirements are to be considered to

determine the extent to which the system is achieving its objectives and to identify the gaps to be bridged and proceed with the promising performances.

- ❖ To mobilize all the actors of the cluster systems clear instructions and guidelines play their own role. Thus, OEB should provide clear and sufficient guidelines and manuals to clearly define the roles, responsibilities, authority and accountability of each segment of the cluster system.

5.3.2. Providing Technical Assistance

- ❖ Currently, the CRCs have focused on the short-term plans only. However, if to achieve the expected results of educational quality, the cluster systems should also establish clear vision, mission, value, long-term plans, and strategies. The bodies at higher hierarchical levels should also provide necessary technical assistance.

5.3.3. Organizing and Staffing the CRCs Adequately and Properly

- ❖ It is believed that the absence of proper organization and staffing is one cause for the ineffectiveness of the CRC management. Hence, the CRCs and WEOs and OEB should design a strategy to coordinate the efforts and contributions of both government bodies and NGOs to secure a pool of financial, material and human resources.
- ❖ To solve the problems of organizing/staffing the CRC with necessary manpower
 - WEOs should assign additional support staffs such as students' record officer, pedagogical center facilitators/coordinators to each CRC.
 - WEOs and CRCs should revise the organization of the CRC committees to ensure that representatives of PTAs, KETBs and teachers are incorporated in it in addition to the CRC supervisors, coordinators and satellite schools so that participation of the community in the management and decision-making of the systems is materialized.
 - As the CRC guideline of OEB shows, CRC committee has not been organized at the regional, zonal and Woreda levels. Thus, it will be logical to recommend that the committees should be organized at the three hierarchical levels if the management of the CRCs is to be effective in coordinating the CRC programs and activities.
 - WEOs, EWZEOs and OEB should support the CRCs with relevant guidelines, training manuals, science kits, library books, and pedagogical center equipments.

5.3.4. Generating One's Own In-Built Income

- ❖ Financial grants that may be given by government alone can not bring about the required outcome. Thus, to supplement this, the cluster systems should design mechanism such as monthly/quarterly/yearly money contributions and organizing bazaars at CRC level to generate their own in-built income for their CRCs programs.

Recommendation for a Farther Study

It is apparent that school cluster model is a relatively recently introduced strategy in Ethiopia.. As a result of this, adequate study has not yet been conducted on the problem. On top of this, the problem is not as such an easy one to be adequately studied by a beginner researcher. Thus, the researcher would like to recommend that other interested researchers should carry out deeper and wider investigation on this problem.

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Appendix: A
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF EDPM
(EDUCATION POLICY AND PLANNING STREAM)

A Questionnaire to be filled by WEO Experts, CRC principals, CRC Supervisors, Key Teachers, Satellite Schools Principals and Teachers.

Dear Respondents,

The main purpose of this questionnaire is to gather data pertinent to the study of "Practices and Problems of the Management of School Cluster Resource Centers in Primary Schools of East Wollega Zone". Thus, you are kindly requested to fill all the close and open-ended questions because your honest and reliable information is valuable for the success of the study. The study focuses on academic and pedagogic issues only, and your information will be kept confidential.

Instruction

1. You need not to write your name
2. Provide your response after thoroughly reading the instructions.
3. Answer all the close-and open-ended questions in a way they are asked to be answered.

Thank you for your cooperation!!

Section I. Personal Information

In responding to the following background information, please provide your answer by writing on the blank space for the first three and by putting “√” sign in the boxes in their rest ones

1.1

Woreda _____

School _____

School level _____

Your current position (indicate with “√”)

☐ key Teacher

☐ Teacher

☐ CRC supervisor

☐ CRC coordinator

☐ School Director

☐ Expert _____

1.2 Biographic Information

Sex		Age (use sign “√”)	Educational Level (use sign “√”)	Field of specializ ation	Relevant special training attended	Years of service		
M	F					In the current position	Other	Total
		☐ 18-22	☐ M.A/M.S.c			☐ <5		
		☐ 23-27				☐ 6-10		
		☐ 28-32	☐ B.A/B.Sc /E.Ed			☐ 11-15		
		☐ 33-37	☐ Diploma			☐ 16-20		
		☐ 38-42				☐ >20		
		☐ 43-47	☐ TTI					
		☐ ≥ 48	Other (specify) _____					

Section II. School Cluster Model Purposes

To what extent are the following purposes of school cluster model being followed in your cluster resource center? Please, rate each of them as highly followed, moderately followed or poorly followed by putting “√” sign against each purpose.

S.N	Purpose	Response		
		Highly followed	Moderately followed	Poorly followed
1	<u>Economic</u>			
	➤ Facilities are shared among the member schools fairly			
	➤ Staff are shared between member schools to fill vacancies			
	➤ Community financial support is fostered			
	➤ Any other purpose being followed			
2	a _____			
	b _____			
	c _____			
	<u>Pedagogic</u>			
	➤ allow schools get extra teaching resources			
	➤ encourage teachers' professional development			
	➤ encourage pupil competition			
	encourage integration of different levels of schooling			
	➤ act as a center for community involvement in education			
	➤ Any other purpose being followed			
3	a _____			
	b _____			
	c _____			
	<u>Administrative</u>			
	➤ school cluster resource centers acts as a center for collection of information in enrollments			
	➤ local decision is made on teacher posting			
	➤ local decision is made on teachers' leave arrangements			
	➤ provides a better framework for teacher inspection			
	➤ addresses access issues with respect to teachers			
	➤ Any other pedagogic purpose being followed			
4	a _____			
	b _____			
	c _____			
	<u>Political</u>			
	➤ increases community participation in education			
	➤ Any other political purpose being followed			
	a _____			
	b _____			
	c _____			

Section III Strategies of Implementation of School Cluster Model

Please, rate the following strategies of managing cluster resource centers, in your cluster system as high, medium or low by putting "√" sign against each strategy.

S.N	Strategy	Rate		
		High	Medium	Low
1	Establish clear policy statement to avoid misunderstanding			
2	Establish:			
	➤ clear vision			
	➤ clear objectives			
	➤ clear strategies for effective implementation of cluster system			
3	Allocate:			
	➤ budget for cluster programmes			
	➤ basic materials to the implementation of cluster center programs.			
4	Increase teachers' competency through in-service teachers professional development			
6	Promote:			
	➤ flexibility in cluster management			
	➤ responsiveness in cluster management			
7	Enhance capacity of cluster resource center committee at cluster center level			
8	Decentralize responsibilities to:			
	➤ cluster level			
9	Enhance community involvement in cluster:			
	➤ management			
	➤ material support			
	➤ financial support			
	➤ labor support			
10	Programmed mutual sharing of experience among:			
	➤ teachers			
	➤ schools			
12	Any other strategy followed:			
	a _____			
	b _____			
	c _____			

Section IV: Planning Aspects of the Management of School Cluster Resource Centers

Please, rate the following aspects of planning system for the cluster management in your cluster system as highly practiced, moderately practiced, poorly practiced or not practiced at all by putting "√" sign against each planning aspect.

S.N	Planning Aspects	Degree of practice			
		Highly practiced	Moderately practiced	Poorly practiced	Not practiced at all
1	The school cluster plans for:				
	➤ Long term activities				
	➤ Short term activities				
2	Formal need assessment before planning				
3	Participation in planning:				
	➤ Teachers involvement				
	➤ PTA members involvement				
	➤ KETB members involvement				
	➤ CRC committee involvement				
4	Others (if any) places specify				
	a _____				
	b _____				
	c _____				

Section V. Organization of School Clusters

For the following questions, please indicate your answer by using "√" sign in the boxes of alternatives of each question.

1. Is there school cluster guideline in your school?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Do not know

2. Is there school cluster guideline in your cluster center?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Do not know

3. If your answer for question number 1 and /or 2 is "yes", have you ever read it?

☐ Yes

☐ No

4. If your answer for questions number 3 is "yes", is it clear and understandable for you?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Section V: (Continued)

For the following questions, please indicate your answer by using “√” sign in the boxes of alternatives of each question.

5. Do you know the selection criteria for selecting a school as a cluster center?

☐ a/Yes ☐ b/No

6. Have you been involved in the selection of cluster resource center?

☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Have your school director/ representative been involved in the selection of cluster center?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Do not know

8. If your response for question number 8 and/or 9 is “No”, who selected it as cluster center?

☐ Woreda Education Office
☐ The Woreda Council and Woreda Education Office
☐ Do not know

9. Has /Have key teacher/s/ (model teachers) been assigned for the center?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Do not know

10. Are additional staffs provided for your cluster center?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Do not know

11. How was cluster center coordinator assigned?

☐ Elected by satellite school principals
☐ Nominated by higher officials
☐ Through competition

Section VI: Monitoring and Evaluation of School Cluster Resource Center Activities

Please, rate each of the following aspects of monitoring and evaluation of school cluster model in your cluster system as always happened, sometimes happened, never happened or do not know by putting “√” sign against each.

Monitoring and Evaluation Aspect	Frequency of Happening			
	Always happened	Sometime happened	Never happened	Do not know
The school cluster committee has a plan for:				
a. Monitoring the cluster center activities				
b. Evaluating the cluster center activities				
Evaluation system is participatory				
Evaluation system is based on objective results				
Rating items in the evaluation formats are realistic				
Evaluation results are reported to the higher bodies				
Evaluation system is transparent				
In-service training program is assessed by WEO at least quarterly				
Feedback about the evaluation results is provided timely				
Any other aspects of monitoring and evaluation system (please specify)				
a. _____				
b. _____				
c. _____				

Section VII. The Issues of Governance in Managing Cluster Resource Centers

Please, indicate the status of each of the following aspects of good governance in your cluster system as highly practiced, moderately practiced or poorly practiced by putting "√" sign against each aspect.

S.N	Aspects of Good governance in cluster center management	How much is it practiced		
		Highly practiced	Moderately practiced	Poorly practiced
1	The empowerment of the cluster center management system by the higher bodies			
2	The autonomy of the cluster center management system:			
	➤ in decision-making			
	➤ in implementation of its affairs			
3	A sense of accountability on the part of the cluster center system			
4	The clarity of definition of:			
	➤ responsibilities			
	➤ authority			
	➤ accountability			
5	The balance of responsibility and authority that is devolved to the cluster center level			
6	Support from super ordinates			
7	Motivation from super ordinates			
8	Participation in decision making			
9	Efficiency in managing the cluster activities			
10	Effectiveness of the management system in the cluster model performance			
11	Status of consensus on:			
	➤ the plans of the cluster center activities			
	➤ programs of the cluster center activities			
12	Transparency of the management system in the running of the cluster tasks			
13	Others (if any) _____			
	a. _____			
	a. _____			
	b. _____			

Section VIII. Major Achievements of the Implementation of the School Cluster Model

Please indicate your response about the following outcomes of school cluster model in your cluster system as high, moderate or low to show how much they are effective by putting "√" sign against each outcome.

S.N	Outcomes	Rating of outcomes		
		High	Moderate	Low
1	Enrollment of students increased			
2	Repetition rate decreased			
3	Drop-out rate decreased			
4	Teachers' professional skill improved			
5	Facilities improved			
6	Equipment of pedagogical centers improved			
7	Library books improved			
8	Pedagogical supervisory services improved			
9	Financial support improved			
10	Income generation increased			
11	Experience-sharing improved			
12	Participatory decision –making improved			
13	Teachers in-service training through cost effective way improved			
14	Others (if any)			
	a. _____			
	b. _____			
	c. _____			

Section IX: Factors Affecting Effective Implementation of School Cluster Model

How much are the following factors affecting school cluster resource center management activities in your cluster system? Please, indicate your response as very serious, serious or not serious by putting “√” sign against each difficulty.

S.N	Difficulties	Level of difficulty		
		Very serious	Serious	Less serious
1	Work load of:			
	➤ cluster center coordinator			
	➤ key teachers			
	➤ cluster center supervisor			
2	Lack of budget			
3	Lack of skilled man-power			
4	Lack of formal structure			
5	Lack of awareness about:-			
	➤ the purposes of cluster system			
	➤ implementation strategy of the cluster system			
	Lack of guidelines of school cluster model			
6	Absence of commitment from higher officials			
7	Turn over of:			
	➤ coordinators of cluster center			
	➤ supervisors of cluster center			
8	In adequacy of community participation			
9	Lack of Facilities			
10	Others (please specify) _____ _____			

11. What solutions do you recommend for the above problems

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Appendix:B

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF EDPM

(EDUCATION POLICY AND PLANNING STREAM)

Section X. An Interview Guide for Zonal and Woreda Education Offices Officials

Dear Respondents,

The Purpose of this interview is to gather information with regard to the general in the CRCs

10.1. What is the importance of school cluster system in your context?

10.2. What are the actual achievements in implementing the school cluster model?

10.3. How do you evaluate the capacity of CRCs with regard to

10.3.1. Financial

10.3.2. Material

10.3.3. Managerial

10.3.4. Technical

10.3.5. Professional capacities?

10.4. What major problems do you observe in implementing the system?

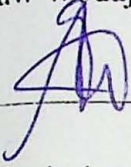
10.5. What measures do you suggest?

Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work, and has not been presented for a degree in any university and that all sources of materials used for the study have been duly acknowledged.

Name Asfaw Wodajo

Signature



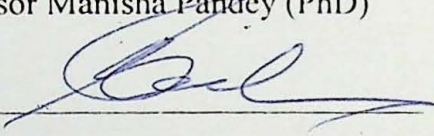
Date of Submission February 9, 2009

Submission Approval Sheet

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

Name: Professor Manisha Pandey (PhD)

Signature:



Date:

10/3/2009