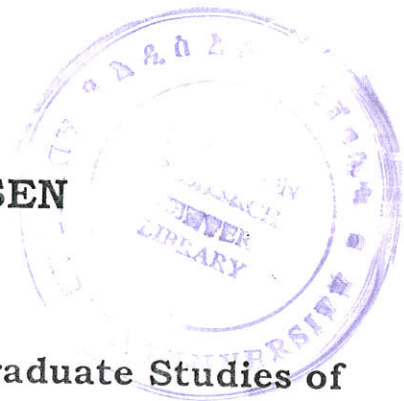


**A STUDY ON THE PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED  
DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FREE  
PROMOTION POLICY IN THE FIRST CYCLE  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF HAWASSA WOREDA**

**BY**

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## ACRONYMS

- MOE* – Ministry of Education
- SNNPRS* – Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Regional State
- TGE* – Transitional Government of Ethiopia
- UNESCO* – United Nation Education Scientific and Cultural organizations

## **Abstract**

*The main purpose of this research is to assess the problems encountered in the implementation of free promotion policy in the first cycle primary schools of Awass woreda and to suggest possible solutions on how to minimize those problems. The sources of data for the study were all the fifty-nine teachers who were teaching in the first cycle primary schools and all of the principals of those schools selected using availability sampling. Data were gathered through questionnaire and interview and guideline about pupils' promotion, which was developed by the primary schools, was used as secondary source. Descriptive statistics as percentage, frequency and chi-square were employed to analyze the data. The finding of the research revealed that the first cycle primary school teachers were not trained in a way that enabled them implement free promotion policy. It also revealed that the woreda education office could not coordinate the primary schools and made them implement the policy in the same way. Based on the findings it was recommended that the regional education office should organize awareness-raising program for teachers and principals through in-service training and provision of supplementary reading materials on the implementation of free promotion policy. It was also suggested that to bring about uniformity among the primary schools in the implementation of free promotion, the woreda education office should develop guideline on the implementation of the policy and distribute them to the schools, and it should also organize a unit that coordinates and controls the primary schools.*

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **I. THE PROBLEM AND ITS APPROACH**

This chapter deals with the problem and its approach. It contains background of the study, statement of the problem, significance of the study, delimitation and limitation of the study and research design, methods and procedures of data collection. It also deals with its organization and definition of terms.

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Different countries may follow different policies for pupils' promotion. According to UNESCO (1988), there are countries, which make pupils repeat grades to give them chance to master the subject matters that they failed to learn. On the other hand other countries, whether the pupils acquire the necessary knowledge, skill and attitude or not, let the pupils pass to the next grade level, i.e. they apply free promotion policy.

The advocates of free promotion policy argue that it helps schools to improve their internal efficiency by increasing enrollment ratio through decreasing the number of repeaters and dropouts (Psacharopoulos and Woodhall, 1985:209). On the other hand, according to the World Bank (1995:62), it is not advisable to use free promotion policy if repetition results from pupils' failure to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes that they are expected to master at a specific grade level.

As continuous assessment is one of the strategies for the implementation of free promotion policy, applying free promotion encourages teachers to use continuous assessment by strictly following up their pupils learning. It also helps teachers to provide additional remedial support to these children who have learning difficulties and this will help the pupils to proceed to the next level

with their peers. In addition, as the number of dropouts and repeaters in Ethiopian primary schools is very high, it is important to apply free promotion policy. In Ethiopia, because of high rate of repetition and dropout, the internal efficiency of first cycle primary schools was too low. At the same time, it is at this level that pupils are expected to acquire knowledge, develop basic skills and bring about attitudinal change that will determine their future. With the intention that it will improve the internal efficiency of first cycle primary schools, Ethiopia has adopted free promotion policy for pupils in grade one up to four. As these levels, where pupils lay the foundation of education, are the levels with too low internal efficiency due to severe repetition and dropout rate, the application of free promotion policy is restricted to them (Hussen, 2000:37).

Since 1994 G.C, first cycle primary schools through out Ethiopia have been implementing free promotion policy, however no research has been conducted regarding its implementation or the problems encountered in the process in Hawassa Woreda primary schools.

It is with this intention that the researcher attempted to assess the problem associated with the implementation of free promotion policy in grades one up to four in the first cycle primary schools of Hawassa Woreda.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The previous curriculum, which was being implemented before 1994 G.C, was more of teacher centered and did not encourage students to learn by doing. It also did not encourage teachers to use continuous assessment. As a result, students were passing from grades to grades without being continuously assessed. This in turn increased the drop out and the repetition rates. Therefore, continuous assessment of pupils' progression was formulated in responding to these problems and as a strategy for the implementation of free promotion policy (TGE, 1994).

Different opinions were forwarded following the implementation of the policy. For example Abel (2001:25) argued that as a result of teacher's lack of appropriate knowledge and skill in continuous assessment pupils were promoted from one grade level to the next grade level without being continuously assessed and without mastering the expected knowledge, developing the skills and bringing about attitudinal change.

Derebssa (2000) has indicated that there is lack of awareness on the side of teachers about integrated approach, continuous assessment, teaching in self-contained classroom, and free promotion policy. Derebssa further says that with the introduction of the new curriculum, the situation of teaching especially in SNNPRS became more difficult because the teachers had not grasped the new concepts therein well enough to apply it in their teaching. Both pre-service and in-service teacher-training programs were not in a position to equip the trainees with the underlying concepts and methods of teaching the new curriculum. Teachers continued to teach even though they had not yet grasped the underlying concept behind the new curriculum.

Evaluation is not an end by itself but it is a means to an end. Mekasha (2000:121) has indicated that teachers assess students by tests on monthly and semester basis. Moreover, teachers do not give their pupils feedback and remedial support, they rather record the results and pass it over to the school administration. Furthermore, Berhanu (2000:141) has found out that these pupils who regularly missed classes were automatically promoted without having been properly assessed. Anbesu and Getachew (1992:1) have also pointed out that teachers did not use assessment results for improving their pupils learning as they lack knowledge and skill about continuous assessment.

Daniel and Desalegn (2001:1) have found out that teachers have negative attitude towards free promotion policy. Daniel and Desalegne

further say that free promotion policy discourages pupils to learn and teachers to teach and assess their pupils' progress on continuous bases; because students will automatically pass to the next grade level regardless of their academic achievement. Supporting this idea Yoseph (2001:7) has pointed out that free promotion policy is understood by many teachers as promoting pupils from grades to grades regardless of their academic achievement.

The basic purpose of this study therefore is to assess and investigate the problems encountered in the implementation of free promotion policy in Hawassa Woreda first cycle primary schools and there by to suggest possible ways to improve the implementation of the policy.

In light of the above statement, the study tried to get appropriate answers to the following basic questions.

1. Are the teachers in first cycle primary schools trained in a way that enable them implement free promotion policy?
2. Do school principals and teachers have clear understanding of free promotion policy?
3. What are the minimum requirements for a student to pass to the next grade level in grades one up to four?
4. Do teachers use continuous assessment?
5. Do school principals and teachers have clear understanding of self-contained classroom organization?
6. What other factors do teachers and educational officers think are the major problems of implementing free promotion policy in the first cycle primary schools?

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

The researcher believes that this study will be important to raise awareness on first cycle primary school teachers, principals, and educational officers and teachers educators in TEIs about the problems in the implementations of free promotion policy.

### **1.4 Delimitation of the Study**

The study is delimited to the investigation of major problems related with implementing free promotion policy in the first cycle primary schools in Awassa Woreda. As the private primary schools in Hawassa Woreda do not apply free promotion policy, the study is also delimited to the governmental first cycle primary schools.

### **1.5 Limitation of the Study**

The researcher faced difficulty in collecting data from regional education officers. The concerned bodies were not willing to give policy guidelines. As a result, it was impossible to compare the real implementation of the policy with the guideline.

## **1.6 Research Design, Methods and Procedures of Data Collection**

### **1.6.1 Research Design**

As the aim of this study is to gather data and assess the problems associated with the implementation of free promotion policy in the first cycle primary schools in Hawassa Woreda, descriptive survey method was used to conduct the study. This method is used with the intention that it will help to describe the current state of the problem.

### **1.6.2 Source of Data**

The primary sources of data for this research were principals of the selected primary schools, first cycle primary schools teachers of these schools, educational officers from Hawassa Woreda Education Office.

Documents on the implementation of pupils' promotion policy in the primary schools were used as secondary sources

### **1.6.3 Sampling Techniques**

The sampling technique used in this study was availability sampling. As the number of first cycle primary schools in Hawassa Woreda is manageable, the researcher has included all the six governmental first cycle primary schools. All the fifty nine teachers who were teaching in grades one up to three in the selected primary schools, all the principals of these schools, and four educational officers from Hawassa Woreda Education Office and Regional Education Bureau, two from each, all together sixty nine respondents have involved in the study.

### **1.6.4 Data Gathering Instruments**

In order to gather reliable information from larger number of respondents a questionnaire with open and close end items were developed. To make the data-gathering instrument reliable a pilot test of the drafted questionnaire was administered to three primary school principals and ten first cycle primary school teachers and obtained dependable results. Based on the respondents' comment, the number of open-end question items, which was eight, was reduced to two and six of them were changed to open-end items. After modifying the draft questionnaire based on the feedback, the final draft was prepared. Finally, it was distributed for the respondents in the study by the principals. Furthermore, to supplement the study fourteen respondents were interviewed. Two educational officers from Hawassa Woreda education office and regional education Bureau, six school principals, and six relatively experienced teachers, one from each selected primary schools were selected as interviewee and finally the results were summarized.

### **1.6.5 Method of Data Analysis**

Based on similarities of issues raised in the basic questions, questionnaires are classified in to different Tables. Per centage is used to analyze various characteristics of the respondents and Chi-square; ( $X^2$ ) is employed to test the level of significance of differences between responses given by school principals and teachers. The existing difference between responses given by the two group of informants is tested for statistical significance at  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

### **1.7 Definition of Terms**

**Region:** national state which is further divided in to zone and woreda.

**Zone:** an administrative area which is a subdivision of region based on different factors such as: similarity of language and geographical location.

**Woreda:** the smallest administrative area next to zone.

### **1.8 Organization of the Study**

The research paper contains four chapters. The first chapter deals with the problems and its approach. Chapter two focuses on the review of related literature. The data gathered through questionnaire and interviews are presented interpreted and analyzed in chapter three. Chapter four contains the summary, conclusion and recommendation.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This part of the paper explores different literatures, which are related with the study.

#### **2.1 Meaning of Promotion Policy**

Promotion according to Good (1973) refers to the passage from one grade to another in a systematized course of study. Herrick (1989) says promoting and none promoting refers to the act of moving a child to the next higher grade or retaining him in his present unit of the school's organizational structure. Promotion policy is defined as the theory which influences or governs one's decisions regarding the advancement of students from one grade to another (Otto, 1944).

Promotion policies translate in to practice in terms of pupil progress, one's concept of education and child development and one's theories about promotion. There is naturally a relationship between promotion policies that a teacher or an administrator believes in and the progress of children through the grades. For example a teacher may perceive a school system in which pupils' progress should be automatic, in this case the teacher may let them pass to the next grade level regardless of their academic achievement. On the other hand, a teacher may perceive the school system in which no pupil should be promoted through grades unless he had thoroughly mastered the academic knowledge and skills allocated by the course of study. Under such condition it is likely that many pupils, especially those who have less ability than average will repeat one or more grades (Otto, 1944:202).

#### **2.2 Types of Promotion Policies**

There are different types of promotion policies which differ in interval and basis of promotion. Special promotion refers to the advancement of a pupil to the next highest grade at whatever time during the school year. This type of promotion has the advantage of providing for acceleration when it is needed. It is considered an opportunity for

keeping the fast learners working at a level more nearly consistent with his ability. It also allows the average and slow learners to benefit when age and maturity are the underlying reasons for advancing him to a group in which he will fit more satisfactorily. The major disadvantage of special promotion is that the bright child may become socially maladjusted if he is placed with more mature pupils and that by finishing school too early he may lack the social and emotional development required for college or employment (Chamberlain, 1966:67).

Trail promotion permits the child who has a low academic average to move ahead with his age group despite the fact that his achievement has been below the school's standards for promotion. Trial promotion is more effective especially when pupils' future performance seems greater than their past experience. In view of the fact that children do not follow consistent patterns of progress in developing skills and acquiring knowledge, trial promotion permits some one who has been in grade two for instance to catch up during a subsequent spurt in grade three. Using this type of promotion the stigma and possible psychological blocking caused by failure can at least temporarily be avoided. However, the threat of demotion when he comes back to his previous grade is a psychological hazard (Elsbree and Nally, 1958).

Annual promotion involves the advancement of a pupil to the next highest grade only at the end of the academic year. In this case, there will be longer teacher-pupil relationship; time will be saved from possible administrative disruptions during semi-annual promotions. In addition to the smaller teaching force, there will be the possibility of homogeneous groupings. The outstanding disadvantage of annual promotion is loss of a whole year in case of non-promotion (Yeager, 1946:148).

Continuous promotion, also called automatic or free promotion refers to advancing pupils at regular periods to the next highest grade level

regardless of their achievement in class work. In this way, pupils are kept with their peers of similar chronological age and maturity (Kindred, 1966).

A question frequently asked is whether free promotion implies that all pupils shall be advanced regularly irrespective of absence from school, quality of work, attitude towards learning or amount of effort made. The answer to this question depends on how a school system interprets the policy of free promotion. One interpretation may be that any pupil who has tried, within the limits of his capacity, to achieve the requirements of the instructional program should be promoted to the next highest grade level. It may also be interpreted in that as long as a pupil shows progress in reaching at goals that are appropriate for him, he/she should not repeat the same grade. The most widely accepted interpretation is that promotion should be contingent in doubtful cases upon a consideration of what is best for the pupil, taking into account, his age, physical development, social maturity, emotional stability, and capacity to learn (Kindred, 1966).

### **2.3 The Need for Free Promotion in the First Cycle Primary Schools**

Several studies reveal that the threat of failure as motivational device is ineffective. Otto cited in Jarvis, (1974) has shown in his research that of the children retained only twenty per cent did better work the next year, whereas forty per cent did the same quality of work as they did in the previous year, and the remaining forty per cent did poorer work than they had previously done. Jarvis further concluded that if one does not expect only twenty per cent of the retained children to benefit from repetition, then free promotion must be accepted as being a worthwhile practice.

Kimbrough (1968) has also shown that the threat of non-promotion is not a valid means of motivating students. He has found out that pupils did not profit from repeating the same grade. In the face of

such evidence hundred per cent promotion policy, in which all pupils were automatically promoted each year was recommended.

In addition Jarvis (1974) based on a research on grade repetition has concluded that children will develop more normally and naturally if they are advanced each year along with their peers eventhough they may not master the academics at any grade level in primary school.

In a Meta analysis of sixty-three researchs, Holmes (1989) in Hussen (2000) has found out that out of the sixty-three researchs examined, fifty-four of them showed negative effects of grade repetition. The rest, nine studies that show an apparent advantage to retained pupils, the benefit disappeared over time. Holmes's analysis further indicated that the negative effects of grade repetition appeared to continue through out the individual's schooling and most pupils who dropout of school were those who had been forced to repeat the same grade.

The practice of continuous promotion for every child with few exceptions is a wise policy to be followed in the elementary schools. It should be continued as long as research evidence shows the practice to be valid (Jarvis, 1974).

## **2.4 Basic Requirements for the Effective Implementation of Free Promotion Policy**

Some may fear that free promotion policy does not encourage people to exert their effort to learn as they simply pass to the next levels regardless of their academic achievement, but if the basic requirements for the effective implementation of free promotion policy are addressed the fear may be minimized.

### **2.4.1 Continuous Assessment**

Like a design that is woven into a fabric by weaver, instruction and assessment are inseparable. They are part of the teaching process and one naturally leads to the other. Continuous assessment is a process of gathering information to make decision about learners' progress

based on what they know. Continuous assessment can be used as a systematic way of finding out how well a student has learned a given objective. In an effective continuous assessment, all forms of assessment are based on closely defined objectives. The diagnostic use of the results of assessment in the classroom is at the core of the continuous assessment process. In first cycles primary schools it is essential to assess pupil's performance on continuous bases to correct weaknesses and ensure that they have learned what they have to (MOE, 2002).

The great sources of inefficiency in Ethiopian education system are grade repetition and school interruption. Thus, continuous assessment provides for students to be tested not only twice a year, but to be continuously assessed and, when necessary to repeat lessons to them until they master the lessons. This enables them not to be threatened by examinations, and to have lessons repeated to them when they become problematic (MOE, 1986).

Assessment results are used to find out if a pupil needs further help to learn or master the objectives of the curriculum. Students who have not mastered the objectives are helped through remedial instruction. The purpose of continuous assessment is to help every student become a successful learner. Continuous assessment integrates its major components as progress tests, peer/group assessment, observation, interview and self-assessment. Each component, in turn, may be approached through micro features such as homework and class activities (Heaton, 1990).

Continuous assessment in the classroom is closely linked to the concept of mastery learning. The basic principle in mastery learning is that individuals differ in their aptitude for learning something which is defined as "amount of time an individual needs to learn something" rather than as "the ability to learn". The basic theory underlying

mastery learning, therefore, is that given enough time and appropriate instruction, all students can learn a given objective (Heaton, 1990).

Individuals differ in the amount of time they need to learn different skills or concepts. They also learn in different ways. It is the responsibility of the teacher and the school to provide the conditions, enough time to learn, appropriate teaching methods and a good learning environment. To do this the teacher should use continuous assessment so that every single child is helped to become a successful learner. Even after a free promotion, the self contained teacher who knows the students' character and problems can use their weak points as the base for rectification (MOE, 2002).

#### **2.4.2 Self-contained Classroom Organization**

The education and training policy of 1994 states that the education to be delivered to first cycle primary school pupils should consider the pupils' physical development, intellectual maturity and readiness for learning. At the same time, it must provide learners with firm basic education supported by production and service giving activities that acquaint them with practical experience that makes them problem solvers. For first cycle primary education which must be geared to the attainment of the goals described, the appropriate classrooms organizational set up is self - contained (Azeb, 1998)

With regard to the rationale for the use of self-contained classroom organization Swards and Scobe cited in Azeb (1998) state that departmentalized classroom organization gives more emphasis to teaching subject matter leaving the children's development in other aspects as psychological development, and it helps the teacher to integrate contents across subjects. Therefore, self-contained classroom organization helps teachers to teach children than subject matter. They also pointed out that it is difficult for children to adjust to different teachers over the course of the day's work. Swards and Scobe further have made a strong statement by saying that If a school

is committed to an organic view of child development and emphasizes up on the total emotional, social, physical and mental development of children, if the school believes that education should be more life centered than subject centered, and that learning in the subject fields should be related with children's life, then largely self-contained classroom organization should be followed.

Yeager (1946) also says if a school follows hundred per cent promotion policy at primary levels, the school principal should help and encourage the teachers to use continuous assessment and conduct remedial sessions based on the results of the assessment. To do this the teacher should remain with the child long enough to understand the pupils progress, therefore, as much as passable the elementary school classroom organization should be self-contained.

The principal can help the self-contained classroom teacher by assigning substitute teacher. It is unavoidable that teachers may be absent some days. If a self-contained classroom teacher is absent his/her students will be idle. In such cases, a substitute teacher can represent the self-contained classroom teacher so that students will not be idle (Lobdell, 1963).

### **2.4.3 Minimum Level of Achievement**

The most vital phase of any promotion policy consists of the minimum level of academic achievement on the basis of which decisions are made as to whether individual pupils shall be retained in the same grade for another year or should be promoted to the next higher grade.

Use of specific objectives in courses of study according to Otto (1944) is a method used by schools to improve promotional practices. For each subjects, especially the academic subject and each grades, desirable goals of achievement are stated in concrete terms. These specifically formulated objectives will give teachers a more tangible basis for the evaluation of pupils' achievement. The attainment of

these objectives is the minimum level of requirement for pupils to pass to the next highest grade level. Another purpose of these specific objectives is to standardize promotions throughout the system so that pupils who transfer from one school to another may fit harmoniously in to the work of the corresponding grade in the new school, and that teachers of each succeeding grade may know the precise academic status, or at least the minimum accomplishments of the students who come to them.

Kimbrough (1968) and Caswell (1957) have stated that to make pupils' progress uniform all children must reach a minimum grade standard of achievement before they pass to the next grade level. They also agree that in whatever circumstances, a child who does not reach the standard is not entitled to promotion.

Otto and Sanders (1964) on the other hand state that the attainment of minimum level of requirements is paramount if a child is to pass to the next highest grade level; only those who can meet these requirements should be rewarded with promotion from one grade to the next. The established minimum level of achievement must be attained by all who are to be promoted to the next higher grade level; and that it is an obligation of the school to produce these minimum level of achievement in all pupils.

In determining whether a pupil shall be promoted to the next higher grade level or retained in the same grade for another year according to Otto (1944), different criteria as achievement in subject of study, mental ability, chronological age, home conditions, health, attendance and conduct should be considered.

Yeager (1946) also says in order to make promotion procedures more or less uniform through out a particular school system, a definite set of factors should be agreed upon to be taken into consideration by each teacher in forming a judgment as to whether or not a particular pupil should be promoted. The final decision as to whether a

particular pupil should be promoted to the next higher grade level or detained in the same grade for another year should not rest only on academic accomplishments, but on what will result in the greatest good to and the all round development of the pupil. Yeager further suggests that it will be better if it is the duty of the next higher grade or unit to accept pupils who are properly promoted to it from the lower grade or unit and to adapt its work to fit the needs of these pupils.

#### **2.4.4 Remedial Measures**

Remedial measure will be more effective if it is preceded by continuous assessment. Supporting this idea Heaton (1990) says by closely and frequently examining the pupil's record, continuous assessment encourages progress and addresses decline by offering remedial lessons, describing the specific weaknesses of the pupils and offering them exercise that is more practical.

The overall goal of student's evaluation is not to stop at putting the marks that the students have scored. Evaluation is not an end by itself. Shuster and Wetzler (1958) say evaluation should provide information in decision-making. Typical results of assessment may help the teacher to give remedial support by matching the pupil's characteristics to an education alternative such as a particular teaching method or material. After assessing the pupils performance on continuous bases if the result shows that the pupil needs extra support the teacher can help him/her in different ways as dropping a subject and substituting a study period, electing an additional subject, dropping an advanced subject and putting double time on a simpler subject, transferring the pupil to another school, repeating a subject or contents of the subject which are not clear to the pupil, transferring the pupil to another teacher, assigning pupils to a special period for individual assistance, and introducing more adequate guidance procedures including study of home conditions.

Automatic promotion requires teachers to carry out regular assessment through out the year. So, these teachers could identify students in need of remedial work. If the result of the assessment shows that the learners have not achieved the objectives set by the curriculum, teachers should provide remedial lessons for these children until they achieve each objective (Derbessa, 2000).

Teachers can conduct remedial sessions in weekend or summer, but what they should not forget is that many children are reluctant to seek help with schoolwork for fear of being considered “lazy” or “dumb” by classmates and adults. Some under-achieving students may thus view remediation arrangements as punishment while others may not like or be unable to come. Therefore, remediation needs to be simple, immediate, and painless (Hussen, 2000).

#### **2.4.5 Teachers Training**

Teachers are the key agents of educational changes and improvement. They are in the front line of educational programs. They have the key role in the provision of quality education to the learners, so the weak preparation of teachers in their pre-service training program contributes a lot for low quality of delivery system. In support of this Hargreous (1994) cited in Azeb (1998) states that the restructuring of schools, the composition of national and curricula, and the development of bench mark assessments are of little value if they do not take the teacher into account.

As the success of an educational program depends to a large extent on the character and ability of the teachers, they need to be well prepared and motivated through teacher training courses offered by teacher training institutions and latter if needed, through in-service trainings. Ambaye (1996) says teaching is more than imparting knowledge; it includes helping learners to learn by themselves, to acquire skills and develop attitudes in the changing social context. This shows that teaching is not an all comers job and it needs training.

There should be a great link between the method the teachers are trained and the way of teaching they are expected to teach at schools. Supporting this idea Friedman (1989) and Wendwa (1970) cited in Ambaye (1996) say that teachers should be taught by the same methods which they will be expected to use in career. In addition, Anand and Pedima (1984) cited in Ambaye (1996) say that the changes in schools should be accompanied by corresponding changes in the teacher-training program.

The scope and depth of the contents in the primary schools are not so difficult that a teacher can't acquire them; therefore, teachers training should not emphasize only on contents, it should also focus on how to teach and how to treat children (Lobdell, 1963). On the other hand David (1998) says that as primary school teachers are supposed to handle self-contained class room, they should be trained in a way that they would be able to: create attractive learning environment, understand the behavior of children and find solution for their problem, observe the life of the children and their families, make teaching methods appeal to the interests and physical and mental readiness of the children, and make evaluation techniques a means to assess the behavioral changes and improve the teaching learning methods rather than intimidate children

Ambaye (1996) states that as teachers are the backbone of the whole education program, their training becomes the focal point and the vital factor affecting the quality of education. In training the primary school teachers, therefore, we must make sure that the would-be teachers will become enlightened and educated persons who can lead and inspire children. In addition teachers should be trained in such a way that they would be able to see, analyze and integrate the needs, feelings and aspiration of children in their environment with their communities and the nations needs.

Teacher trainers influence the ability of a teacher that a trainee will have, therefore, teacher training institutes should always consider the expected profile of primary school teachers set by the ministry of education. The expected profile of the graduates from teacher training institutes as stated in Teshome Abebe (1998) is to be:

1. Able to impart basic education in an integrated approach and to teach as a generalist.
2. Equipped with the necessary professional capabilities.
3. Equipped with profound understanding of professional ethics.
4. Able to teach in the mother tongue at the assigned place.
5. Able to realize and make use of the specific conditions of potential students, the school and the environment.
6. Capable of diagnosing students' learning needs, assessing their educational progress and assisting them to develop the necessary skill at their age level.

Sowards and Scobe (1969) cited in Azeb (1998) say that primary school teachers could be prepared as specialists who know how to work with children and their subject matter preparation would be secondary. Contrary to this Azeb (1998) has found out that most teacher trainers in Ethiopia do not have dependable professional competence regarding how and for what the would-be teachers are trained. This is so because the teacher trainers themselves do not have the necessary preparation or training for their important responsibilities. Without concern and care for why they are training them, they simply give trainees subject matter, and that is what they in turn give to the children, as the common saying "teachers teach not what they were taught to teach but the way they were taught."

## **2.5 Arguments For and Against Grade Repetition**

Grade repetition, i.e. making students spend additional academic year studying the same subjects in the same grade level as they were doing in the previous year, is a debatable educational issue.

### **2.5.1 Arguments Against Grade Repetition**

Research studies have consistently shown that pupils who repeat the same grade do little, if any better, the second time in the grade than they did. Kinnez cited in Elsbree and Willard (1956) has found out that fifty eight per cent of the repeaters in the primary school made no improvement and twelve per cent did poorer work while thirty per cent of them made a little progress. Otto cited in Mickelson and Hansen (1957) also shows that only twenty per cent of who were retained in a grade for another year showed substantial improvement in their achievement while forty per cent did no better, and forty per cent of them showed a lower level of achievement after the second year in the grade.

Teachers and supervisors in primary schools, based on the repeaters document, reported that the pupils making up the group of repeaters in the primary schools did not show any marked improvement in their knowledge of subject matter after repeating the grade (Elsbree and Nally, 1958).

Here, one might say that many of these pupils who were required to repeat would have achieved even less if promoted. Buckingham's research in Elsbree and Willard (1956) shows the opposite conclusion. His research revealed that after a six weeks probationary period, seventy-five per cent of the pupils who would otherwise have been required to repeat were successful in the grade to which they had been conditionally promoted.

Lery (1971) cited in Hussen (2000) has found out that grade repetition increases dropout rate, and high repetition rate contributes to the

problem of wide diversity of age which makes a single teaching method in appropriate.

Those who are against grade repetition emphasize certain psychological values attributed to promotion. Pratt (1994) cited in Hussen (2000:33) says that as a result of grade repetition children are taken out of the friendship group in which they have grown up and placed with a younger group who may not accept them. As they are older and publicly labeled failure, they will withdraw from the group and will be psychologically discouraged.

Harlen (1978) has also found out that not only does failure have an undesirable emotional influence on the child and his family; but also complicates the teaching situation and increases the crowding in schools. In addition, Herrick (1989) in support of promotion says that:

- The possibility of non-promotion is a threat that constitutes negative motivation, but children learn under conditions of positive motivation therefore, they should be promoted.
- Children distribute themselves from poor to excellent in each of the many school endeavors in which they engage. Usually with only slight variations from child to child on, the continuum to average these attainments is unrealistic. To determine arbitrary cutting points for passing or failing demands a refinement in judgment that defines human capacities.
- The presence of older, repeating children in classroom decreases group homogeneity.
- Learning is enhanced when children move on to new endeavors instead of experiencing the boredom of repetition.
- Grade repetition results in over-ages, which in turn, produces behavioral problems requiring special disciplinary action.

- Promotion retains approximately equal chronological age as a common factor and results in improved personal and social relationships.

Elwee cited in Herrick (1989) has revealed that those pupils who repeat a grade face difficulty in making satisfactory social adjustments. Undesirable behaviors and unsatisfactory school progress are more closely associated with non-promoted children than with promoted slow learning children. Conversely, slow learning children who have been promoted tend to make satisfactory progress and adjustment than do their peers who have been retained.

A high failure rate may imply that the school has administrative or other problems. Some teachers attribute the pupil's failure to the schools. Mickelson and Hansen (1957) say no child is actually a failure: Some children fail to achieve a satisfactory level of progress that might be expected from their intellectual ability, past experience, or chronological age. The school sometimes fails to provide the child with satisfactory learning experiences and educational objectives. The teacher may fail to adapt instructional materials and teaching methods to the needs of the child. Mostly the score mark, or grade received by the child may be an invalid or unreliable measure of achievement. There may also be failure in other areas to deliver education but no child is a failure.

Jordan (1959) says most of the students who repeat grades are slow learners. The principal knows that these children can not compete with their classmate. If these slow learners are working up to their capacity, if they are doing all that they can, they should not be penalized with a record of failure. If they were misfit, the school should not have kept them in unconformable position for a year.

Generally from the above arguments against grade repetition, one can conclude that making pupils repeat the same grade in order to assure mastery of subject matter will not be that much fruitful.

### 2.5.2 Arguments For Grade Repetition

Advocators of grade repetition argue that when students know that they will be promoted to the next higher level, they will develop poor working habit and be unconcerned about their schoolwork. They further argue that repetition informs slow learning students that they will repeat the same grade if they are weak at their school works. When students, who do not acquire the knowledge and skill expected from them at that specific grade level, are promoted to the next higher grade level, they will be unable to do the work of the new grade they are assigned in. This will make them frustrated, discouraged and develop inferiority feelings that inturn affect their social relations and personality development, but if these students are made repeat grades they will find suitable condition to learn (Herrick, 1989:95): Harlen, 1978).

Elsbree and Nally (1958), state that students' failure is a symptom for a need of additional time to acquire the knowledge and skills that they failed to master them before. They further have pointed out some advantages of grade repetition as it:

- Maintain the standard
- Makes instruction easier by reducing the variability in achievement levels within each grade.
- Serves as a motivation to pupils to work harder and learn better for promotion.
- Provides an opportunity for slow learners to bring their achievement levels up to standard.
- Brings about better emotional adjustment by placing children in a grade most consistent with their achievement level.

Many teachers may feel that children who repeat grades tend to become stigmatized and as a result develop emotional and mental

disturbances. In contrary, Pratt (1980) says that the normal range of individual difference at any grade level will necessitate intra class groupings any way, and that if students repeat the same grade they will find a group that is similar with them in age and understanding ability, so they will not be stigmatized. If they repeat the same grade they will relearn the knowledge and skills they failed to acquire and master before.

There are numerous opportunities for providing failure experience in the elementary school without destroying morale. From day to day activities pupils will fail in some of their efforts. This failure may occur in working out their individual assignments or in some group activities in which they have a responsibility. Here are the occasions when they can be taught to sense their inadequacies, see their own weaknesses, and realize that time wasted in fruitless endeavor results in less satisfaction than work well done. The pleasure accompanying successes and the unhappy sensation, which goes with failure, will be fully impressed up on pupils in their daily experiences in school (Elsbree and Willard, 1956).

The philosophy of child development held by the principal and his staff is generally the most important element in determining the rate of grade repetition. Administrators who view child growth as the major responsibility of the school and who appreciate the fact that no two children are alike, or able to progress at exactly the same rate of speed, attribute repetition to the failure of the teacher and the principal. The rate of failure in schools where this philosophy predominates is usually low. On the other hand, in schools where principals and teachers believe that a close relationship exists between grade standards and child development, failure is accepted as normal for many children and the responsibility for it is placed up on the shoulders of the pupils affected (Elsbree and Nally, 1958).

To summarize, every child must be considered individually. For one, promotion can result in the wrong placement of the child in terms of his needs and his adjustment to the group. In another case, a child, who is slow learner may profit from being placed in a higher grade. If repetition brings about discouragement, it is not desirable. On the other hand, if the teachers discover that the child needs additional time to attain the objectives of the curriculum, repetition may be a constructive experience ( Elsbree and Willard, 1956).

### CHAPTER THREE

#### PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter deals with presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data gathered through questionnaire and interview. All of the questionnaires distributed were collected, tallied, tabulated and quantified.

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents by Sex, Age and Years of Service

No	Item	Respondents										
		Teachers				Principals				Total		
		M		F		M		F				
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
1	Age	36-40	-	-	3	11.11	-	-	-	-	3	4.62
		41-45	1	3.13	5	18.52	-	-	-	-	6	9.23
		46-50	3	9.38	9	33.33	-	-	-	-	12	18.46
		Above 50	28	87.5	10	37.04	6	100	-	-	44	67.70
		Total	32	100	27	100	6	100	-	-	65	100
2	Service years	16-20	-	-	2	7.40	-	-	-	-	2	3.08
		21-25	5	15.63	5	18.52	-	-	-	-	10	15.38
		Above 26	27	84.37	20	74.07	6	100	-	-	53	81.54
		Total	32	100	27	100	6	100	-	-	65	100

As it can be seen from Table 1 all of the principals were male and 45.7 per cent of the teachers were females while 57.2 per cent were male. With regard to their age, all of the teachers were above 36 years old while all of the principals were above 50. With regard to their service year 84.3 per cent of the male teachers and 74 per cent of female

teachers have above 26 years of teaching experience. This shows that most of the primary school teachers in Hawassa Woreda had long years of teaching experience. It also shows that all of the principals had long years of experience in the profession. Similar to this finding Ambaye (1996) has found out that most of the teachers who teach in Hawassa Woreda primary schools have long years of teaching experience.

**Table 2. Qualification of respondents**

Respondents	Sex	Qualification									
		12 complete		12+1		10+1		Diploma		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Teachers	M	2	6.25	28	87.5	-	-	2	6.25	32	100
	F	2	7.41	23	85.18	-	-	2	7.41	27	100
Principals	M	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	100	6	100
	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

With regard to respondents qualification all of the school principals were diploma holders while there were only two female and two male teachers who had diploma. Table 2 also shows that 87.5 per cent of the male teachers and 85.18 per cent of the female teachers respectively have certificate in 12+1 programme. There were two male and two female teachers who were not qualified to teach, they only completed grade 12. There was no one who had certificate in 10+1 programme.

In general as indicated in Table 2 all of the teachers and school principals received their professional training in the previous curriculum, which was being implemented before 1994 G.C and which

did not include self contained class room organization and free promotion policy. Similar to this finding Derebessa (2000) has found out that teachers lack awareness about continuous assessment, teaching in self-contained classroom and free promotion policy. He has also found out that the problem is more serious in SNNPRS.

### **Implementation of Free Promotion Policy**

With regard to the implementation of free promotion policy there was no regularity in the first cycle primary schools of Hawassa Woreda. Among the six governmental primary schools only four of them implemented free promotion policy. Even among the schools that implemented free promotion policy there was no uniformity in the implementation. The main reason for the difference in the implementation of the policy in these schools according to the principals of these schools was that there was no guideline about the implementation of free promotion policy sent from Regional Zone or Woreda Education Bureaus. They were told orally to implement it. As a result the schools followed their own strategies to implement the policy. With regard to the starting time the four schools, which implemented the policy, did not start at the same time, two of the schools started implementing the policy in 1996 E.C and the other two schools started in 1997 E.C.

From this one can conclude that the Education Bureau could not coordinate the primary schools and make them implement free promotion policy in the same way.

**Table 3. Assessment of Pre-service Training Package in Relation to Implementation of Free Promotion Policy**

No	Items	Number of respondents							
		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Not trained for continuous assessment in TEI.	53	89.83	2	3.4	4	6.78	59	100
2	No relation between the training content in TEI and the actual practice in school	55	93.22	-	-	4	6.78	59	100
3	TEI training on continuous assessment is useful	9	15.25	10	16.95	40	67.80	59	100
4	Not learned what to do after assessing pupils progress, so I simply pass the results over to the school administration	29	49.15	12	20.34	18	30.51	59	100
5	Know how to implement free promotion policy	3	5.1	5	8.47	51	86.44	59	100
6	Not learned how to handle self contained class room	50	84.75	4	6.78	5	8.47	59	100
7	Do not use continuous assessment as I was not assessed that way	55	93.2	4	6.78	-	-	59	100

As it is indicated in Table 3 most of the teachers (89.83 per cent) were not trained for continuous assessment in their pre service training program. The interview responses also indicated that many teachers in the first cycle primary schools did not learn about continuous assessment; however, they through experience have developed some skills of using continuous assessment.

The same Table also shows that majority of the teachers (93.22 per cent) agreed that what they learned in TEI and what the school expected them to do were completely different. This shows that there was no relation between the training content in pre service training and the actual practice in schools. In the same Table, 49.15 per cent

of the teachers indicated that as they did not learn what to do after assessing pupil's progress, they simply passed the results over to the school administrators. They also reported that though they did not learn what to do after assessing pupils' progress, before they pass the results over to the school administrator they depending on the results of the students, identify those who need extra support and consult their parents. However, they did not give extra support. The interview made with them also shows that the main reasons they raised for this were;

1. The school did not encourage them to support those students who need extra support.
2. The students themselves were not willing to get help as they were afraid of being called slow learners.

Table three also shows that 86.4 per cent of the teachers indicated that they got no enough knowledge on how to implement free promotion policy. Similarly, 84.7 per cent indicated that, as they did not learned how to handle self-contained classroom it took them much time to adjust themselves. The interview result also shows that it was after they started teaching that teachers heard about free promotion policy. Teachers are at the front line for the achievement of an educational program, therefore they should be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills that enable them accomplish educational tasks. In support of this, Ambaye (1996) says that the ability of teachers largely determines the success or failure of an educational program. As a result, teachers, when they are in teacher training institutions, should be well prepared.

Table 3 also shows that 93.2 per cent of the teachers agreed that as they were not assessed on continuous bases when they were in teacher training institutes, they could not use continuous assessment now in schools. Teachers teach not what they were taught to teach rather they teach the way they were taught. Therefore; there should be

a great link between the methods teachers are trained and the way of teaching they are expected to teach at schools. In support of this idea Friedman and Wendwa cited in Ambaye (1996) say that teachers should be taught by the same methods which they will be expected to use in their career. They also say that the changes in schools should be accompanied by corresponding changes in the teacher-training program.

In general, from the teachers' responses for items in Table 3, it can be concluded that the pre-service training given for first cycle primary school teachers was not sufficient to enable them implement free promotion policy.

**Table 4. Assessment of Teachers Activities in The Process of Continuous Assessment**

No	Items	Number of respondents							
		Always		Sometime		No at all		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	I check students' progress after each session	4	6.78	10	16.95	45	76.27	59	100
2	I use observation as a means of assessment	6	10.17	14	23.73	39	66.10	59	100
3	I interview students to check their progress	-	-	5	8.47	54	91.53	59	100
4	I give home work as a means of assessment	20	33.90	39	66.10	-	-	59	100
5	I give class work	3	5.08	14	23.73	42	71.19	59	100
6	How often do you give quiz	-	-	7	11.86	52	88.14	59	100
7	I give test at the end of each chapter	8	13.56	47	79.66	4	6.78	59	100

With regard to teachers, activity in the process of continuous assessment 76.27 per cent indicated that they did not assess their students' progress after each session. The interview made with them also shows that they believed that their responsibility was just to

cover what was in the textbook. They also agreed that they did not have time to check their students' progress after each session. They even did not communicate the objectives of the lesson with the students and check if they attained them.

Table 4 also shows that 66.10 per cent of the teachers did not use observation to check their students' progress while 91.53 per cent of them did not interview students as a means of assessment. Similarly, the same Table shows that 71.19 per cent of the teachers did not give class work while 88.14 per cent of them never used quiz to check their students' progress. On the other hand, 79.66 per cent sometimes gave tests at the end of each chapter. This shows that among the types of continuous assessments only homework and tests were most of the time used by primary school teachers.

The interview result also shows that the teachers have not even heard about using interview or observation as a means of assessment. The common reason for most of the teachers not to use class work as a means of assessment was large class size; as a result, they preferred to depend on mid term and final examinations. In contrary to this finding, MOE (2002) states that to ensure that pupils in first cycle primary schools have acquired the necessary knowledge, skill and attitude it is essential to assess their performance on continuous bases. It will also provide for students to be tested not only twice a year, but to be continuously assessed and, when necessary to repeat lessons to them until they master the lessons. This enables them not to be threatened by examinations, and to have lessons repeated to them when they become problematic. In this way, students can be automatically promoted from grade to grade.

**Table 5. Frequency of Short Term Training**

Respondents	Continuous assessment						Free promotion policy					
	Only ones		Two times		More than Three times		Not at all		Only ones		Not at all	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Teachers	10	16.9	5	8.4	6	10.1	38	64.4	-	-	59	100
Principals	3	50	1	16.6	2	33.3	-	-	-	-	6	100

As it can be seen from five 64.4 per cent of the teachers did not attend workshop for both continuous assessment and free promotion policy while 35.59 per cent of them attended workshop only for continuous assessment. Among the teachers who attended workshop for continuous assessment, ten of them have got only one chance and five teachers were trained for two times while six of them have got chance to attend more than three times.

All of the principals attended workshop on continuous assessment while all of them attended neither seminar nor workshop on the implementation of free promotion policy. With regard to the frequency of principals' attendance on workshop for continuous assessment, three of them have attended only once, one of them twice and two of them have attended more than three times. This shows that within their long years of experience in the profession both primary school teachers and school principals were not trained for free promotion policy through in service training.

The interview responses also confirmed that the workshops, which the teachers attended for, were not effective in equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills to use continuous assessment effectively. The interview made with Hawassa Woreda educational officials showed that the Bureau, through gathering information on the performance of the teachers, has decided to train them about continuous assessment and free promotion policy through in-service training programs, however, the regional education Bureau could not allocate budget to run the programs. On the other hand, the interview made with the educational officers at regional level indicated that their emphasis was on opening new primary schools especially in the rural parts of the region to give chance for the farmers' children to get at least basic education. As a result, they did not have money to invest on in-service training programs. They also reported that even the workshops organized previously were sponsored by non-governmental organizations.

**Table 6. Perception of Respondents About Self-contained Classroom Organization**

No	Items	Number of respondents							X <sup>2</sup>
			Disagree		Undecided		Agree		
			NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	
1	Teachers in grades 1-3 should teach all the subjects.	P	2	33.3	2	33.3	2	33.3	3.588
		T	42	71.18	8	12.5	9	15.2	
2	If the teacher is absent, all the students could not learn all the day so self-contained is not useful.	P	1	16.6	1	16.6	4	66.6	0.469
		T	9	15.2	5	8.47	45	76.27	
3	Not competent self-contained classroom teacher makes students weak at all the subjects.	P	-	-	2	33.3	4	66.6	49.08
		T	55	93.2	4	6.77	-	-	
4	As the contents in primary level are not difficult to understand, the teacher will not be weak at any subjects.	P	6	100	-	-	-	-	22.03
		T	9	15.2	4	6.77	46	77.9	
5	If there are substitute teachers the absence of the self-contained teacher cannot be a problem.	P	4	66.6	-	-	2	33.3	21.52
		T	3	5.08	2	3.38	54	91.52	
6	Departmentalized classroom organization emphasize on subject matters than the child's whole development	P	2	33.3	2	33.3	2	33.3	8.25
		T	49	83	4	6.77	6	10.1	
7	Self-contained organization enable teachers to help pupils beyond subject matter knowledge	P	1	16.6	1	16.6	4	66.66	7.31
		T	37	62.71	1	1.69	21	35.5	

**P: Refers to Principals**

**T: Refers to Teachers**

As it can be seen from Table 6 most of the teachers (71.18 per cent) and 33.3 per cent of the principals disagreed with the idea of implementing self-contained classroom organization. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=3.588$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $DF=2$ ) indicates that statistically there is no significant difference between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. The interview result also confirmed that both teachers and principals did not accept the implementation of self-contained classroom organization in their schools. In contrary to this Azeb (1998) has found out that for

first cycle primary education which should be directed at the attainment of the educational goals described in the New Education and Training Policy, self contained is the appropriate classroom organizational set up.

The same Table also shows that 76.27 per cent of the teachers and 66.6 per cent of the principals agreed that as the absence of the self-contained classroom teacher makes students not to learn for the entire school day, self-contained classroom organization is not useful. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=0.469$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $DF=2$ ) indicates that statistically there is strong association between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. This shows that teachers and principals did not have clear understanding of self-contained classroom organization. In contrary to this, Lobdell (1963) says that it is inevitable that some teachers will be absent a few times through out the year. In such cases, a substitute teacher is necessary so that students will not be idle for days, weeks and even for a month.

On the other hand for item five in the same Table majority (91.2 per cent) of the teachers agreed that if the school arranges substitute teachers, the absence of the self contained teacher can not be a problem while 66.6 per cent of the principals disagreed with the same statement. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=21.52$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $DF=2$ ) indicates that statistically there is no association between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. The interview result also confirmed that the self-contained classroom teachers needed substitute teachers. They reported that if they were absent for a day they could not give make up sessions due to lack of time to teach all the subjects. They also agreed that they would not be psychologically tensioned when they were absent if there was substitute teacher.

In the same Table majority (93.22 per cent) of the teachers disagreed that if a teacher is not competent in a self contained classroom, his students

will also be weak at the same subjects while 66.66 per cent of the principals agreed that incompetent self-contained classroom teachers make students weak. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=49.08$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $DF=2$ ) shows that statistically there is no relation between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. Similarly for item 4 in the same Table 77.9 per cent of the teachers agreed that as the contents in primary school were not difficult to understand, the self-contained classroom teacher would not be weak at any subjects while all of the principals disagreed with the teachers' idea. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=22.03$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $DF=2$ ) shows that statistically there is significant difference between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. From the principals responses for the above two items one can understand that they did not clearly know the depth and scope of the contents in the primary school curriculum.

Lobdell (1963) says that although sound subject matter knowledge is important for elementary school teachers, other components such as, understanding of child growth and development and ability to organize learning experience are more important. He further says that the scope and depth of subjects taught in elementary school are not difficult that regular classroom teacher can't acquire them. The interview made with the teachers also confirmed that no content in the primary school was difficult for them to understand. They also indicated that as they were over loaded they could not teach some subjects effectively. To the contrary, the interview made with the principals shows that, as the self-contained classroom teachers were poor in English language; almost all of the students in the primary schools had weak English language skills.

Table 6 also shows that 83 per cent of the teachers disagreed that a departmentalized classroom organization emphasize on subject matters leaving the Childs' development in other aspects while only 33.3 per cent

of the principals disagreed with the same idea. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=8.25$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $DF=2$ ) shows that statistically there is significant difference between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. On the other hand, on the same Table 62.71 per cent of the teachers disagreed that self-contained classroom organization enables teachers to help pupils beyond subject matter knowledge while 66.66 per cent of the principals agreed that it enables to help beyond subject matter knowledge. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=7.31$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $DF=2$ ) shows that statistically there is significant difference between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. This shows that teachers did not have clear understanding about the rational to use-self contained classroom organization.

With regard to the rational for the use of self-contained classroom organization Swards and Scobe sited in Azeb (1998) state that departmentalized classroom organization gives more emphasis to teaching subject matter leaving the children's development in other aspects as psychological development, and it helps the teacher to integrate contents across subjects. They also pointed out that it is difficult for children to adjust to different teachers over the course of the day's work. They further concluded that if a school targets at producing pupils who are physically, socially, emotionally, and mentally well developed it should implement self-contained classroom organization.

The interview result also shows that the primary school teachers preferred departmentalized classroom organization to self-contained classroom organization.

**Table 7. Understanding of Respondents About Free Promotion Policy.**

No.	Items	Number of respondents							X <sup>2</sup>
			Disagree		Undecided		Agree		
			NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	
1	Free promotion is positive reinforcement for pupils	P	-	-	2	33.3	4	66.6	17.259
		T	45	76.2	8	13.5	6	10.6	
2	Pupils should be promoted to the next grade regardless of their academic achievement	P	2	33.3	1	16.66	3	50	10.99
		T	51	86.44	1	1.66	7	11.8	
3	Free promotion solves repetition and dropout problems	P	1	16.66	1	16.66	4	66.66	18.67
		T	52	88.1	1	1.66	6	10.6	
4	Free promotion discourages teachers to follow their pupils as they will automatically pass to the next grade	P	1	16.6	-	-	5	83.3	0.832
		T	6	10.6	6	10.6	47	79.6	
5	Pupils should pass to the next grade regardless of absentees.	P	5	83.3	-	-	1	16.6	0.433
		T	46	77.9	4	6.77	9	15.1	
6	If slow learners can work up to their capacities they should automatically pass to the next grade.	P	-	-	-	-	6	100	32.449
		T	51	86.4	3	5.03	5	8.47	
7	Free promotion requires teacher to carry out regular assessment throughout the year	P	-	-	-	-	6	100	1.346
		T	8	13.5	3	5.08	48	81.3	
8	If pupils are freely promoted to the next grade level, they will achieve less in the new grade	P	-	-	-	-	6	100	1.652
		T	9	12.5	4	6.77	46	77.9	

**P: Refers to Principals**

**T: Refers to Teachers**

In Table 7 it is indicated that 76.2 per cent of the teachers believed that free promotion policy was not positive reinforcement for pupils while 66.6 per cent of the principals agree that it was a positive reinforcement. The chi-square result ( $\chi^2=17.259$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $DF=2$ ) showed that there is statistically significant difference between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. This shows that teachers lacked clear understanding about free promotion policy. In contrary to this Jarvis (1974) based on a research on grade repetition has concluded that children will develop more normally and naturally if they are advanced

each year along with their peers even though they may not master the academics at any grade level in primary school.

The same Table also shows that 86.44 per cent of the teachers disagreed with the policy of promoting pupils from grade to grades regardless of their academic achievement while 50 per cent of the principals believed in promoting pupils across grades regardless of their academic achievement. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=10.99$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $DF=2$ ) shows that statistically there is significant difference between the responses given by the two groups of informants. This shows that teachers did not know the meaning of free promotion policy which is defined as advancing pupils at regular periods to the next higher grade level regardless of their academic achievement (Kindred, 1966).

Table 7 also shows that most of the teachers (88.1 per cent) did not believe that free promotion solves repetition and dropout problems, while 66.66 per cent of the principals agreed that it solves these problems. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=18.67$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $df=2$ ) shows that statistically there is no relation between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. This may show that the teachers did not understand the rationale for the implementation of free promotion policy. According to Hussien (2000) it is with the intention that it will improve the internal efficiency of first cycle primary schools through decreasing the repetition and dropout rate that free promotion is implemented.

In the same Table, it is indicated that 79.6 per cent of the teachers and 83.3 per cent of the principals believed that free promotion of pupils discouraged teachers to follow their pupils as they would automatically pass to the next grade. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=0.822$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $DF=2$ ) shows that statistically there is strong relation between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. This shows that both teachers and principals lacked clear understanding about free promotion

policy. In contrary to this Hussien (2000) has found out that applying free promotion policy encourages teachers to use assessment by strictly following up their pupils learning. The interview result also revealed that teachers and principals believed that free promotion policy discouraged students to learn because as students knew that they would promote to the next grade level regardless of their academic achievement, they would be less motivated in their work. They also reported that students' lack of motivation discouraged teachers to follow their students properly.

In the same Table, it is also indicated that 77.9 per cent of the teachers and 83.3 per cent of the principals did not agree with the idea of promoting pupils through grades regardless of absentees. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=0.433$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $DF=2$ ) shows that statistically there is no significance difference between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. The guideline on pupils promotion, which is developed in the primary schools shows that if a student is absent for ten days with in a semester he/she will be forced to repeat the same grade what ever his academic achievement will be.

Table 7 also shows that 86.6 per cent of the teachers disagreed with promoting slow learning students automatically even if they can work up to their capacities, while all of the principals agreed that students should pass to the next grade if they can work up to their capacities. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=32.44$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $df=2$ ) shows that statistically there is significance difference between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. This shows that the teachers did not have clear understanding about free promotion policy. In implementing free promotion policy according to Kindred (1966) if any pupil has tried, within the limitation of his/her capacity, he/she should be promoted to the next grade level. The interview result also showed that teachers

believed that students should score at least average marks to pass to the next grade level.

In the same Table 81.3 per cent of the teachers and all of the principals agreed that free promotion requires teachers to carry out regular assessment through out the year. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=1.346$  at  $\alpha=0.05$  with  $DF=2$ ) shows that statistically there is no significance difference between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. This shows that teachers and principals were aware that continuous assessment is a requirement for the implementation of free promotion policy; however, practically teachers were not implementing continuous assessment properly.

Teachers and principals have attended neither seminar nor workshop on implementation of free promotion policy; teachers reported that the principals told them that they should assess their students' progress for the successful implementation of free promotion policy. The principals also reported that on a workshop for continuous assessment they were told that continuous assessment was essential for the implementation of free promotion policy.

Table 7 also shows that 77.9 per cent of the teachers and all of the principals believed that pupils achieve less in the new grade if they are freely promoted to the next grade level with out mastering the expected knowledge and skills. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=1.652$  at  $\alpha=0.05$  with  $DF=2$ ) shows that statistically there is strong relation between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. This shows that both teachers and principals were in favor of grade repetition. The interview result also showed that teachers and principals believed that let alone those who could not master the knowledge and skills, even the average achievers could not do better when they promoted to the next grade level. In contrary to this finding Buckingham's research in Elsbree and Willard

(1956) show that among the students who were conditionally promoted seventy-five per cent of them did better in the new class.

**Table 8 Perception of Respondents About Remedial Session**

No	Items		Number of respondents						X <sup>2</sup>
			Disagree		Undecided		Agree		
			NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	
1	Students cannot understand contents through makeup sessions.	P	6	100	-	-	-	-	1.346
		T	48	81.3	3	5.08	8	13.5	
2	There is no need to give extra support for slow learners because they will automatically pass to the next grade.	P	6	100	-	-	-	-	0.797
		T	52	88.1	3	5.08	4	6.72	
3	It's difficult to re teach the contents, which are difficult for the students to understand because it is boring.	P	6	100	-	-	-	-	41.12
		T	3	5.08	6	10.1	50	84.7	
4	There is no need to conduct makeup session because the slow learners are not willing to be helped.	P	4	66.66	1	1.66	1	1.66	10.72
		T	9	15.2	4	6.77	46	77.9	

**P: Refers to Principals**

**T: Refers to Teachers**

Table 8 shows that 81.3 per cent of the teachers and all of the principals disagreed that the students, who could not understand the contents in the regular session, could not understand them again if they are repeated for them through makeup sessions. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=1.346$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $df=2$ ) revealed that statistically there is strong association between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. This shows that teachers and principals were aware that students differ in the amount of time they need to understand a given content. Similarly, in MOE (2002) it is indicated that as individuals differ in the amount of time they need to learn different skills or concepts therefore the teacher should be responsible to provide enough time until the students understand the concepts.

Table 8 also shows that majority (88.1 per cent) of the teachers and all of the principals believed that even if slow learners automatically pass to the next grade level, they need to be supported. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=0.797$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $df=2$ ) shows that statistically there is no significance difference between the responses given by the two groups of informants. This shows that both teachers and principals had common understanding on the need of supporting slow learners. In support of this Derbessa (2000) says that teachers through continuous assessment should identify learners who need extra support and provide remedial lessons for them until they understand the contents of the curriculum.

The same Table also shows that majority of the teachers (84 per cent) agreed that re-teaching the contents which were difficult for the students to understand was boring while all of the principals believed that re-teaching difficult contents was not boring. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=41.129$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $df=2$ ) shows that statistically there is significance difference between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. Similarly, in the same Table for item four 77.9 per cent of the teachers agreed that, as students were not willing to get help there was no need to conduct make up sessions while 66.6 per cent of the principals did not agree with the teachers idea. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=10.72$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $df=2$ ) shows that statistically there is no relation between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. This shows that teachers and principals had completely different experience on conducting remedial sessions. The interview result showed that teachers wanted to help the slow learning students; however, they could not make it practical due to lack of free classrooms. They also reported that as the slow learners could not understand contents easily, conducting remedial session was boring.

**Table 9. Perception of Respondents on the Need of Setting Minimum Academic Performance to Determine on Promotion**

No	Items		Number of respondents						X <sup>2</sup>
			Disagree		Undecided		Agree		
			NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	
1	Minimum level of academic achievement is helpful to make promotional practices uniform	P	-	-	-	-	6	100	1.346
		T	9	15.2	2	3.38	48	81.3	
2	Academic accomplishment should not be the only determinants in deciding whether the pupils should pass or fail	P	-	-	1	16.6	5	83.3	2.003
		T	8	13.5	3	5.08	48	81.3	
3	Pupils should meet the minimum requirements before they pass to the next grade levels	P	-	-	-	-	6	100	0.207
		T	1	1.69	1	1.69	57	96.6	
4	As there is individual difference there is no need to expect different pupils to meet the same minimum level of requirement	P	-	-	-	-	6	100	26.44
		T	49	83	3	5.08	7	11.8	

**P: Refers to Principals**

**T: Refers to Teachers**

Table 9 shows that majority of the teachers (81.3 per cent) and all of the principals believed that minimum level of academic achievement made promotional practices uniform. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=1.346$  at  $\alpha=0.05$  with  $df=2$ ) shows that statistically there is strong relation between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. The interview result also showed that in all of the primary schools there was minimum level of academic achievement that the students were expected to achieve before they passed to the next grade level.

Teachers and principals also reported that if a student who could not meet the minimum requirement passed to the next grade level he/she could not be competent in the new class, because he/she lacked the prerequisite knowledge and skills to learn the contents in the new grade

level. Kimbrough (1968) and Caswell (1987) say that to the regulation of pupils' progress; before children pass to the next grade level they should meet the minimum level of achievement. They also agree that in whatever circumstances, a child who does not meet the standard is not entitled to promotion.

In Table 9 it is also indicated that majority of the teachers (81.3 per cent) and principals (83.3 per cent) agreed that academic accomplishment should not be the only determinant in deciding whether the pupils should pass or fail. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=2.003$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $df=2$ ) shows that statistically there is strong relation between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. This shows that teachers and principals did not depend only on academic achievement to let students pass to the next grade levels. Otto (1944) and Yeager (1946) agree that the final decision as to whether pupils should pass or repeat the same grade should not rest only on academic accomplishments. Otto also says that in addition to academic achievement different criteria as mental ability, chronological age, home conditions, health, attendance and conduct should be considered in determining whether a pupil shall pass or repeat the same grade. The interview result also confirmed that in all of the primary schools of Hawassa Woreda, in addition to pupils' academic accomplishment, conduct and attendance were considered as criteria in deciding whether pupils should pass or repeat the same grade.

Table 9 also shows that majority (96.6 per cent) of the teachers and all of the principals agreed that pupils should meet the minimum requirements before they pass to the next grade levels. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=0.207$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $df=2$ ) shows that statistically there is strong relation between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. Similarly the same Table also shows that most of the teachers (83 per cent) believed that pupils should meet the same

minimum level of requirements regardless of individual difference while all of the principals believed that as there was individual difference there was no need to expect different pupils to meet the same minimum level of requirement. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=26.44$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $df=2$ ) shows that statistically there is significant difference between the responses given by the two groups of respondents.

The interview result also confirmed that principals believed that there should be three different minimum requirements for slow, average and fast learners, and students should meet the minimum requirements in their category before they pass to the next grade levels. They also reported that if all of the students were expected to meet the same minimum level of achievement the slow learners would always repeat grades. On the other hand, teachers believed that whatever differences students had, they should meet the minimum requirements before they passed to the next grade levels.

**Table 10. Perception of Respondents on Grade Repetition**

No	Items	Number of respondents							
			Disagree		Undecided		Agree		X <sup>2</sup>
			NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	
1	Students fail because teachers could not assess their academic performance continuously and give remedial support.	P	4	66.6	1	16.6	2	33.3	6.23
		T	54	91.5	2	3.38	3	5.08	
2	If pupils can't compete with average learners, they should repeat the same grade.	P	4	66.6	-	-	2	33.3	11.65
		T	7	11.8	1	1.69	51	86.4	
3	Pupils fail because the school administration could not arrange special program to help slow learners.	P	6	100	-	-	-	-	12.07
		T	17	28.8	10	16.9	32	54.2	
4	Grade repetition maintains standard in schools.	P	-	-	2	33.3	4	66.6	3.81
		T	5	8.47	5	8.47	49	83.5	
5	If students repeat the same grade they will do better than the first	P	2	33.3	2	33.3	2	33.3	5.65
		T	7	11.8	6	10.1	46	77.9	
6	The presence of grade repetition motivates students to do better.	P	-	-	-	-	6	100	1.06
		T	6	10.1	3	5.08	50	84.7	
7	To make students learn to adjust themselves to the real world, they should experience failure as well as success.	P	-	-	-	-	6	100	0.43
		T	3	5.08	1	1.69	55	93.2	

**P: Refers to Principals**

**T: Refers to Teachers**

Table 10 shows that majority of the teachers (91.5 per cent) agreed that pupils failure does not indicate the weakness of self-contained classroom teachers' in assessing pupils progress on continuous basis while 66.6 per cent of the principals agreed that students failure indicates that the self contained classroom teacher could not assess pupils progress on continuous bases and give them remedial support. The chi square result ( $x^2=6.233$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $df=2$ ) shows that statistically there is significant difference between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. In the same Table for item three 54.2 per cent of the teachers agreed that pupils fail because the school administration could

not arrange special program to help slow learners while all of the principals agreed that pupils failure can not be attributed to the school administration. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=12.07$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $df=2$ ) shows that statistically there is significant difference between the responses given by the two groups of respondents.

This shows that principals and teachers attribute the cause of pupils' failure to one another. The interview result also showed that principals attributed the failure of students to teacher's weakness in treating children. They further reported that as the teachers did not tolerate the students when they misbehaved and they most of the time used corporal punishment to penalize them, children were afraid of school and grade repeaters. On the other hand, the teachers believed that there were a few teachers, who mistreated children, but this contributed little for the failure of students. The main reasons for students' failure according to the teachers were large class size, shortage of textbooks and parents' reluctance to follow their children. They further reported that as long as the children's parents wanted them to join primary schools the school admitted any children regardless of their mental and chronological age.

Table 10 also revealed that 86.4 per cent of the teachers agreed that if pupils cannot compete with average learners they should repeat the same grade while 66.6 per cent of the principals disagreed that pupils should not repeat grades only because they can't compete with average learners. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=11.65$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $df=2$ ) shows that statistically there is significant difference between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. This shows that principals believed that academic achievement should not be the only criteria to decide if pupils should pass or repeat the same grade. It also shows that teachers believed that students should meet the average results before they pass to the next grade levels. In support of the principals Yeager

(1946) says the final decision as to whether a particular pupil should be promoted to the next higher grade level or detained in the same grade for another year should not rest only on academic accomplishments.

With regard to item four in Table 10 majority (83.05 per cent) of the teachers and 66.6 per cent of the principals agreed that grade repetition maintains standards in schools. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=3.081$  at  $\alpha=0.05$  with  $df=2$ ) shows that statistically there is strong relation between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. This shows that both teachers and principals were the supporters of grade repetition. This finding contradicts with the rationale for the implementation of free promotion policy.

In the same Table for item five 77.9 per cent of the teachers and 33.3 per cent of the principals agreed that if students repeat the same grade they will do better than the first. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=5.656$  at  $\alpha=0.05$  with  $df=2$ ) shows that statistically there is strong relation between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. Similarly for item six of the same Table 84.7 per cent of the teachers and all of the principals agreed that the presence of grade repetition motivates students to do better. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=1.062$  at  $\alpha=0.05$  with  $df=2$ ) shows that statistically there is no significance difference between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. On the other hand for item seven of the same Table majority (93.2 per cent) of the teachers and all of the principals agreed that to make students learn to adjust themselves to the real world they should experience failure as well as success. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=0.433$  at  $\alpha=0.05$  with  $df=2$ ) shows that statistically there is no significance difference between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. The Teachers and the principals response for items five, six and seven show that they were strong supporters of grade repetition.

**Table 11. Perception of Respondents on Continuous Assessment**

No	Items		Number of respondents						X <sup>2</sup>
			Disagree		Undecided		Agree		
			No	%	No	%	No	%	
1	Pupils' progress should be assessed on continuous bases.	P	-	-	-	-	6	100	0.319
		T	2	3.28	1	1.69	56	94.9	
2	As it is time consuming, it is difficult to assess pupils' progress on continuous bases in a large class size.	P	6	100	-	-	-	-	32.44
		T	5	8.47	1	1.69	53	89.8	
3	The class size is the major problem to use continuous assessment..	P	-	-	-	-	6	100	1.062
		T	8	13.5	1	1.69	50	84.7	
4	As students simply pass to the next grade level assessment is not that much important.	P	4	66.6	-	-	2	33.3	0.123
		T	37	62.7	1	1.69	21	35.5	
5	Continuous assessment helps teachers to identify students who need extra support.	P	-	-	-	-	6	100	1.201
		T	8	13.5	2	3.38	49	83.0	

**P: Refers to Principals**

**T: Refers to Teachers**

As indicated in Table 11, majority (94.91 per cent) of the teachers and all of the principals agreed that pupils' progress should be assessed on continuous bases. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=0.319$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $df=2$ ) shows that statistically there is no significance difference between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. This shows that both teachers and principals knew the way pupils' progress should be assessed. MOE (2002) states that to correct pupils' weakness and make sure that they have mastered the contents of the curriculum; their performance should be assessed on continuous bases.

Table 11 also shows that most of the teachers (89.8 per cent) agreed that as it was time consuming it was difficult to assess pupils' progress on continuous bases in a large class size while all of the principals disagreed that it was not time consuming and difficult. The chi square result

( $\chi^2=32.44$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $df=2$ ) shows that statistically there is no relation between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. On the other hand, for item three in the same Table 84.7 per cent of the teachers and all of the principals agreed that the class size was the major problem to use continuous assessment. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=0.1.062$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $df=2$ ) shows that statistically there is no significance difference between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. This shows that principals had some confusion on continuous assessment in that, for item two they reported that assessing pupils progress continuously was not time consuming and difficult on the other hand they agreed that the class size was the major problem to use continuous assessment, but it is obvious that as the class size increases, using continuous assessment consumes more time.

With regard to item four, 62.7 per cent of the teachers and 66.6 per cent of the principals disagreed that as students simply pass to the next grade level assessment is not important. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=0.123$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $df=2$ ) shows that statistically there is no significance difference between the responses given by the two groups of informants. Similarly on the same Table for item five 83 per cent of teachers and all of the principals agreed that continuous assessment helps teachers to identify students who need extra support. The chi square result ( $\chi^2=1.201$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $df=2$ ) shows that statistically there is strong relation between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. This shows that both the teachers and principals had common understanding on the importance of continuous assessment. Heaton (1990) says that assessment helps teachers to identify pupils who fail to master the objectives so as to give them remedial support. The interview result indicated that the teachers believed that assessing students' progress on continuous bases was important but impractical due to large class size.

The informants' responses for the open-end question items are summarized in the following two Tables.

**Table 12 Problems Encountered by Respondents in the Implementation of Free Promotion Policy**

Problems	Number of respondents				x <sup>2</sup>
	Teachers		Principals		
	NO	%	NO	%	
Lack of awareness	53	89.9	6	100	0.825
Do not believe in the policy	56	94.9	4	66.6	
Absence of guideline	50	84.7	6	100	

Most of the teachers and principals indicated that the major problems in implementing free promotion policy were lack of awareness (89.8 per cent of teachers and 100 per cent of the principals), absence of guideline (84.7 per cent of teachers and 100 per-cent of the principals). Majority of the teachers (94.9 per cent and 66.6 per cent of principals) believed that free promotion policy was not useful in the first cycle primary schools. The chi square result ( $x^2=0.825$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $df=2$ ) shows that statistically there is strong relation between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. This shows that the problems were serious.

**Table 13 Suggestions Given by Respondents to Minimize the Problems**

Suggestions	Number of respondents				x <sup>2</sup>
	Teachers		Principals		
	NO	%	NO	%	
No need to use the policy	51	86.4	5	84.7	0.79
Increasing awareness on the policy	42	71.1	6	100	
Minimizing class size	32	54.2	4	66.6	

As depicted in Table 13 majority of the teachers (86.4 per cent) and the principals (84.7 per cent) suggested that the problems in implementing free promotion policy could be solved by ignoring the policy itself. In the same Table 71.1 per cent of the teachers and all of the principals suggested that the problem could be minimized through raising their awareness on free promotion policy through workshop. Similarly, 54.2 per cent of the teachers and 66.6 per cent of the principals suggested that reducing the class size could help to minimize the problem. The chi square result ( $x^2=0.79$  at  $\alpha= 0.05$  with  $df=2$ ) shows that statistically there is strong relation between the responses given by the two groups of respondents. This shows that both teachers and principals believed that implementing free promotion policy would be good if various training programs were arranged to create awareness on the policy.

From the informants response for the open-end question items it can be concluded that both teachers and principals have negative attitude towards free promotion policy. The interview result also confirmed that both teachers and principals disliked implementing free promotion policy. They, excluding the teachers and principals of the schools, which

do not apply free promotion policy, confirmed that they were implementing the policy only because they were told that they should implement government's policy. They also reported that they should have known how to implement free promotion policy before they were forced to apply it. To this end, they suggested that workshop should be organized and guideline should be developed.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SUMMARIES CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 4.1 Summaries

The main purpose of this study was to assess the problems encountered in the implementation of free promotion policy in the governmental first cycle primary schools of Hawassa Woreda and to suggest possible solutions to minimize those problems. The following six basic questions were formulated to be answered by the study;

- 1 Are the teachers in first cycle primary schools trained in a way that enable them implement free promotion policy?
- 2 Do school principals and teachers have clear understanding of free promotion policy?
- 3 What are the minimum requirements for a student to pass to the next grade level in grades one up to three?
- 4 Do teachers use continuous assessment?
- 5 Do school principals and teachers have clear understanding of self-contained classroom organization?
- 6 What other factors do teachers and educational officers think are the major problems of implementing free promotion policy in the first cycle primary schools?

To gather reliable data a questionnaire with open and close end items were developed and pilot tested. Based on the feedback the number of open-end question items, which was eight, was reduced to two and six of them were changed to open-end items. The final draft questionnaires were administered to fifty-nine first cycle primary school teachers and six principals, which were selected using availability sampling. Guidelines

on pupils' promotion in the primary schools, which were developed by the primary schools, were used as secondary sources of data. Interview was also used to supplement the data gathered through questionnaire. The data collected were tabulated based on their similarity with the basic questions and descriptive statistics as per centage, frequencies and chi-square were employed. Finally, the results are summarized as follows:

1. It is found out from the study that all primary school principals were males by sex. This shows that females were not represented in school administration.
2. All of the teachers had experience of teaching for more than sixteen years and 84.3 per cent of the male teachers and 74 per cent of the female teachers had above twenty-six years of teaching experience. This shows that most of the teachers who were teaching in the first cycle and all of the principals had long years of experience in the profession.
3. With regard to qualification, all of the principals were college diploma holders.
4. Four teachers, of these two of them are females having a qualification of diploma, were teaching in the first cycle primary schools. On the other hand, four unqualified teachers were found teaching in the level under study.
5. Majority of the teachers (87.5 per cent) were graduates of the previous 12+1 certificate program. On the other hand, no teacher received professional training in 10+1 certificate program. This shows that most of the teachers were trained in the previous program, which did not treat self-contained classroom organization and free promotion policy in its curriculum.

6. Among the six governmental primary schools only, four of them were implementing free promotion policy.
7. There was no guideline about the implementation of free promotion policy sent to the primary schools from the Regional, zonal or Woreda Education Bureau. Rather they were tolled orally to implement it. As a result, there was no uniformity among the schools in the implementation of the policy.
8. With regard to the pre service-training program, the teachers were not trained in a way that enabled them use verities of continuous assessment; as a result, pupils' progress in the first cycle primary schools was not properly assessed on continuous bases. Only homework and tests were the most widely used types of continuous assessment.
9. Both the teachers and the principals attended neither workshop nor seminar on the implementation of free promotion policy.
10. The study also reviled that as the teachers were not trained to be self-contained classroom teachers, most of them did not want to teach in a self-contained classroom.
11. Both teachers and principals did not know the importance and why self-contained classroom organization was implemented in the first cycle primary schools.
12. All the primary schools have set minimum level of requirement, and students promote through grades only if they meet the requirements. Students were expected to score the average results and not be absent for more than 10 days within a semester.

13. Majority of the teachers and the principals did not believe that free promotion policy solves repetition and drop out problems rather they were in favor of grade repetition.

#### **4.2 Conclusions**

1. Whenever there is a curriculum change, before it is implemented, its strategies of implementation and its importance should be communicated to the implementers. First-cycle primary schools teachers in Hawassa Woreda were given no retraining on the implementation of free promotion policy and how to handle self-contained classroom. The promotion policy, which was new to the teachers appeared as a surprise to them. With out knowing its relevance and its strategies of implementation, the schools were applying the policy improperly. The responsible body, Hawassa Woreda education Bureau, could not provide the primary schools under it, with guidelines on the implementation of free promotion policy. As a result, the schools followed their own ways of implementation. This resulted in non-uniformity in its implementation among the primary schools.

2. Teachers are at the front line for the successful implementation of any education program; therefore, they should be well trained in line with the skills and knowledge required in their profession. In contrary, the finding of this research revealed that though free promotion policy is being implemented in two-third of the first cycle primary schools found in Hawasa Woreda, both teachers and principals lacked clear understanding on the rational to use free promotion policy.

### 4.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research, and conclusions drawn the following recommendations are suggested:

1. The finding of this research exposed that lack of clear understanding on free promotion policy and self-contained classroom organization was the major problem that hindered the proper implementation of free promotion policy. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that SNNPRS education Bureau should organize for teachers and principals awareness-raising program through in-service training and provision of supplementary reading materials on the implementation of free promotion policy and self-contained classroom organization.
2. The finding also revealed that as most of the teachers who were teaching in the first cycle were trained in the previous 12+1 program, which did not treat self-contained classroom organization and free promotion policy, they were unable to implement free promotion policy properly. Therefore, it is recommended that the Regional Education Bureau should assign young teachers, who are the results of the recent 10+1 program.
3. It is also found out that the Woreda Education Bureau could not coordinate the primary schools in Hawassa Woreda and make them implement free promotion policy uniformly. Therefore, it is suggested that the Woreda education Bureau should organize a unit that coordinates and controls the primary schools found in the Woreda.
4. The finding of the research also revealed that there was no guideline about the implementation of free promotion policy sent from Regional Education Bureau, as a result, primary schools

were following their own way of implementation. Therefore, it is recommended that the regional education Bureau should develop guideline on the implementation of the policy and distribute them to the schools.

5. It is also indicated that the major problem teachers faced in using continuous assessment was large class size. Reducing the class size is a solution; however, it is not economically feasible. Therefore, it is suggested that the TEIs should modify their training content and include techniques of assessments that are appropriate for large class size.
6. The research finding indicated that as teachers were not trained to be self-contained classroom teachers, they were found to be resistant to teach in a self-contained classroom. This posed a serious challenge for the effective implementation of free promotion policy. Hence orientation at school level should be given prior to their engagement.
7. The research found out that teachers disliked the self-contained classroom organization, because their students were not learning when the teachers were absent. It is inevitable that teachers may be absent some days therefore, it is suggested that the principal should assign substitute teachers. In such cases, the substitute teacher can replace the self-contained classroom teacher so that students will not be idle when the self-contained classroom teacher is absent.
8. It is also found out in the research that some students did not want to seek help with schoolwork for fear of being considered slow learners by their friends. Some slow learning students may perceive remediation arrangements as punishment. Therefore; remediation needs to be simple, immediate, and painless. It is

recommended that the slow learning students should involve in deciding the time and place for remediation programs.

- 9 The research findings revealed that there was no relation between the training contents in TEIs and the actual practice in schools. It is therefore, strongly recommended that TEIs should link the way of teaching, which teachers are expected to teach at schools, with the training contents the TEIs have.
- 10 The research also found out that teachers agreed that the scope and depth of the contents in the primary schools were not so difficult that they could not acquire them. It was also found out that some teachers were weak at treating children properly. Therefore, it is recommended that TEIs should not emphasize only on contents they should also focus on how to teach and how to treat children.
- 11 This research is narrow in its scope, it investigates the problems encountered in the implementation of free promotion policy in first cycle primary schools found only in Hawassa Woreda. Therefore, the researcher recommends that further study should be carried out in depth and wider scope.

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1.4 Qualification

a/ 10+1

b/12+1

c/ 12 complete

d/ Diploma

1.5 Service years

a/ 1-5

b/ 6-10

c/11-15

d/ 16-20

e/21-25

f/Above 26

**2. Items related to implantation of free promotion policy.**

2.1. Is free promotion policy implemented in the first cycle in your school?

a/ Yes  b/ No

2.2. If yes, when was it started? \_\_\_\_\_

2.3. Is there any guideline for the implementation of free promotion policy?

a/ Yes  b/ No

2.5 Have you ever attended workshop or seminar on continuous assessment?

a/ Yes  b/ No

2.6 If yes how many times?

a/ Only ones  b/ two times  c/ three times

d/ More than three times

2.7 Have you ever attended workshop or seminar on implementation of free promotion policy?

a/ Yes

b/ No

2.8 What do you think are the major problems of implementing free promotion policy in the first cycle of your school?

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2.9 As a teacher, what do you suggest to minimize those problems?

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3. The following questions have three options of which '1' stands for always, '2' for sometimes and '3' for not at all. Please indicate the level of your agreement by putting a tick '✓' mark.

No	Items	1	2	3
		Always	Sometime	No at all
3.1	I check my students progress after each session.			
3.2	I use observation as a means of assessment.			
3.3	I interview my students to check their progress.			
3.4	I give home work as a means of assessment.			
3.5	I assess my students understanding through class work.			
3.6	How often do you give quiz.			
3.7	I give test at the end of each chapter.			

4. The following questions have five options of which '1' stands for strongly disagree, '2' for disagree, '3' for undecided, '4' for agree and '5' for strongly agree. Please indicate the level of your agreement by putting a tick "✓" mark.

No	Items	1	2	3	4	5
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
4.1	Free promotion is positive reinforcement for pupils.					
4.2	Pupils should be promoted to the next grade regardless of their academic achievement.					
4.3	Free promotion solves repetition and dropout problems.					

4.4	Free promotion of pupils discourages teachers to follow their pupils as they will automatically pass to the next grade.					
4.5	In free promotion Pupils should pass to the next grade regardless of absentees.					
4.6	If slow learners can work up to their capacities they should automatically pass to the next grade.					
4.7	Free promotion requires teacher to carry out regular assessment throughout the year.					
4.8	If pupils are freely promoted to the next grade level with out mastering the knowledge and skills, they will achieve less in the new grade.					
4.9	Teachers in grades 1-3 should be assigned in one section and teach all the subjects.					
4.10	If the teacher is absent, all the students could not learn throughout the entire day so self-contained classroom is not useful.					

4.11	If a teacher is not competent in a self-contained classroom, his students will be weak at all of the subjects.					
4.12	As the contents in primary level are not difficult to understand the teacher will not be weak at any subjects.					
4.13	If the School arranges substitute teachers the absence of the self-contained classroom teacher cannot be a problem.					
4.14	A departmentalized classroom organization emphasize on subject matters leaving the Childs' development in other aspects.					
4.15	Self-contained class room organization enables teachers to help pupils beyond subject matter knowledge.					
4.16	Pupils' progress should be assessed on continuous bases.					
4.17	As it is time consuming it is difficult to assess pupils' progress on continuous bases in a large class size.					
4.18	The class size is the major problem to use continuous assessment.					

4.19	As students simply pass to the next grade level assessment is not that much important.					
4.20	Continuous assessment helps teachers to identify students who need extra support.					
4.21	Minimum level of academic achievement is helpful to make promotional practices uniform.					
4.22	Academic accomplishment should not be the only determinants in deciding whether the pupils should pass or fail.					
4.23	There is no need to give extra support for slow learners because they will automatically pass to the next grade.					
4.24	Pupils should meet the minimum requirements before they pass to the next grades.					
4.25	As there is individual difference there is no need to expect different pupils to meet the same minimum level of requirement.					
4.26	Students' failure indicates that the self-contained classroom teacher could not assess their progress on continuous base and give remedial support.					

4.27	If pupils can't compete with average learners in the class they should repeat the same grade.					
4.28	Pupils fail because the school administration could not arrange special program to help slow learners.					
4.29	If students repeat the same grade they will do better than the first.					
4.30	The presence of grade repetition motivates students to do better.					
4.31	To make students learn to adjust themselves to the real world, they should experience failure as well as success.					
4.32	I have not learned about continuous assessment when I was a TEI student.					
4.33	What I learned in TEI and what the school expected me to do are completely different.					
4.34	I have got enough knowledge on how to implement free promotion policy.					
4.35	I have not learned how to handle self-contained classroom so it took me much time to adjust my self.					

4.36	When I was TEI student I was not assessed on continuous bases and this has influenced me not to use continuous assessment.					
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**Addis Ababa University**

**School of Graduate Studies**

**Department of Educational Planning and Management**

**Questionnaire to be filled by principals of first Cycle**

**Primary Schools**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather data on the problems encountered during the implementation of free promotion policy in Awassa Woreda first cycle Primary schools. As your genuine response determines the value of the study, you are kindly requested to give honest responses.

**Directions**

1. In answering the questions with alternatives please put a tick (✓) mark in the boxes provided.
2. In responding to the open-end question item, please give short and precise answers in the blank spaces provided.
3. Please do not write your name

**Thank you in advance for your cooperation**

**1. Personal information**

1.1 Name of the school \_\_\_\_\_

1.2 Sex:           A/Male                                    B/Female

1.3 Age            A/ Below 20           

                    B/ 21-25           

                    C/ 26-30           

                    D/ 31-35           

                    E/ 35-40           

                    F/ 45-50           

                    G/ above 50

1.4 Qualification

a/ 10+1

b/12+1

c/ 12 complete

d/ Diploma

1.5 Service years

a/ 1-5

b/ 6-10

c/11-15

d/ 16-20

e/21-25

f/Above 26

**2. Items related to implantation of free promotion policy.**

2.1. Is free promotion policy implemented in the first cycle in your school?

a/ Yes  b/ No

2.2. If yes, when was it started? \_\_\_\_\_

2.3. Is there any guideline for the implementation of free promotion policy?

a/ Yes  b/ No

2.5 Have you ever attended workshop or seminar on continuous assessment?

a/ Yes  b/ No

2.6 If yes how many times?

- a/ Only ones     b/ two times     c/ three times   
d/ More than three times

2.7 Have you ever attended workshop or seminar on implementation of free promotion policy?

- a/ Yes                       b/ No

2.8 What do you think are the major problems of implementing free promotion policy in the first cycle of your school?

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2.9 As a school principal, what do you suggest to minimize those problems?

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3. The following questions have five options of which '1' stands for strongly disagree, '2' for disagree, '3' for undecided, '4' for agree and '5' for strongly agree. Please indicate the level of your agreement by putting a tick "✓" mark.

No	Items	1	2	3	4	5
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
4.1	Free promotion is positive reinforcement for pupils					
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	organization emphasize on subject matters leaving the Childs' development in other aspects.					
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4.17	As it is time consuming it is difficult to assess pupils' progress on continuous bases in a large class size.					
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4.30	The presence of grade repetition motivates students to do better.					

4.31	To make students learn to adjust themselves to the real world, they should experience failure as well as success.					
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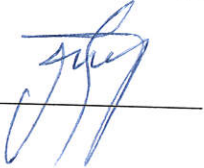
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## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my work and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been dully acknowledged.

Name: - Gobezie Yimer Assen

Signature \_\_\_\_\_



Addis Ababa, March, 2007

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